

Music and the Teaching of Music History as Praxis: A Reply to James Maiello

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Introduction

I am both pleased and challenged by the offer to expand on points from James Maiello's stimulating paper that applies my praxial theory of music teaching to the praxis of teaching music history. The challenge arises from the opportunity to consider my theory beyond its usual application to primary and secondary education and some of its implications for teaching music at the university level. My praxial theory has been long in developing and over time has incorporated a range of issues and concerns that were not in mind at the onset. Some of its origins are in philosophical and historical questions that were the focus of scholarly training¹ that located me squarely in nineteenth-century developments in both music and the other arts.

Accidents of employment history led to the application of my historical and philosophical interests to the concerns of music and music education rather than in other directions. However, in this field I found it necessary to reconsider much that I and others had taken for granted concerning music and the teaching of it. In particular, I soon discovered that in order to teach music, you need to have a clear idea of what 'it' is! Of concern then and today were teachers who take for granted that musical experiences and learning information *about* music automatically constitute a proper or sufficient music education. In brief, the issue boils down to the question of the difference between a *music* lesson and, for example, a *piano* lesson.

A further consideration was the ongoing problem—now a crisis—of legitimating music education as a valuable part of the general education of all students; to put it in pragmatic terms, the need to warrant what music is 'good for' in schooling that is premised on living the 'good life'. (This might also

1. My thesis, from Ohio University in 1970, dealt with "Music and Painting in the Paragon of Eugène Delacroix," a study of the influence of Chopin and his music on the artistic practice of his synesthete friend Delacroix and the resulting influence of Delacroix's color theory on Impressionism.

extend to warranting the teaching of music history in schools and universities.) Failure to examine this issue in any depth leads to superficiality and even to a misrepresentation of the virtues and value of music's role in human life and, thus, its role in an education for life.

In what follows, I assume that the existence of a journal such as this is evidence of ongoing concern with the status quo of the pedagogy of music history and that there is interest in views that might point in new directions. I shall thus amplify what I see to be some key features of my praxial theory in relation to the teaching of music history; and I shall raise some issues from philosophy that are, I think, relevant and perhaps not usually considered by music history teachers and musicologists. I shall also consider the question of the audience for music history and the potential impact of the field on the music world, particularly listeners.

Praxis

As Maiello accurately describes, the concept of *praxis* was introduced into the discourse of music education philosophy in a seminal 1991 paper by Philip Alperson, at the time the editor of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*.² Alperson argued, *inter alia*, that a philosophy of music education should account for *all* music and for an understanding of music as a social *praxis*.³ In this, Alperson grounded his position in Aristotle's account in the *Nicomachean Ethics*⁴ of the distinction between *theoria*, *techne*, and *praxis*. It will be useful for me to add my own account to Maiello's summary in order to keep its distinctions in mind for the present essay and to emphasize certain aspects of it.

For Aristotle, *theoria* involved knowledge contemplated for its own sake.⁵ It is relevant to recall that "music" to the Athenians of the time "meant firstly the rhythm of musical speech, and then especially lyric poetry with some simple accompaniment of lyre or flute."⁶ Moreover:

2. Philip Alperson, "What Should One Expect From A Philosophy Of Music Education?" *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 25/3 (1991): 215–29.

3. "Social praxis" is, in a sense, a pleonasm since *praxis* is inherently social because it involves people. Yet discourse in the field of social theory makes regular use of the expression, perhaps to stress that connection. Although there are some technical differences between "praxis" and "practice" (concerning mainly the ethical stance of the former) the terms can often be used interchangeably, with "practices" preferred stylistically over "praxes."

4. *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. (with an interpretive essay) by Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011). Highly readable.

5. And, at the time, it was therefore contemplated by scholars and other educated men, not by commoners, slaves, or women. It is not clear what such "contemplation" involved at the time and, for that matter, what aestheticians mean by it today in relation to music and art.

6. F. A. Wright, *The Arts in Greece* (London: Kennikat Press, 1969 [1923]), 38.

The Greeks had very little instrumental music because they had very few musical instruments: and, as is the case with most of the things which the Greeks did not possess, they did not have them because they did not want them. They realized quite clearly that the most perfect of musical instruments is the human voice⁷

Thus, the contemplation of music as promoted by the speculative rationalist aesthetic theories⁸ of the post-Enlightenment was not the concern of *theoria*, and the distinction between music and oratory was one of degree.⁹ Among the ‘truths’ contemplated in Aristotle’s time were, instead, those revealed by the study of cosmology, mathematics, philosophy, music theory, and literary forms.

Techne, on the other hand, involved the expertise involved in the ‘making’ of things or the ‘producing’ of events. These were usually non-controversial, pragmatic undertakings that were governed by the criterion of *poiesis*, or ‘good making’.¹⁰ Artisanry and productive skill were thus central, but the ‘product’ or ‘thing’ itself was valued separately from the act of making it.¹¹ Such skills were typically passed on directly, and competence was judged in terms of effectiveness for the uses being served.

7. F. A. Wright, *The Arts in Greece*, 39.

8. The *theories* are decidedly speculative and rational, but, “in the course of the evolution through which it becomes autonomous, the beautiful object, as sensible object slips over to the nonrational. Declared radically nonintelligible is [*sic*] ipso facto becomes irrational, and under this aspect aesthetics begins to look like a veritable challenge to logic.” Luc Ferry, *Homo Aestheticus: The Invention of Taste in the Democratic Age* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 21. This study of the birth and development of the concept of taste is revealing for its critical analysis of aesthetics as the source of “the designation of a new faculty, capable of distinguishing the beautiful from the ugly and of apprehending through immediate sentiment (*aisthesis*) the rules of this separation” (14) “Establishing as it does the beautiful on a faculty much too subjective for objectivity to be easily discernible within it, its history goes instead from *relativism towards the search for criteria*.” (25; italics added).

9. *Ibid.*, relying on a quotation from Dionysius: “The science of public oratory is after all a sort of musical science, differing from vocal and instrumental music in degree not in kind. In oratory, too, the words involve melody rhythm, variety and appropriateness; so that in this case also the ear delights in the melodies, is fascinated by the rhythms, welcomes the variations, and craves always what is in keeping with the occasion. The distinction between oratory and music is simply one of degree.”

10. For an in-depth account of this concept (and of praxis) for contemporary thinking, see: Joseph Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground: ‘Phronesis’ and ‘Techne’ in Modern Philosophy and in Aristotle* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993). NB: *Poiesis* and *poesis* are alternative spellings, and *poietike* is a variant term having the same meaning.

11. In particular, “in *poesis* there is a separation between *production* and *product*, as well as between the *producer* (not as a subject that has, among his other attributes, the capability of producing, but purely as producer) and what he produced.” Oded Balaban, “Praxis and Poesis in Aristotle’s Practical Philosophy,” *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 24, 185–98 (1990): 186; italics in original.

Praxis, however, involved actions¹² undertaken in the service of *people*, not things or events. In this, and the reason for its central place in Aristotle's virtue ethics, is that *praxis* thus has an *ethical component* of undertaking 'right action' in producing 'right results' for those served. This ethical component, which is also a pragmatic one (and thus related to pragmatist ethics¹³), is termed *phronesis*: the need to be 'care-full' in bringing about beneficial results for those served. Importantly, the means and ends of *praxis* are fused. Thus, Aristotle distinguishes between "an activity whose end [*telos*] is different from the activity itself" and "an activity whose *telos* is the activity itself. The first is *poesis*, and the second *praxis*."¹⁴ Taken to its logical conclusion, the distinction has considerable relevance in consideration of whether music is simply a matter of *techne* (executory skill and *poiesis*) or *praxis* the 'doing' of which is good in itself.

Music as Praxis

Importantly, a praxial theory of music teaching understands *music as praxis*—not as *poiesis*, where means are not enacted for their own sake.¹⁵ This distinction has important consequences: a praxial theory of music thus understands music in terms of what it is 'good for' in life; what human values and needs are satisfied by listening to it, making it, or otherwise engaging with it. In this regard, in addition to Aristotle's account of *praxis*, my praxial theory of music also draws from neo-Marxian social philosophy and theory.¹⁶ This discourse advances the idea of *praxis* as *action undertaken to change or transform the*

12. *Praxis* is translated as "action" and, thus understood, it participates in the *action theory* of contemporary philosophy, social theory, and psychology where an *action* is distinguished from mere *activity* by its *intentionality*, the 'aboutness' of an action that an agent mindfully seeks to realize. See, also, n. 14 below.

13. See, e.g., Steven Fesmire, *John Dewey and Moral Imagination: Pragmatism in Ethics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

14. Oded Balaban, "Praxis and Poesis in Aristotle's Practical Philosophy," 186. Thus "the activity of *poesis* is not desired for its own sake" and, consequently, "when the end is achieved, the achievement brings about the cessation of the means (the activity); and vice versa . . ." (Ibid.). "In *praxis* means and end are one and the same This characteristic of *praxis* makes it the model for moral behavior, since in ethics the end is good action itself." (Ibid., 190)

15. Ibid., 186.

16. In general, from the Frankfurt School of social theory and, in particular, the theory of Habermas, the student of Adorno. For a related praxial theory mentioned by Maiello that does not stress this neo-Marxian influence, see David J. Elliott, *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995 [soon to be a revised 2nd ed.]) and David J. Elliott, ed. *Praxial Music Education: Reflections and Dialogues* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

world, especially including the construction (or re-construction and improvement) of social realities.¹⁷

In a praxial framework, then, “culture” itself is centrally constituted as various habits of praxis (i.e., of social agency); ‘it’ is not an accumulation or transmission of traditions. Praxis, thus, is a primary cultural source for both creativity and norms.¹⁸ In this way, music is among the most important social forces in society or culture.¹⁹ As such, music can be understood in terms of what has been called “the practice turn in contemporary theory”²⁰ that is concerned with the role of social practices (such as music and art, etc.) and their role in cultural life and change.²¹

Regarded as praxis, then, music takes on a decidedly social role and function that goes beyond the usual concept of ‘works’ that are contemplated only in special moments of leisure. Instead, music, in all of its instantiations, is seen to be a key part of the fiber and fabric of the living of life. While the study of ‘works’ by historians and theorists reveals much of interest and value,²²

17. See, for example: Richard J. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971); Jürgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973); Richard Kilminster, *Praxis and Method* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979— notable for its coverage of Adorno); John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1995); and Adolfo S. Vazquez, *The Philosophy of Praxis* (London: Merlin Press, 1977).

18. Zygmunt Bauman, *Culture as Praxis* (London: SAGE, 1999).

19. For example: Kurt Blaukopf, *Musical Life in a Changing Society* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1992); Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Peter J. Martin, *Music and the Sociological Gaze: Art Worlds and Cultural Production* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); John Shepherd, *Music as Social Text* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1991); John Shepherd and Peter Wicke, *Music and Cultural Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997); and Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

20. Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin Knorr Cetina, and Eike von Savigny, eds. *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (London: Routledge, 2001).

21. For example: Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Derek Robbins, *Bourdieu and Culture* (London: SAGE, 2000); Theodore R. Schatzki, *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Theodore R. Schatzki, *The Site of the Social: A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change* (University Park: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2002); and Raimo Tuomela, *The Philosophy of Social Practices: A Collective Acceptance View* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

22. Yet, such analysis does not reveal “the music” as actually experienced phenomenologically by individuals, on this occasion in this or that context. “When people are confronted with the task of expressing the personal meaning which various forms have for them, responses vary along the whole range of symbolic meaning dimensions. These meanings include not only association to objects and situations, but also sensations moods and feelings, abstract concepts, metaphors and symbols The understanding of a specific experience in a specific observer in the here and now would require a [consideration of all psychological]

music's role in and contribution to the wider sociocultural context is highlighted by praxial theory. In this change of emphasis from the 'music for its own sake'²³ claims made for putatively autonomous 'works', praxial theory draws from social theory, sociology, social psychology, and philosophy of music, and from ethnomusicology, and anthropology (even ethology of humans) and situates music as a vital social praxis. So-called 'appreciation', then is an empirical matter of the myriad personal and social uses that music serves, not an individual's state of mind or a metaphysical experience.²⁴ People choose to incorporate into their lives the musics that enhance life for them and for reasons that are unique between individuals.

The study of music, too, takes on an *action* dimension (again, "action" being the typical translation for "praxis"). What is to be learned is learned through action (i.e., various 'doings') with music and is drawn from and related to typical in-life uses, whether of musicians, teachers, or the music loving public. Just as "music," then, is not simply a canon of 'works'²⁵ but of diverse sociomusical practices, so the study of music history (for example) will involve the 'doings' that are, first of all, most directly relevant to being musically informed by history; and, secondly, that are learned by engaging in the various musical activities—the praxis of music—that informs history. In sum, when acquired as praxis, what is learned is never forgotten; it is the means for

processes in terms of the context of that particular experiencing subject, with his idiosyncrasies and uniqueness." Hans and Shulamith Kreidler, *Psychology of the Arts* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1972), 119–20. Cited in John Carey, *What Good are the Arts?* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), 79–80.

23. Concerning this emphasis, "the main problem of modern aesthetics from the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth is still that of reconciling the subjectivization of the beautiful (the fact that it's no longer an 'in itself' but a 'for us') with the demand for 'criteria,' thus with a relation to objectivity or, if preferred, to the world." Ferry, *Homo Aestheticus*, 9–10.

24. Thomas A. Regelski, "'Music Appreciation' as Praxis," *Music Education Research*, 8/2 (July 2006); 281–310. The attempt to distinguish between 'high' and 'low' art is often an "attempt to reconceive the appreciative response to art along the lines of the Protestant work ethic" where discipline, developed skill, and concentrated effort are required as bases for 'proper' appreciative responses to 'high' art, but where 'low' and 'mass' art supposedly demand little effort. Carey, *What Good Are the Arts?*, 46 and passim. The "culture industry" critiqued by Adorno is discussed below.

25. See, e.g.: Michael Talbot, ed. *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000); Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); and Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, Richard Middleton, eds. *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2003). In general, following Kantian-influenced aesthetic theories, the claim is that "works of art belong to a separate category of things, recognized and attested by certain highly gifted individuals who view them in a state of pure contemplation, and their status as works of art is absolutely universal and eternal." Carey, *What Good Are the Arts?*, 14.

ever-expanding musicianship, especially in the postmodern, post-disciplinary world.

Finally, praxial theory bypasses or goes beyond traditional speculative rationalist aesthetic theories of the purpose and value of music: those have their own social history (the existence and relevance of which is too often ignored by aestheticians).²⁶ And their various *aporia* only adds to the *obscurum per obscurius* that attempts to account rationally for the affective appeal of the musical art and its contributions to personal, social, and cultural life. In particular, the autonomy claimed for music as being somehow apart from or ‘above’ life,²⁷ ‘pure,’ ‘for-itself,’ and properly contemplated by observing an ‘aesthetic distance’ is corrected by the more down to earth empirical accounts of music relied on by praxial theorists.²⁸ Regarding such aesthetic detachment and ‘museum’ status, Preben Mortensen, concludes,

if it is claimed that art should be appreciated for its own sake in isolation from the struggles of everyday existence, it becomes such an alternative only by equipping itself with a halo. But art and our conceptions of the arts are not isolated from the broader realities of our everyday lives . . . [O]ur concept of the arts is deeply ingrained in historical processes of a social, political, and cultural nature and . . . it represents people’s attempt to understand aspects of their present and their past.²⁹

26. See, e.g., “The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic,” in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); 254–66. The positing of a ‘pure aesthetic’ based on a “transhistoric or ahistoric essence” . . . “is itself an institution which is the product of historical invention and whose *raison d’être* can be reassessed only through an analysis which is itself properly historical. Such an analysis is the only one capable of accounting simultaneously for the nature of the experience and for the appearance of universality which it procures for those who live it, naively, beginning with the philosophers who subject it to their reflections unaware of its *social conditions of possibility*.” (255–56; italics in original) See Ferry, *Homo Aestheticus* for just such an historical account and critique.

27. What one philosopher of music dubs “automania” the adherents of which are “autonomaniacs”: “The autonomaniac begins by assuming that music is, essentially, pure sound, and then sets about investigating it in according with a method which reinforces that assumption,” with the result being “the pretence that music is from Mars . . .” Aaron Ridley, *The Philosophy of Music: Theme and Variations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 11, 13, and passim.

28. Concerning this aesthetic ideology, see, e.g.: Preben Mortensen, *Art in the Social Order: The Making of the Modern Conception of Art* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 171–83. Concerning the social history of aesthetics, see, e.g.: Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Art of the Modern Age: Philosophy of Art from Kant to Heidegger* (Princeton: Princeton University Press) and Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).

29. Mortensen, *Art in the Social Order*, 183. For similar critiques, see, e.g.: Stanley Aronowitz, *Dead Artists Live Theories and other Cultural Problems* (London: Routledge, 1994); Arnold Berleant, *Re-Thinking Aesthetics: Rogue Essays on Aesthetics and the Arts* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004); Noël Carroll, *Beyond Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Adam Krims, ed. *Music/Ideology: Resisting the Aesthetic* (Amsterdam:

And as far as claims that “the arts make us better,”³⁰ over history aesthetes have committed many atrocities despite the ‘civilizing’ claims made for the arts (e.g., Nazi Germany³¹). Moreover, as the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has argued, an essentially divisive effect of art is seen in its role as a means of social distinction, of social class consciousness and reproduction.³²

Music in History

The postulated role of music history in the praxis of music and in human affairs raises a range of interesting issues. The first goes to the pragmatic question of what music history (and the discipline of musicology) is ‘good for’ in terms of its contribution to the actual praxis of music? The second, and related philosophical question, involves the question of what of all that could be taught of music history is most worth teaching and learning³³ and why? From the praxial perspective such considerations need to be central in deciding what ends and purposes are furthered by the teaching of music history.

The first question often seems to be taken for granted (or is rarely considered) and, following the educational philosophies of *essentialism* and *perennialism* (neither of which are probably consciously held in any strictly

B & G Arts International, 1998); Katya Mandoki, *Everyday Aesthetics: Prosaics, the Play of Culture and Social Identities* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007); Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009); and Stuart Sim, *Beyond Aesthetics: Confrontations with Poststructuralism and Postmodernism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992). For my in-depth critique of Philip Alperson’s “Robust Praxialism and the Anti-Aesthetic Turn” in the *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 171–93, see Thomas A. Regelski, “Praxialism and ‘Aesthetic This, Aesthetic That, Aesthetic Whatever,’” *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 10, no. 2 (2011): 61–99, http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Regelski10_2.pdf.

30. E.g., Carey, *What Good Are the Arts?*, 96–134. Carey concludes that “claims that the arts make people better or more civilized . . . are problematic” (116) and that “the results [of such claims] do not support the conventional belief that exposure to the arts makes people better” (134).

31. For examples, see Carey, *What Good Are the Arts?*, 130, 140–44, 149.

32. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984). For a précis and appraisal of Bourdieu’s findings, see, Carey, *What Good Are the Arts?*, 117–21. Claims about the existence of ‘high’ and ‘low’ and ‘mass’ arts also reflect this social and cultural divisiveness. See, e.g., Lawrence Levine, *High-brow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Carey, *What Good Are the Arts?*, 32–64, 135–70; and Max Paddison, *Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture: Essays on Critical Theory and Music* (London: Kahn & Averill, 2004).

33. This is a basic question of curriculum theory since, in any field, there is far more known than is practicable to teach. Yet the philosophical question of worth (value) often devolve to claims of *essentialism* and *perennialism* (examined immediately below) rather than on pragmatic grounds of what the useful benefits of music history are to musicians and listeners.

philosophical sense³⁴), the answer seems to be that music history is assumed to be (somehow) “essential” (i.e., ‘basic’) to being a “musician.” A corollary seems to be the conviction that background information and cognitive competence are needed to *properly* understand and appreciate music³⁵—whether or not being a “musician” is at stake (as is not the case for most listeners). Supporting philosophies of educational essentialism are the basic positions of idealism and realism, and often neo-scholasticism.

Idealism, following Plato, stresses ideas, thoughts, and mind as ‘basic’ and ‘real’. For idealism, then, ‘truth’ and ‘value’ are both found in the realm of ideas, not in empirical appearances. In education, the traditional idealist curriculum emphasizes the liberal arts and humanities, and learning amounts to promoting the understanding and recalling of ideas as the ‘facts’ most worth teaching and learning. Idealism is historically related to the lecture method³⁶ and involves a transmission approach to teaching that passes on ‘received’ ideas from the past.

In contrast, the emphasis of *realism* is on the senses (on *aisthesis* as the empirical source of knowledge, a position stemming from Aristotle—and a difference from his teacher Plato—and that is the basis of modern scientific disciplines) where perceived ‘form’ and ‘matter’ (appearances) *are* at stake, not ideas. ‘Truth’ is a matter of observation and the role of the teacher is to effectively pass-on to students (again, a transmission approach) accurate findings about ‘reality’. The ‘orderliness’ and law-like nature of the universe is emphasized and the ‘conservation’ of ‘our cultural heritage’ (including the facts and frameworks established by the various disciplines) is a focal point.³⁷

Educational claims made on behalf of essentialism, thus, are often based on competing, even contradictory premises since the ‘basics’ drawn from

34. Another question, too complex to address here, involves mindfulness about what it means to be “educated” and, where relevant, with mindfulness concerning the role of the liberal arts in such an education. Curricular decisions often reflect intuited perspectives on these topics, yet are not always warranted to the degree needed to guide an effective liberal arts education. Readers interesting in pursuing these educational ‘isms’ in any depth can consult, e.g., Theodore Bramel, *Patterns of Education Philosophy: Divergence and Convergence in Cultural Perspective* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971) on which the following account is based in part.

35. For critique of this taken for granted belief, see Regelski, “‘Music Appreciation’ as Praxis.”

36. All the way back to the scholars of medieval time “professing” their “theses” in an age before printed books. Students who became “masters” of such ideas lectured further on them to “bachelors,” the single men who were the focus of such learning. Thus has neo-scholasticism survived in the contemporary university. See n. 39.

37. In the philosophy of art/music, essentialism takes the form of claims for a *trans-historical*, *ahistorical*, or *aesthetic essence* that is timeless, faceless, placeless, and that is putatively shared by all the arts—thus supposedly enabling the distinguishing of art from non-art, and ‘good music’ from other music.

idealism and realism are in conflict. However, essentialists also see *discipline* as central and, thus, students' interests and needs are to be sacrificed to intellectual rigor. The resulting focus is on the 'sage on stage', the teacher/professor and the 'approved knowledge' that is sanctioned by authorities to be 'transmitted' to and 'received' by learners. Discipline is thus a matter of both the students' deportment in class and of meeting scholarly standards, and it involves evaluating the acquisition of whatever is deemed 'basic' (received ideas or observed facts, depending on the predication of idealism or realism, or some tainted mixture of the two)—with the latter prevailing in university settings where grades are all-important.

For perennialists, permanence is valued over change and thus focus is on 'received' ideas and facts whose validity, value, and usefulness are believed to have survived the 'test of time'.³⁸ A liberal education in the classical tradition is the ideal, and an emphasis is shared with neo-scholasticism³⁹ (one of the sources of perennialism) on the importance of reason. Given the universal and absolute claims made for reason, a proper education is said to be the same for everyone. Special focus is on the subject matter as an end-in-itself (*theoria*) rather than on its usefulness to the student (society or culture). This leads, of course, to the frequent complaint by students who distinguish between what they experience in schooling as "merely academic"⁴⁰ and what they judge to be useful or interesting to them.⁴¹ This problem can also be the

38. One difficulty of this position is that ideas are most typically wed to the situated conditions and languages of their time and place that do not easily 'translate' to modern issues and sensibilities. "Reception histories" of music are aware of this, but can be denigrated by those (essentialist-leaning) historians who find absolutes of one kind or another in scores and other documents (e.g., Charles Rosen, "Beethoven's Triumph," *The New York Review of Books*, Sept. 21, 1995, 52–56—in part a review [and dismissal] of James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* [Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995]). The issue of "authentic performance" (and the related quest for historically accurate scores and performance practices) is also at stake here. But so is the question of whether modern listeners can understand Bach with the sensibilities said to be 'authentic' of his time, after exposure to Beethoven, Brahms, Bruckner, Brubeck, and the Beatles?

39. Rooted in Thomas Aquinas, and thus sometimes known as neo-Thomism, neo-scholasticism was prevalent from between 1050 to 1350 in Medieval Europe. Its thrust is a focus on reason (the model being the *Summa Theologica*). Thus the mind can reach 'truth' through reason alone: analytic statements (that contain their predicate in their subject) take priority over synthetic statements (that rely on empirical experience), and deductive logic (of the Aristotelian variety) is heavily emphasized. Much of the traditional terminology, habits and trappings of schools, universities, and scholarship stem from this tradition and permeate schooling at all levels today. See n. 36.

40. This expression stems from the 'pure' ideas taught in Plato's "Academy" (named after the war hero Academus), the model for the subsequent history of the dominance of idealism in schooling at all levels.

41. Music majors are often heard bemoaning what they see as the undue time their "academics" take away from practicing and rehearsing.

case for music majors' studies in music theory and history when they do not clearly see in what they are taught (and how) the application of these disciplines in their personal and future professional lives.⁴² Special attention is given to 'great works' of the past on the belief that they reflect timeless value to contemporary life.

The Praxial Alternative

Essentialist rationales, however much they stress 'the basics' do so on largely *ideological* grounds; they are rarely specific about what such learning (whether 'received' ideas or facts) is *basic to*; what useful ends are served. Given its stance on music as a key social praxis, a praxial philosophy of education points to a range of other approaches—some of which Maiello suggests. To begin with, in the "practice turn," *praxial knowledge* is found not in textbooks or in the minds (lectures) of teachers and professors, but in the actual praxis of competent practitioners; that is, in the community of praxis where the 'doings' at stake are the source of the coherence and identity of a community.⁴³ In this regard, conditions that approach an apprenticeship model (as in studio instruction) or a "musicianship laboratory" (that systematically explores various aspects of 'musicianship' or 'listenership', etc.) are stressed. As Maiello posits, music history and musicology are important communities of musical praxis. Such praxis is best learned by engaging in the range of the actual 'doings' that characterize these fields and of identifying, if not with the professional community then with the value of its praxis.

However, what remains unanswered, I worry, are clear directions and warrants in mind as to what the disciplines of history and musicology are 'good for'—beyond establishing careers or accumulating knowledge as though for its own sake.⁴⁴ If instruction is to be 'good for' students, for praxial

42. When teaching itself directly models such applications, the conditions of "action learning" as summarized by Maiello ("Toward an Extension of Regelski's Praxial Philosophy of Music Education into Music History Pedagogy," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 4, no. 1 [2013]: 100–4, <http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/85/127>) obtain.

43. Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Wenger's concept of "communities of practice" is extremely valuable as regards understanding the learning involved, the meanings and values thus generated, and the identification of individuals with their communities of practice. See, also, Schatzki, *The Site of the Social*, for an in-depth analysis of two such communities. Inga Rikandi, in *Negotiating Music and Pedagogical Agency in a Learning Community*, *Studia musica* 49 (Helsinki: Sibelius Academy, 2012) applies Wenger's perspective to teaching *vapaa säestys*, a Finnish term for "free accompaniment" group piano classes (not to be equated with what passes for 'class piano' in the US) that involves "playing with elements from different musical styles, improvisation, and making one's own arrangements . . ." (27).

44. That is, beyond Aristotle's valuing of *theoria* as knowledge as generated and contemplated for its own sake, whether of the idealist or realist type.

theorists it must be *pragmatic*⁴⁵—in the philosophical sense of ‘making a difference’ for future praxis, leading to appropriate ‘habits’ of praxis and problem solving.⁴⁶ As mentioned earlier, this is not a simple question of preferring one approach to another but is essentially an ethical issue; one related to the *social test* of what is ‘good for’ individuals and society—and, in our case, the vitality and relevance of the musics we teach.

For Aristotle, praxis entails arriving at the ‘right results’ after consideration of the ‘right reasons’. Thus, for him, a thorough philosophical deliberation precedes the choice of means; and ‘right ends’ as philosophically (and ethically) warranted become the focus.⁴⁷ Thus are ‘means’ and ‘ends’ appropriately fused and the undertaking a matter of praxis (and of ethical responsibility), not merely of *techne* understood, in music history and musicology for example, as competent delivery of ‘content’. Among the outcomes of praxis are not only ‘right results’ for those served, but the action itself is virtuous and ‘good teaching’ becomes its own virtue and reward.⁴⁸

45. Pragmatism as a school of philosophy is commonly misunderstood and is equated with mere ‘expedience’ and simplistic ‘practicality’. Its many profound contrasts with essentialism, idealism, realism, perennialism, and neo-scholasticism deserve being fully noted, however. See, e.g., Ernst E. Bales, *Pragmatism in Education* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) and Martin S. Dworkin, ed., *Dewey on Education: Selections* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967). In sum, at stake is the major difference between education as “transmission” versus as “cultural transformation” and “reconstructionism.” On the latter, see Brameld, *Patterns of Educational Philosophy*, 346–563.

46. Habits are central to pragmatism—though not in the sense of ‘mindless’ habits. Rather, the habits cultivated through direct experience with—in our case—*past* problems or needs of musical praxis are always confronted by the unique conditions and criteria of *new* circumstances that require going beyond past solutions to ever-new creative and successful resolutions. See http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/BowmanEditorial4_1.pdf, a series of reviews by music education philosophers of Erkki Kilpinen, *The Enormous Fly-wheel of Society: Pragmatism’s Habitual Conception of Action and Social Theory*, Research Report No. 235 (Department of Sociology, University of Helsinki, Finland, 2000).

47. Considerable guidance of this kind is available in: Wayne D. Bowman and Ana Lucia Frega, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Music Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Included, i.a., are major sections about “The nature and values of music,” “The aims of education,” and “Philosophical inquiry directed to curricular and instructional concerns.”

48. Thomas A. Regelski, “The Good Life of Teaching or the Life of Good Teaching,” *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 11, no. 2 (2012): 42–78, http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Regelski11_2.pdf; Thomas A. Regelski, “Musicianism and the Ethics of School Music,” *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 11, no.1 (2012): 7–42, http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Regelski11_1.pdf; and Thomas A. Regelski, “Ethical Dimensions of School-Based Music Education,” in Bowman & Frega, *Oxford Handbook of Music Education*, 284–304.

The Audience and Ideas

Over time, the audiences for music history have varied. However, it is unclear, at least to me, what the trends in the field are in the present age and, thus, which audiences are thought to be the focus of historians' efforts. Clearly, the audience for scholarship and teaching is an important consideration—at least for those who don't regard such matters as valued 'for their own sake', as Aristotelian *theoria*. With the rise of historical musicology, among other results was to “establish the notion of a ‘classical,’ as opposed to a ‘popular,’ music, around which the professional middle class rallied” thus “helping to legitimize its aspirations to social equality” in the “aristocracy of culture and the intellect.”⁴⁹

This emphasis on 'classy' music “reinforced the value of plurality, suggesting that many different styles of music, reflecting diverse values from several periods might reasonably coexist in concert life, subsumed under the label ‘classical music’.”⁵⁰ A related benefit was tied to the theme of *progress* the nineteenth century inherited from the Enlightenment—both as regarding claims for musical progress (i.e., that music's evolution somehow manifests progress) and the progress of human civilization. The latter led, in particular, to the “sacralization” of culture⁵¹ and music's important role in it. “In short, the study of cultural history, including music history, came to bear almost religious connotations. Cultural historians not only helped the professional middle class to gain new status but also became the priests of a discipline that fostered the virtues of plurality and progress.”⁵² Under the aegis of the burgeoning culture industry of aesthetic writings, musical journals, criticism, and music history, then, Haydn's and Mozart's symphonies were “portrayed as progressing logically toward a Beethovenian summit,” and the influence of musicologists of the time directly influenced prominent orchestral composers who took an active part in historical and theoretical musicology.⁵³

49. Jon W. Finson, “Musicology and the Rise of the Independent Orchestra,” in Joan Peyser, ed., *The Orchestra* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2006), 437.

50. *Ibid.*, 438. Note the musical essentialism involved in this categorization: that ‘classical’ (or what some call ‘serious’) music has a distinct ‘essence’ that transcends various types, styles, eras, etc., and that sets it off from ‘popular’ and other vernacular musics.

51. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 85–168; Shiner, *The Invention of Art*, 187–212; Carey, *What Are the Arts Good For?*, 135–70.

52. Finson, “Musicology and the Independent Orchestra,” 438. See, also, Carey, *What Are the Arts Good For?*, 12, 57, 97, 106, 123.

53. *Ibid.*, 442, 443. Robin Wallace, in *Beethoven's Critics: Aesthetic Dilemmas and Resolutions During the Composer's Lifetime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) argues that the paragon of ‘pure’ instrumental music associated with Beethoven was heavily weighted by and toward the *aesthetic* theorizing of German idealist philosophers and poets, more than by the *musical* thinking of musicians at the time. Jane F. Fulcher, “Music in

Although the musicological study of such music has enjoyed a widespread presence in universities,

scholars have increasingly abandoned their activities as critics in favor of more systematic research and writing, and with minor exceptions their direct influence on public taste has waned. Paradoxically, musicologists have gained a greater hold on the orchestra repertoire, perhaps because their status as experts has been more highly respected by performers. As a result of musicological academicism, the function of the orchestra as a museum has intensified.⁵⁴

This observation raises two issues. First, the possibility of influence on the public goes to whether this should be a purpose of musicological scholarship (irrespective of the problematic issue of ‘taste’) and, thus, of the teaching of music history. If so, then the range of what is productively included in such studies becomes of concern: is it a continuing influence on the traditional canon, or its expansion to contemporary music that often strains to distance itself from the past, or is it self-consciously elusive, exclusive and elitist?⁵⁵ The suggestion sometimes entertained about teaching music history ‘backwards’ at least would give ample emphasis to contemporary musics and, in doing so familiarize audiences with exemplars of this literature. Art history typically gives plenty of emphasis to recent art. If this is not the case with music history and, at least, with theoretical musicology, then the issue deserves concerted attention as to why.

The second issue concerns the ‘museum’ status of music versus its standing as a living art. In addition to the ongoing question of emphasizing the role of ‘great works’ of the traditional canon in the cavalcade of music history is the parallel question of other musics and their importance, their own canons.

Relation to the Other Arts: The Critical Debate,” in Peyser, ed., *The Orchestra*, 387–407, surveys the ‘debate’ between supporters of absolute music and program music.

54. Finson, “Musicology and the Independent Orchestra,” 445; in Peyser, ed., *The Orchestra*, see J. Peter Burkholder, “The Twentieth Century and the Orchestra as Museum,” 411–32; and, of course, Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*. As Maiello notes, Joseph Kerman, *Musicology* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1985) addresses the problem of musicology as criticism.

55. E.g., Milton Babbitt, “Who Cares if You Listen?,” *High Fidelity*, Feb. 1958, <http://www.palestrant.com/babbitt.html> (accessed May 2013). Of the papers of Babbitt and his students, Kerman observes: “No branch of music theory since the Middle Ages has given so strong an impression of curling away from the experience of music into the far reaches of the theorist’s intellects” (Kerman, *Musicology*, 99). The impression is one of ‘music for composers only’ and of the ‘residency’ for new music mainly in university schools of music, not for the typical audiences of the public concert. See, too, the account below of Leonard Meyer’s theory of “transcendentalism” in contemporary music.

The subject of canonisation rose in the musicological agenda in the 1980s, together with a strong need to redefine the limits of the discipline. One of the most influential addresses in the discussion was delivered in the early 1990s, when a group of musicologists in the United States published an anthology entitled *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons* (Bergeron and Bohlman 1992). In that book's epilogue, Philip V. Bohlman anticipated a new era for research in the field: the perspective of musicology was to shift from the mode of studying *Die Musik* to many musics, and the critical gaze of the discipline was to focus on a variety of musical canons, including their mutual competition and interplay.⁵⁶

These questions concerning the fate of music as a living art remain relevant, and answers are challenging and elusive. Praxial theory, however, understands “music” in its plurality,⁵⁷ and a major concern is to not just stress music's important role as a social praxis but to contribute to the vitality of that praxis through education. In this, music history would not be studied ‘for its own sake’ as *theoria*, but for what it can contribute to the varieties of musical praxis in which students engage, even later as adults.

Such an undertaking faces several problems. To begin with, the audience for music history courses can be music majors of various kinds (as part of their required programs), whose practices and thus need for musical grounding may be quite different according to their professional focus (e.g., music education, composition, sound recording, music therapy, performance, etc.);⁵⁸ or non-music majors who take such courses as part of their general/liberal education program requirements, or as electives. The needs of each are often different, yet profit from being addressed in some way or degree by curriculum. Considered as praxis, not as a discipline isolated in its own Ivory Tower or silo, music history would seek to directly inform the various ways in which students do or can engage with music in their present and future lives.

56. Vesa Kurkela and Lauri Väkevä, eds. *De-Canonizing Music History* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), vii. This volume represents a selection of just such musicological practice. For a review see Travis D. Stimeling in this journal 2, no. 2 (2012): 193–97, <http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/55/90>.

57. “Music” is to “musics” as “food” or “law” are to “foods” and “laws.” That principle often seems overlooked in the pursuit and teaching of “music” history where, typically, one musical tradition is put on a pedestal to the exclusion of others.

58. Another common example of essentialism in university music schools and departments is the notion that being “a musician” is the premiere enabling requirement for any music profession—although what learning that label entails, beyond required courses in studio, ensembles, history and theory (and perhaps most important, a graduation recital), is far from clear or consistent between institutions. The musical skills needed by a music therapist, for example are quite unlike those of a performer, or a music teacher.

For the various music majors, their interests and needs are likely to be constructed around their present musical involvements while still students. Study that is directly related and applicable to their current musical efforts, and that models the kinds of knowledge acquisition that can serve them in their future musical careers is therefore most suitable. Survey courses can certainly provide something of an ‘overview’ but such an Ivory Tower perspective risks becoming information-for-its-own-sake that barely lasts beyond the final exam because it often lacks ongoing application to actual musical praxis.⁵⁹ To overcome this outcome, lectures can deal with the ‘big picture’ while individual readings, assignments, and projects can offer a range of options for students to pursue according to their needs and interests. For teachers whose classes feature PowerPoint presentations, or use ‘smart classrooms’, an alternative can be to make prepared presentations available outside of scheduled class times (e.g., via the library or on an intranet), thus reserving class time for discussions, criticism, projects and even historically informed performances.⁶⁰ For example, organology⁶¹ relevant to their own studies can

59. As a teacher of choral conducting, I was struck by the tendency of students to conduct/interpret madrigals as though they were sacred motets. They had little or no ‘sense’ of the historicity of the praxis and the various neo-Platonic and courtly overtones in madrigal texts concerning love, food and drink, and even baser topics. I asked the music history teacher about this, and he pronounced: “Well, I taught it to them; if they didn’t learn it, it’s their fault.” I’m sure he did teach ‘about’ madrigals to students, but probably with a focus strictly on their musical features—i.e., concerned with their musical place in “the cult of chronology” (Ferry, *Homo Aestheticus*, 23)—not on their social role and spirit. And, as it turns out, madrigal literature is thus often misrepresented in concert performance as pretentiously ‘serious’—a result that perhaps can be attributed to the earlier mentioned “sacralization” of music and its inclusion in the secular music hall ‘museum’.

60. Not all of these options need involve the professor’s presence; e.g., very large classes can meet periodically as smaller ‘seminar’ groups focused on topics/projects of common interest the results of which are submitted in some way for feedback and evaluation. In the early 70s I taught a music appreciation course the formal ‘content’ of which was purveyed 100% using “programmed learning” modules. Classes, then, consisted entirely of live student performances of musics (styles, characteristic forms, etc.) that exemplified and applied what had been studied beforehand. A predictable problem was that the student performers rarely could *say* anything intelligent or intelligible about the music they performed. Once, having asked a pianist to demonstrate the second theme of a sonata the student had no idea what I was asking for (she had no problem with the first theme, being at the beginning). Questions about matters of style and performance practice were likewise often met with embarrassed silence or off-the-cuff attempts at answers. I’m sure such matters were ‘covered’ in history classes, yet students are usually left to their own designs as to whether or not, or how, to relate them to praxis. This gap can be closed by having students consider their present literature (in studio and ensembles) as part of their history studies.

61. See, e.g., Peyser, ed., *The Orchestra*, 41–228, for coverage of the technical development of the various families of instruments and of the orchestra as an instrument. Such reading assignments and individual research (whether using primary or secondary sources) can

be among students' choices of focus. Critical consideration of the editions of scores can also be undertaken and, at least, comparisons made between different editions that take historical variables and criteria into consideration. Transcriptions can be compared to their original sources and critically 'debated' as to their musical 'authenticity'. And, of course, changing performance practices, for given instruments, families, and across eras, can expand on whatever coverage is offered in studios and ensembles.

Where classes are very large, or include too a wide variety of student interests to reasonably accommodate, a focus on listening as its own musical praxis can provide a common denominator. And an idea worth considering is that even music majors and some professional musicians themselves are often 'amateur' listeners to a great deal of the variety of music in the concert and recital fare.⁶² One of the reasons that students are required to attend recitals is the expectation of exposure to a wider range of literature than they are engaged in performing.⁶³

As historians know very well, the concept of an amateur was simply not an issue when music was confined to the court and church. And even with the rise of the public concert in the nineteenth century, amateuring⁶⁴ was largely a private matter, owing to the professionalization of performance that brought about the cult of the virtuoso. Thus, "more and more the amateur player became, in the late nineteenth century, the amateur listener"; and the "middle class had become firmly established as the new patron and audience for serious music; the concert hall had supplanted the home as the focus of musical life."⁶⁵ In consequence, "the new amateur is the direct heir of the nineteenth-

be of particular interest and relevance according to a student musician's applied instrument(s) or to instruments played or enjoyed by non-music majors.

62. Thus, in one institution, a large and impassioned debate arose concerning the issue of percussionists who entered the important 'concerto competition' and how non-percussion faculty could be expected to evaluate such performances. It takes a deep-seated essentialism surrounding the status of "musician" to be comfortable with, say, wind players' adjudications of, say, art song performances (and vice versa).

63. 'Exposure theories' of education, however, have their problems. In this instance, the need to require attendance for those no more interested in exposure to literature that doesn't interest them any more than they are in being exposed to a disease.

64. For a positive account and support of this praxis (a 'doing', as inferred by the gerund neologism), see Wayne C. Booth, *For the Love of It: Amateuring and Its Rivals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). Booth was a noted literary critic at the University of Chicago until his retirement. The book is about the shared 'passion' for amateur performing of chamber music that he and his wife fully explored in their retirement. For an application of the concept of amateuring to music teaching, see Thomas A. Regelski, "Amateuring in Music and its Rivals," *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 6, no. 3 (2007): 22-50, http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Regelski6_3.pdf.

65. Edward Rothstein, "The New Amateur Player and Listener," in Peyser, ed., *The Orchestra*, 537.

century amateur players and is listening for exactly the same thing: identification with the music;" and identifies with, and thus prefers, "the great works of the last century, which have come to define for him what music should be."⁶⁶ Thus, as mentioned earlier, the "intrinsically different"⁶⁷ listening required by *new* musics remains undeveloped and that music is more rarely heard.⁶⁸

According to Leonard B. Meyer's account of "Romanticism—The Ideology of Elite Egalitarians," "romanticism, not religion, was the opiate of the masses."⁶⁹ The resulting decline in audiences' musical sophistication that he traces⁷⁰ led, first of all, to direct influences on composition that took listeners' musically untrained status in account;⁷¹ and, secondly, to trends in listening "that have continued for some two hundred years."⁷² In itself, Meyer's analysis would be interesting for students to weigh, regardless of their backgrounds; where then can seek to confirm or deny his arguments for "The Persistence of Romanticism"⁷³ and its ideology in their own or other contemporary listening practices.

Also of potential interest to the historian is the idea Meyer calls "transcendentalism" in contemporary concert music that "repudiates all contrived order: intraopus norms, as well as regularities of idiom and dialect. The goal of this repudiation is the innocent perception of the peculiarity of individual sonic stimuli. Plainly prior experience—history, learning, and even memory—is irrelevant."⁷⁴ This "acontextualism" of music⁷⁵ takes the form of an

emphatic denial of the relevance of origins and context. In the ancien régime, artificialities of birth and lineage established one's position in society and determined benefits and rights available to each individual. The new ideology not only repudiated such hereditary privileges, but insisted on the irrelevance of *all* origins, lineages, and contextual connections

66. Edward Rothstein, "The New Amateur Player and Listener," 539–40.

67. *Ibid.*, 539. See, below, the discussion of Leonard Meyer's account of "transcendentalism" in contemporary music.

68. This is a generalization that does not apply everywhere. For instance, the Helsinki Radio Symphony Orchestra regularly programs and even commissions works by new composers.

69. In *Style and Music: Theory, History, and Ideology* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 161–217; 169, n. 26.

70. *Ibid.*, 208–17.

71. E.g., *Ibid.*, 204–8; e.g., the "monumental climaxes" made possible by the increased size of the orchestra; 206.

72. *Ibid.*, 350.

73. *Ibid.*, 337–52.

74. *Ibid.*, 343.

75. *Ibid.*, 170–83, and passim. It is, in effect, an extension of the acontextualism of absolute music in the nineteenth-century.

whatsoever. Inheritance was to be replaced by inherence—and inherence that was at once natural and necessary.⁷⁶

In this context, “historians believed that writing history could and should be an objective, positivistic act of discovery that, like scientific investigation, apprehended and recounted the facts without prior prejudice or preconception,” and, thus, “the ideals of historical scholarship were consonant with the ideas of acontextualism.”⁷⁷ Indeed, the argument can be made that they tended to advance or reinforce the speculations of aesthetic theorists (of the nineteenth century and until today) of music’s ‘in-itself’ autonomy.

In any event, in Meyer’s account—and its relevance for present considerations—a notable result was the “egalitarian side of Romanticism”⁷⁸ where (paradoxically) even appreciating the works of geniuses depended not on context, not on learning from history or the studied capabilities of “professional listeners”⁷⁹ “but on natural musical sensitivity.”⁸⁰ Thus in history arose the “new amateur listener” who populates concert venues to this day. This listener

can even be quite serious and educated: he becomes a record collector, opera fan, or subscriber to a major municipal music organization. He listens to the twenty-four-hour classical radio station, surveys the musical feature stories in the newspapers, tunes in to “Live from Lincoln Center,” and assiduously tapes broadcasts from the Met. He becomes a highly educated listener, able to discern performances and styles, argue with friends over virtues and failings of this rendition or that of one of the warhorses. He becomes the model listener for ‘serious’ music making. His passion is voracious; music becomes paramount. This has much to do with the powers of music itself, but this passion is also directed toward and accumulation of experience of music and toward the status conferred by such accumulation.⁸¹

Thus, for such listeners, the amateurism that had been displaced by the professionalization of performing was relegated to the audience status of being

76. Meyer, *Style and Music*, 167; italics in original.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., 168.

79. Rothstein, “The New Amateur Player and Listener,” 539. This status involved “the listener who had a trained ear and had taken music on as a discipline and who, moreover, chose to discard the bourgeois aesthetic that had shaped the [Romantic] tradition” (Ibid.).

80. Meyer, *Style and Music*, 171.

81. Rothstein, “The new amateur player and listener,” 543. The emphasis on “he” in this quotation is so frequent that I don’t bother with [*sic*] at each use—here or in other quotations in this paper. I wonder about the practice in music history/musicological scholarship in general.

‘seen not heard’⁸²—and of feeling warranted in shouting “Bravo!” at the end of a performance or confidence in offering an opinion, critique, or other ideas about a composition or its performance.

An important side-effect of this equalitarian trend was the “embrace of a new form of culture granted the name *popular*.”⁸³ The ensuing ‘pop culture’ was specifically intended to

provide for the widest number the greatest sense of pleasure in belonging. It requires no training for understanding or participation; all are eligible. Hence, all are automatically amateurs, lovers of sensation, whose ambitions become simple because so easily sated. The amateur becomes the consumer.⁸⁴

Theodor Adorno’s writings on aesthetics are well-known to music historians, but of particular relevance here is the critique leveled by Frankfurt Theorists Adorno and Max Horkheimer at the rise of the “culture industry” and the ‘consumer culture’ that, they believed, *commodifies the arts and music* in attempting to deceive and manipulate the masses into a passivity and acquiescence that results in ignoring social inequities.⁸⁵ In the critique of this ‘false consciousness’ is included much of the standard repertoire beloved by audiences then and today!⁸⁶ The “art worship” that results from the earlier mentioned sacralization of the arts “is essentially consumerist. It situates art

82. Rothstein, “The New Amateur Player and Listener,” 537. “The amateur during the nineteenth century derived pleasure not only from playing music but also from being seen playing it. By the dawn of this century, the pleasure in playing was replaced by the pleasure in listening and in being seen listening.” This, of course, is part of the social dimension of concert listening, and of the affective couplings of a live audience. “[F]or individuals sharing a common musical culture, there is a strong and systematic similarity between the tonal flow of music and its neurophysiological substrates that allows a tight coupling between the brains of those individuals. While participating in the music those individuals constitute a community of sympathy.” William Benzon, *Beethoven’s Anvil: Music in Mind and Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 44, summarizing a thesis of Nils Wallin, *Biomusicology* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1991).

83. *Ibid.*, 539; italics in original.

84. *Ibid.*, 539. But, cf., n. 86.

85. Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

86. As well as all products of ‘mass’ and ‘popular culture.’ For a stout defense of the latter, see: Noël Carroll, *A Philosophy of Mass Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Dominic Strinati, *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995); Theodore Gracyk, *Listening to Popular Music* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2007). For the inclusion of such matters in music history, see Kurkela and Väkevä, *De-Canonizing Music History*. On ‘false consciousness’ see, e.g., in Theodor Adorno, *Prisms* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967), “Bach Defended Against His Devotees,” 133–48, and Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” 120–67.

in picture galleries, concert halls or theatres, where an audience attends passively to receive it.”⁸⁷

As regards the teaching and learning of music history, then, a considered approach is warranted that takes into full account such ideas from history in relation to listening praxis. The hope is that this brief social history of listening might provide re-appraisal of the conviction that ‘background knowledge’ is the prerequisite to properly ‘informed’ or ‘appreciative’ listening. Despite the considerable ‘learning from experience’ of the ‘amateur listener’, it seems apparent that most have not as a rule benefited from direct instruction from music history.⁸⁸ And recognition of the ideological role of ‘music appreciation’ as part of the “culture industry” and the stasis of the traditional canon can be taken more fully into consideration.⁸⁹

Another reason for the above excursion through various territories of music history and philosophy of music and education is to stress the importance of ideas and historical theories that are provocative, critical, anomalous, stimulating, and creative—rather than the essentialist’s primary concern with ‘received’ ideas and facts, Ivory Tower chronologies, and ‘standard’ analyses of musical ‘texts’ according to characteristic forms, styles, and the like. As can be noticed from the nature of the many citations already given, my praxial approach to music teaching, of any kind at any level, is to stress music as a vital human social praxis.⁹⁰ This entails more than just providing a historical context for the music studied; it requires bypassing the

87. Carey, *What Good Are the Arts?*, 152. For a critique of the “religion of art,” see Chapter 5, 135–68.

88. Thus the continuing use of program notes and CD liners. An ongoing *listening log* premised on, not so much, program note praxis but on recounting how a student heard and responded to music (recorded or live; e.g., especially student and faculty recitals), and that includes historical references and criteria, is worth considering as an ongoing undertaking that applies class studies to actual listening praxis. Analytic critiques of program notes and CD liners can also be produced.

89. See, e.g., Michael Talbot, ed. *The Business of Music* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002) for a range of topics of interest and relevance to understanding the commodification of music.

90. Readings, projects, and other assignments might well be drawn from such research in the history of ideas, intellectual history, and social history of music. See, in addition to those already cited: e.g., Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art, Vols. 2-3* (New York: Vintage Books, 1951); Tim Blanning, *The Rise of Composers, Musicians and Their Art* (Cambridge: Harvard/Belknap, 2008); Mortimer Kadish, *Reason and Controversy in the Arts* (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve, 1968); Philip Ball, *The Music Instinct: How Music Works and Why We Can’t Do Without It* (London: The Bodley Head, 2010); and the like. In particular, much of interest along such lines is included in: Jim Samson, ed. *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). I take this collection to be evidence of healthy and helpful interest among music historians in such socio-cultural matters—although the fact that the volume is already remaindered may point away from that possibility.

aesthetic ideology of autonomous and acontextual music in favor of an account that reveals and stresses just how important music, of all kinds, is and will continue to be for the praxis of social and cultural life. As Meyer writes, in part in accounting for the leanings of his own theoretical ideas:

There is no such thing as understanding a work of art in its own terms. Indeed, the very notion of *work of art* is cultural. The choices made by some compositional community can be understood and explained only if relationships can be discerned among the goals set by culture, the nature of the human cognitive processes, and the alternatives available given some set of stylistic constraints. . . . [H]istories are interpretations, and as with all interpretations, differences are possible. Histories should be accurate, but they cannot be true in the sense that general propositions may be so. Rather, what is constructed is a network of hypotheses and observations whose several strands, woven together and reinforcing one another, form a coherent and convincing fabric of explanation.⁹¹

This criterion might well be the goal of both the praxis of teaching of music history and its praxis by students.

Coda

What remains to be said involves ideas drawn from educational theory and philosophy. First, is the distinction of “curriculum as product”⁹² that ‘reproduces’ in students certain rules, skills, and ‘received’ facts and truths. This concept relies on a positivist ethos:

In this view, knowledge is objective, ‘bounded’ and ‘out there’. Classroom knowledge is often treated as an external body of information, the production of which appears to be independent of human beings. From this perspective, human knowledge is viewed as being independent of time and place; it becomes universalized ahistorical knowledge. Moreover it is expressed in language which is basically technical and allegedly value free Knowledge, then, becomes not only countable and measurable, it also becomes impersonal. Teaching in this pedagogical paradigm is usually discipline-based and treats subject matter in a compartmentalized and atomized fashion.⁹³

91. Meyer, *Style and Music*, 351; italics in original.

92. Shirley Grundy, *Curriculum: Product or Praxis* (London: Falmer Press, 1987), 21–39.

93. Henry Giroux, *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling* (Barcombe: Falmer Press, 1981), quoted in Grundy, *Curriculum*, 34.

All aspects of pedagogy and assessment (viz., grading) flow directly from these premises.

In contrast, “curriculum as practice”⁹⁴ involves a practical, pragmatic interest that generates hypotheses that are tested in action by praxis. “It involves critical testing rather than acceptance”⁹⁵ by both the teacher and the students. In practice, the ‘content’ chosen to be taught is a series of *hypotheses* predicated on some ideal of practicality, the value of which is seen (or not) in actual usefulness for musical praxis as a test of their validity. Similarly, what is learned functions for students as hypotheses, the effectiveness of which they regularly test through use. Meaningfulness is thus seen by students in the relevance of such learning for praxis, and praxis is the main vehicle of instruction. Thus inert and isolated facts and the like have little or no action potential (and that are only easily tested on written tests) are usually quickly forgotten because they are not used in praxis.

“Curriculum as praxis,”⁹⁶ however, is “self-consciously informed by an emancipatory interest.”⁹⁷ Teaching as *techné*—as efficiently delivering ready-made ‘content’ to students as though a ‘product’ on an educational factory line—typically fails to be effective due to its lack of consideration of students’ meaning-making. “An emancipatory interest, however, engages the student not simply as an active rather than a passive ‘receiver’ of knowledge, but rather as an active creator of knowledge along with the teacher.”⁹⁸ Such an education involves being ‘liberated’ from the *transmission* of information and, instead, leads to the *transformation* of the learner (and, ultimately, of society and culture). Teachers, then, are in dialogue with students who, in practice, are teaching themselves as well as teaching the teacher via their responses. The result is “a picture of the students and teacher engaged together as active participants in the construction of knowledge.”⁹⁹ In departments and schools of music and conservatories, this emancipatory interest also involves opportunities for getting students to think critically and for themselves about various major paradigms and “that’s the way things go” status quo, *authoritarian* demands—a typical but not often noted characteristic of such institutions.¹⁰⁰

94. Grundy, *Curriculum*, 59–78.

95. *Ibid.*, 71.

96. *Ibid.*, 99–119.

97. *Ibid.*, 100.

98. *Ibid.*, 101.

99. *Ibid.*

100. See, Henry Kingsbury, *Music, Talent, and Performance: A Conservatory Cultural System* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988). Kingsbury is a trained pianist whose neurological condition ended his career and led him to study ethnomusicology. This book is his PhD thesis, an ‘inside’ study of a ‘tribe’ called the New England Conservatory of Music (although that institution isn’t actually identified in the book) and reveals a considerable range of important insights, not the least of which is the tendency of different musical fields of

Praxial teaching, in contrast, is *authoritative* in helping students reach their goals and meet their needs. It seeks to ‘draw’ or ‘pull’ them into the subject, not to ‘push’ or ‘force’ it on them.

Another way of looking at curriculum is to understand its original etymology as ‘a course run’ or ‘covered’. There are three distinctions that can be made regarding such ‘coverage’. First is *curriculum as planned* (or written). In higher education, this usually amounts to the course outline or syllabus of what is judged to be most worth learning. The second is the *instructed curriculum*: what of the planned curriculum is actually ‘delivered’ by instruction. That concern usually tends to focus on *techne*—the ‘best practices’ and ‘what works’ *methodolatry* mentioned by Maiello—that is calculated on and believed to produce the desired ‘product’.¹⁰¹ (At best, this amounts to the instrumentalism and strategic rationality of what Grundy calls “curriculum as product” and its common dysfunctional problems.) The third type, the *action* or *praxial curriculum*, amounts to what the students are able to *do*—at all, better, more often, with more insight or reward—as a result of their studies. In this, teaching and learning are conjoined and Grundy’s practical and praxial curriculum properly and productively become two sides of the same coin.

The result, as Maiello recounts, is called “action learning.” It is further premised on deriving curriculum content from models and exemplars of ‘real-life’ musical praxis. In the case of music history, this would involve include tasks that model the actual ‘doing’ and ‘using’ of music history—or where, when that ‘use’ is not common but might well be (or should be), praxial teaching aims to promote change in that direction. Thus, where music history is not as central as it could or should be to, say, the praxis of performers or listeners, a praxial approach will seek to remedy this by promoting grounding that is more informed by music history.

In general, the lexicon of teaching changes accordingly with a praxial approach to teaching. *Praxis as a noun* points to a clear and beneficial result accomplished or produced. “Music” is the result of the value added by society

specialization to regard what music ‘is’ differently. The existence of so many unquestioned, authoritarian paradigms explains why many professional music studies are not allowed by university and college faculty to count as general or liberal education credits.

101. The taken for granted assumption is that the delivery of ‘content’ has been reasonably competent, and thus variations in the effectiveness of the product delivered, as revealed in grades, depends on students’ rigor. This leads to an odd situation where *teaching* is not defined in terms of the *learning* that it promotes, but as an act of ‘instruction’ separate from producing results. In line with such thinking, “good teaching” (judged as *techne*) can result in poor learning (for praxis). As seen earlier, this is not the case when teaching itself is approached as praxis. Such teaching, thus, is at least a matter of reflective practice where the relation of means to ends is always under consideration, as it is, for example, in the diagnoses and treatments of physicians.

to sounds,¹⁰² and musical praxis changes according to the situatedness—historical, social, and cultural, but also practical (e.g., good church music)—of such praxis. ‘Works’ are seen as constituted or instantiated in the present moment, and this process constantly varies according to ever-changing conditions and listeners, and over time.¹⁰³ Phronesis, the ethical criterion for ‘right results’, is judged according to the objective conditions at stake—the sociomusical needs or purposes being served. Also stressed are the different *affordances*¹⁰⁴ of music in and for life. Curriculum goals, outcomes, and results are pragmatic; that is, as with the praxis of a physician, they should “make a difference” and thus involve the “value added” form of “authentic assessment” discussed by Maiello.

Praxis as a gerund is an action (acting, doing, or a trying to) of a sociopersonal musical kind. Emphasis is on the process and the value of such doing for agents and for those served: the praxis is in part its own reward. “Music” in this sense is “performative”¹⁰⁵ and has occasioned the term “musicing” (or “musicking”): Music as performative brings into being certain sociopersonal musical practices that would not otherwise exist (at least in musically elaborated or enriched form: e.g., consider a wedding or dance without its music¹⁰⁶). Concerts are prime examples of social events focused on music, but

102. Thomas A. Regelski, “Musical Values and the Value of Music Education,” *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 49–55.

103. See, Nicholas Cook, “Music as Performance,” in Clayton, Herbert, and Middleton, eds., *The Cultural Study of Music*, 204–14; for example, the same ‘work’ heard over time is simply not the same “music” heard each time. This collection of essays contains a wealth of interesting ideas and topics than can enliven the study and relevance of music history. The second half, “Issues and Debates” is especially useful its presentation of the kind of provocative ideas (and topics) recommended earlier.

104. Objects, including cultural objects (such as paintings and music), have certain objective, physical properties. However, these properties “afford”—make possible—different uses, according to how a user “appropriates” them. Thus a tennis ball affords playing with your dog, a rock affords use as a hammer when backpacking, and a musical ‘work’ (or event, in the case of improvisation) similarly affords a range of uses according to the user, need, occasion, etc. However, the physical properties—in the case of music, the notes, timbres, syntax of organization, etc.—constrain the range of affordances so that “not anything goes.” For example, Barber’s *Adagio* (in the string orchestra version, not the original string quartet version, or the choral transcription, or the saxophone arrangement, etc.) was therefore seen as affording certain “affective (ethetic) states” (Meyer, *Style and Music*, 213) in connection with the war scenes of the film *Platoon*, but is not very good for dancing or for certain ceremonies. It also, of course, affords just listening (at home or at a concert) because it offers a richness of musical properties that, say, a simple Christmas song does not. On the other hand, simple Christmas songs afford a host of different uses, all the way from singing carols together with family and friends, to their role in reinforcing the Christmas spirit.

105. In speech act theory, a “performative” is a verbal act that creates a reality: “Let the meeting begin,” “I thee wed.”

106. As a university student in Belgium I once attended a dance that provided only a drummer.

so are all musical practices from worshipping/praying, to caroling, to celebrations and ceremonies, to ambient and occasional musics.

In teaching the stress is on students' mindfulness and their contributions to the act of learning. Thus, their *intentionality*—what their learning actions are 'about' or trying to bring about—becomes central. For example, simply seeking a good grade (or avoiding failure) typically short-circuits any usefulness of what is taught and learned. When students' interests and musical needs are at stake, and the usefulness of learning is readily apparent to them, learning is more effective because it is worthwhile¹⁰⁷ and thus gets used. Students are thus able to reflect on their musical actions (in terms of mindfully held ends) and can adapt over time to changing conditions and needs.

Praxial knowledge is the 'know how, 'how to', 'can do' that arises only from praxis (as a gerund) within specific musical practices (as nouns: e.g., music history). All praxial knowledge functions as skills. Such knowledge can be and is applied or used, not just memorized and forgotten. Having been developed 'in action' it is often *embodied*—tacit knowledge known by the 'minded body' as a tacit 'feel' or 'sense' for the when, why, how of use. Concepts, facts, information, and theory also function 'in action' through use, not as abstract verbal information or 'background knowledge'. Meaning is existentially personalized as 'my knowledge' and is often tacit: Words can guide praxis but are not the relevant understanding at stake in or served by action (e.g., the difference between saying "I love you" and "loving" actions).

Techniques and skills are acquired from *holistic* practice, not in atomistic bits and pieces. Musicianship, musicality, creativity, and artistry take the form of tacit and personal 'know how' applied under specific and situated conditions, not as an absolute or final achievement. Such competency is therefore temporally conditioned, not once-and-for-all time or at any single time. *Standards* vary according to the 'doing' at stake (praxis as a noun) and change as the needs and criteria of praxis evolve.

In a praxially oriented program, teaching methods and curriculum also change and improve over time according to ever-changing needs, diagnoses, and improvements in current practice, technology, society, and music. And teaching approximates the professional praxis of, for example, doctors and lawyers; that is, with an ethic of responsibility (phronesis) that judges successful praxis by the results achieved for 'clients', our students. Failure to achieve 'right results' or that brings about negative results amounts to malpraxis (i.e., professional malpractice). Successful practice promotes musical independence and independent musicianship that enables students to function, learn, and engage in music praxis successfully in the future without a

107. NB: "worthwhile" literally means "worth the time," and being "worth their time" becomes the operative criterion of studies in students' value structures.

teacher or other authority. And it empowers and increases their range of musical choices; and, importantly, these choices reveal their musical values. Thus, of present concern, is whether students continue to rely on and are able to update the music history that serves their musical practices.

Concluding Remarks

A praxial approach to teaching music history requires a certain paradigm shift, a shift within the field from a 'teaching culture' focused on transmission of 'received' facts, ideas, and truths to one of transformation of students, society, and culture and in the direction of "the cultural study of music."¹⁰⁸ It is not something that can be achieved formulaically, according to a certain 'method', nor 'perfected' in some final form. It is, instead, an "action ideal." Such *guiding ideals* are not utopian or idealistic but rather are the typical aspirations humans have for guiding their choices and actions in certain productive directions: good parent, good friend, good spouse, good health, a good performance.

As with any ethical undertaking, teaching as praxis needs to cope with a wide range of confounding complications. Thus in teaching it often proceeds according to at least an informal form of *action research* that takes such problems of situatedness into account. Action research involves the research and experimental steps taken to improve praxis in that situation for the immediately foreseeable future. It is not easily generalized to the efforts of other practitioners in other situations: it is more a matter of the spirit of reflective practice and of the degree to which one improves in the direction of the action ideals at stake.

I don't presume to preach or pronounce on what should or should not be done in music history classrooms. Yet the praxial ethos points in many new directions and away from some traditional, often taken for granted, practices. Maiello has proposed some directions that music history pedagogy might take. My task has been to amplify and focus on some of the key elements that characterize a praxial approach. And it is hoped that these efforts might have stimulated some considerations not otherwise dwelled upon in the field of music history pedagogy and praxis and that might raise the promise of new possibilities.

The foregoing is only a simplified account of what is a much more detailed position developed over thirty years. Before accepting or rejecting any of this account, the sources cited should be consulted in arriving at a more in-depth perspective and judgment concerning the issues, needs, and arguments at stake. That a journal of this kind exists suggests that readers are not convinced

108. Clayton, Herbert, Middleton, eds. *The Cultural Study of Music*.

that the ‘same ol’, same ol’ is doing its *job*, and are open to new or refreshing perspectives. I will conclude, then, with the overall recommendation, as hinted at in several places, that determining its “job”—what music history exists to achieve or contribute to the broader field of music praxis—is, following Aristotle’s ethic of praxis, the first and most important step to be considered in some depth. This requires substantial philosophical warranting of desired ends and goals before deciding on means. I hope this essay has demonstrated a least some potential value for such a philosophical approach.