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Music Definition and Music Education

many perspectives, many voices, many questions

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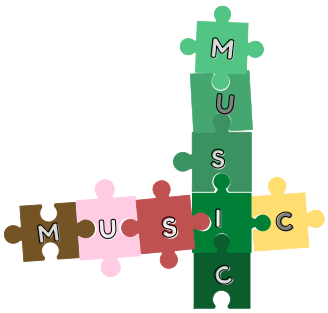

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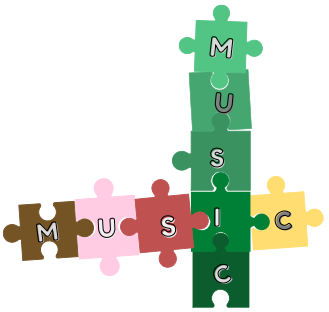


Introduction

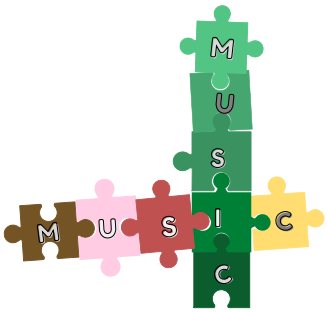
The definition of music is complicated by several factors. Music is everywhere. It holds sociability and individuality, freedom and limits. It is situated historically, philosophically, culturally, politically, economically, and ideologically, in a complex system of symbolic meanings. It has acquired various meanings and bears various connotations. In semiotic terms, music is polysemic: a complex signifier with many signifieds.

Understanding music and musical meaning is a central question in various domains such as philosophy, anthropology, social sciences, semiotics and music education. From the very beginning of human history, people have tried to explain the nature of music and its importance in human life.

In this book, I first provide a critical reading of literature, that addresses issues about music's definition. The next section that follows is on the implementation of a music definition project conducted between 2017 and 2019 with post-graduate students (pre-service and in-service music educators) who had been teaching music for several years. A substantial corpus of data was generated from this project. Common elements in music educators' definitions are that music is: an art form; a universal language; expressive sounds; an emotional force; a cultural given or entity; a context for sociability; a communicative symbolic system. In participants' responses one can find direct references to music education. The next section explores the key

themes that were revealed in the data analysis focusing on participants' perspectives and placing them in a broader context. The final parts of the book couple the project to music education. I argue that a discussion on music education, which does not take the definition of music into account, is somehow incomplete. Ultimately, my assertion is that the process of searching for the definition of music is prolific by itself as it allows us to make judgments, envisage principles, and interact dialectically with music objects and ideas. My aim is to encourage music education students and music educators to reflect on these issues in relation to their practices.

Three fundamental presuppositions of this monograph are: a) the pivotal aim of a definition is to help us deepen our understanding and reflect on the nature of music; b) the examination of various aspects of music enfolds a number of cultural and ideological assumptions; c) within the field of music education, dealing with questions about music definition and meaning requires self-reflexivity, sensitivity, and openness, both musically and pedagogically. The perspective of this book has been largely influenced from the philosophical thinking of Regelski (2017), who suggests that the question of "what music is" may help us to clarify "why do we teach music?", "what and how is music to be taught" and "to what pragmatic ends." In this respect, musical values and meanings are not inherent in the physical sounds but are formulated by the function assigned to them and their potentials are always about what they are "good for" (Regelski 2020).



Music definition:

many aspects, many voices

The quest for definitions haunts every scientific (empirical or practical rational foundation) and philosophical camp. Every definition helps us to reach a common ground of understanding. According to Aristotle, a definition is a phrase (*logos*) that signifies the essence of things (Topics I.5, 101b38). The prospect for a definition can be seen as a way to engage with "conditions of emergence," in Foucault's words (1972, 163). It can result in a general discourse, which, operating as representation or paradigm, can be replicated under other conditions. Dewey (1910) sees definition as mark "of a science" (131), as a device "by which the fixation and elaboration of a meaning into its detailed ramifications are carried on" (95). On the whole, we endeavor to formulate definitions in order to crystallize the territory of a concept and delimit its dynamics. The concepts that seem the most familiar or ordinary are those that require the most demanding, even Herculean, examination.

The ontological question 'What is music?' has intrigued scholars in various fields for decades: philosophy, musicology, sociology, cultural anthropology, history, archeology, theology, mythography, biology, humanities, cognitive sciences, neurosciences, and cultural studies, among others. A lot of ink has been spilled trying to answer this almost existential question. Some emphasize musical experiences and meanings in people's lives, others focus on music's structural components, some highlight the

emotional response to music and its potential for communication, and many underline the importance of its culture-specific elements. Music has been defined as human behavior that consists of expressive gestures that are purposeful, culturally defined, with aesthetic valence, and symbolic potential. Naturally, every definition is confined, by default, to a particular historical-cultural time.

Every attempt for definition addresses epistemology and ontology. Each attempt develops a new approach for interpreting the perceptual features of music works, music knowledge and tradition, regarding codes and conventions of the historic time and space. As expected, a musicological definition would be different from a philosophical, sociological, or anthropological one. Sociologists, for example, tend to study music as a social-cultural construction, considering its monetary value and issues of prestige, without referring to its aesthetic qualities. Composers and performers are expected to understand and talk about music in a different way from musicologists or amateurs.

Why is difficult to define music? Many efforts have been made to lay the groundwork in defining music. Many scholars have highlighted the fact that capturing the fundamentals and general principles that govern the phenomenon of music is not easy; even more so, finding a definition, which can wholly encompass all its particular or emergent features. One reason for this difficulty is that there is not universal agreement about what counts as music (Kania 2011, 4). It is worth reminding ourselves that most Western art philosophers face difficulties in setting a definition for an individual art form, in our case for music. Instead, they contemplate particular issues such as music and emotion, musical understanding, and/or the ontological character of certain musical works, using by rule paradigms, which seem convenient for their purposes (Davies 2008). In what follows, I will review several definitions

of music in the hope of presenting the most crucial aspects of this discussion, as it is not possible to provide a detailed review here.

According to worldwide acknowledged dictionaries (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, Penguin Dictionary of Music, Compact Oxford English Dictionary, Merriam-Webster), the word 'Music' derives from the Greek word *μουσική* (mousiké, art of the 9 Muses) and it is defined as "the art or science of combining or of arranging vocal or instrumental sounds" in order to produce "pleasant sounds" (or "sounds in a pleasing way"), and compositions that have beauty, form, harmony, melody, rhythm, unity, continuity, emotional content, etc. (in similar or identical words). This is, of course, a well-fitted definition in the modern West, where music is mostly perceived as an aesthetic object, used for entertainment, mood arrangement, and needs artistry and education. However, even in the Western art canon, music sounds are not always "pleasant". The notion of beauty excludes many avant-garde forms, ambient music, experimental music based on environmental sounds, etc. Davies (2014) is one among many philosophers who have illustrated that music can be ugly, formless, dissonant or not expressive of emotion. Dictionary definitions of music, as Morley (2014) puts it, are narrow and tend to describe music, to a greater or lesser extent, in the modern Western context, and do not "adequately encompass the diversity of forms, effects, uses and conceptions of music that exist across human cultures" (p. 150). In other words, these definitions seem clearly unsatisfactory and without aspirations to general validity, referring only to music aspects "that appear significant within recent Western culture" (Cross and Morley 2009, 69).

Nettl (2000) emphasizes the difficulty in defining music "in a way that is equally valid for all cultures, and valid as well in the eyes of different societies of humans" (465). He suggests that most Western definitions of music stress qualities such as beauty, intelligibility, and expressiveness and present them as criteria to decide whether something constitutes 'music'. However, there

are societies and musics where "these criteria make no sense at all" (Nettl 2005, 18). Sparshott (1987) argues that the idea of calling music 'an art' is mistaken, because "there are aspects of music's relations to human life that the notion of an art misses entirely" (p. 77).

In general, music has been rooted in rituals and gestures and, for most of human history, did not constitute 'art'. In Islamic tradition, for instance, Qur'anic recitation—and prayer chants altogether—is not conceptualized as music by believers, although it holds similarities to secular singing. It is neither music nor poetry. It is a God-given text (Bedford 2001).[1] In many cultures, ritualistic music practices are performed to honor spirits, ancestors, kings; communicate with gods; celebrate birth and nature; display respect to death; heal[2]; link secular and spiritual world; pray for a successful harvest; prepare the hunt, and so on.

In Blacking's words (1995, 224), although every known human society has "what trained musicologists would recognize as music", there are some societies that have no specific word for it.[3] The term 'music' is found only in selected cultures (Trehub et al. 2015). Even so, this does not mean that these cultures have not developed a music system. What this really means is that musical activities in a specific culture are not separated from other ritual-social behaviors with which they are integrated (Cram 2009).

In the 20th century, as Cross (2012) puts it, music is envisaged and explored "in terms of the discourses that surround it and endow it with significance, the social and historical institutions that frame it, the social practices that embody it, and the roles and identities that it enabled and enables." (670). Cross goes on speculating that these kinds of implicit definitions of music are appropriate to "its elucidation in the Western historical and social contexts that constitute the principal foci of musicological study, which tends to focus on the specificities of historical moments, of material practices, and of social circumstances" (670).

Music comes into being through various processes. Merriam (1964, 27) deduced that music "is a complex of activities, ideas, and objects that are patterned into culturally meaningful sounds recognized to exist on a level different from secular communication." He further suggests examining music at three analytic levels: a) music as concept (system and values within a specific culture), b) music as behavior (physical, social, and verbal), and c) music as sound (the acoustical product of musical behaviors and its structure). Small (1998) coined the gerund "musicking," clarifying that the term 'music' as a noun could downplay the dynamics of musical actions and interactions in music behaviors and performances (listening, rehearsing or practicing, composing, dancing). For him, "[M]usic is not a thing at all, but an activity, something that people do. The apparent thing 'music' is a figment, an abstraction of the action, whose reality vanishes as soon as we examine it closely" (2).[4] In the same year, Cook (1998) writes: "Music is a very small word to encompass something that takes as many forms as there are cultural or subcultural identities. And like all small words, it brings a danger with it. When we speak of 'music', we are easily led that there is something that corresponds to that word—something 'out there', so to speak, just waiting for us to give it a name. But when we speak of music we are really talking about a multiplicity of activities and experiences; it is only the fact that we call them all 'music' that makes it seem obvious that they belong together" (5).

For Regelski (2018), "music is a consequence of the interaction between people and sounds socially recognized (labeled as) 'music.' […] Musical meaning, then, is not in the sounds or their relationships, but is in or of the interaction of such sounds with the sociocultural structures, contexts, uses, and other governing particulars of musical situatedness" (24–25). Another interesting endeavor to conceive the big picture of music has been made by Tagg (1999). According to him, music is that "form of interhuman communication which distinguishes itself from others in that individually and

collectively experienced affective/gestural (bodily) states and processes are conceived and transmitted as humanly organized nonverbal sound structures to those creating these sounds themselves and/or to others who have acquired the mainly intuitive cultural skill of 'decoding the meaning' of these sounds in the form of adequate affective and/or gestural response" (18).[5]

Approaching the complexity of musical activities from the viewpoint of '4E' music cognition theory[6], Ryan and Schiavio (2019) refer to 'music' as a synonym of 'musicking' and propose that music is not a reified external object. It is "an emergent process that is negotiated among brains, bodies, and world, and realized in real time with contextual performance dynamics, where instruments and individuals are understood as continuous with each other, and mutually incorporated" (15).[7] Nevertheless they argue that it is hard—if not impossible—to attain a definition of music "that truly captures the importance and complexity of performance across different times, places, and cultures". Finally, Davies (2012) distinguishes four ways in which we might try to define music: functionally, operationally, historically, and structurally.[8] However, he suggests that none of these alone can produce a definition. To be successful, a definition of music must balance these parameters. In effect, rather than trying to define music per se, it is better to define it as something created as music at a given time in a given tradition, generating more context-sensitive principles of musical construction.

No human culture has been without a musical tradition of some sort. Whilst musical behaviors and forms are enormously varied across cultures and over time, it remains the case that "it is possible to recognize this diverse range of activities across all cultures as 'musical', suggesting that there is an identifiable set of common characteristics, occurring in various combinations" (Morley 2014, 150). Then,—notwithstanding the diversity, dissimilarities, and pluralism in the musical behaviors, functions, forms, praxes and codes in different societies across the globe—we can discern (or abstract) some

general 'universal' properties about music across cultures and time. These **catholics** are: biological predisposition to engage in musical activities, mechanisms of musical sense-making (production and perception), musicality, the capacity of music to affect, evoke and regulate emotions, singing, playing with instruments, caregiver-infant music interaction, and musically motivated action and interaction.

In particular, all humans (with few exceptions) have the capacity to engage in musical behaviors, in one way or another (Cross and Morley 2009, 73) as they are equipped with a "biological machinery" that enables them "to cope with music" (Reybrouck 2013, 586). For Trehub and her colleagues (2015), musicality is a universal and distinctive characteristic of humankind. All peoples of the world sing and have various forms of instrumental music as well, which could be refined or rudimentary. Moreover, music is ubiquitous in caregiving. Caregivers across cultures sing to infants to soothe them and induce sleep. Lullabies are readily identifiable across cultures. This is precisely the point that Dissanayake (2000) makes when she claims that mother-infant music interaction provides the most significant universal context for the use of music.

Nettl (2005, 253) suggests that, despite the diversity of music functions across cultures, there are two fundamental functions: (a) music controls "humanity's relationship to the supernatural" and (b) it supports "the integrity of individual social groups [...] by expressing the relevant central values of culture in abstracted form". Tagg (1999) claims that cross-cultural 'universals' of musical code are bioacoustic and can be summarised in relationships such as: between musical tempo and heartbeat or the speed of breathing, walking, running and other bodily movement; between musical loudness and timbre and certain types of physical activity; between musical phrase lengths and the capacity of the human lung. Nevertheless, Tagg makes clear that "[w]hile such relationships between musical sound and the human

body are at the basis of all music, the majority of musical communication is nevertheless culturally specific" (18-19). For Reybrouck (2013), there are psychophysical commonalities, which rely on genetics that can be considered to be universal, but there is a lot of subjectivity as well. Moreover, we can detect commonalities without genetic basis at the level of acquired habits as well as learned responses.

As the above review shows, music might be defined broadly and operationally as a cultural multi-faceted phenomenon and construct. It is about humanly organized sounds and can be experienced bodily, cognitively, emotionally, socially, culturally, aesthetically, politically, and ethically. It is more than art, more than science; it is more than mere product and more than mere procedures. It has the power to awaken the mind and, simultaneously, provides the steps for achieving this elevation. It engages creativity and, simultaneously, shows the tools of creativity. In particular:

Music works are made by humans. It is not a product of nature (Cook 1998). Humans deliberately manipulate and organize sounds in order to make music. Yet, it is not about plain waves of sound or physical vibrations. Music is always about meaningful sounds, intentionally organized in time. Conceiving of musical sound as simple sonic information, one misses the fundamental point that humans produce music because it meets some of their basic needs. Musical sounds—as well as musical features and events—have different meanings, and the importance that individuals, groups and societies attribute to them may vary considerably. They have meanings on a symbolic level, which combine their creation, their function, and their values for human beings as individuals and for a society as a whole.

No study of culture is complete without a close understanding of the music of the people. For many societies, music and the people's way of life are almost inseparable. Each culture has its own musical system that reflects its

worldviews (i.e., cosmology, spirituality), beliefs, and values (social-political, ethical, etc.).

All known human societies engage in music and activities that we could call musical (Trehub et al. 2015). Music takes as many forms as culture (Cross 2008). The reality of a given society at a given historical point—with its rules, traditions, practices, values, and cultural narratives—shapes the experience of music. In short, music is a culturally specific concept (Tagg 1999), bound up with local identities and practices, reflecting the values of a certain society in which it is produced. Music is a universal phenomenon, but its meanings are not. The very idea of social cohesion through music varies among cultural communities. The musical universals can be discussed not as something that ties and can be applied to all music but with respect to what is common to all musical traditions.

The power of music in humans' lives is monumental (Hargreaves et al. 2005, DeNora 2003, 2000). Music allows individuals to create and re-build their identity, reach self-identification, and store and restore memories accordingly to their needs. It helps us organize our daily practices and make sense of social reality; it shapes our actions assigning to them a deeper meaning (DeNora 2000). The process of explaining music naturally takes us out of music and into the world (Kaduri 2006). All music is inevitably tied to real-world practices. It is about traditions, experiences, community, politics, ideologies, sovereignty, identities, knowledge and skills, sense of belonging, memories, protest, persuasion, imagination, economy, intellectual property, and so on. The power of music is the reason why it is used as a mechanism for distributing ideology (patriotic and military songs, propaganda, peace movements, activism, etc.). Paraphrasing Wittgenstein's famous dictum, we could say that the "The limits of our music are the limits of our world."

Music is above all a mindful act that is manifested bodily. In fact, it is grounded in the body and bodily movement (Berleant 2009, Hamilton 2007),

closely associated with physical tension, postures, gestures, and movements (Tagg 1999, Merriam 1964), and involves gestural patterns of movement "that may or may not be oriented towards sound production" (Cross and Morley 2009, 69). It is not an object independent of us, "just as environment is not a place" (Berleant 2009, 63). We understand musical processes with our bodies (Kozak 2015). More importantly, musical instruments are extensions of our bodies. Nevertheless, the role of the body in music performance and the idea of 'being one' with the instrument are not only about skilled musicians and the conception of virtuosity (Nijs 2017).

Music is highly multifunctional. It serves a large range of functions across cultures, in group and individual contexts, with a profound variability in the structure of music activities and phenomena, and a series of rules and values governing its participation and role in human cultures (Regelski 2020, Kokkidou 2018, Davies 2012, Cross 2008, Merriam 1964).[9] Functions can be seen as processes of lived music experience, awareness, and meaning, based on knowledge about what people in a culture at a certain time do, feel, or think about music. Music products both determine and are determined by the ways they are used, valued and interpreted. Sparshott (1987) asserts that the word 'music' includes "an inherently unstable variety of practices linked functionally, and/or procedurally and/or institutionally, in all sorts of ways" (p. 44). As such, he claims, "there can be no impartial basis for declaring one musical practice better than another" because the "best music is the music that best satisfies musical interests" among different people (p. 73).

Music is a system of communication (interpersonal or mass communication, even communication with the transcendental). Specific considerations of the situational variables of music communication enable us to develop understanding of the referential complexity of musical meanings (Hargreaves et al. 2005).

Music is a means of interaction between people and their environment. According to evolutionary theories, music was a catalyst for humans to survive and adapt to their environment. Yet, many questions are still open with regard to the adaptive function or evolutionary advantage served by music in ancestral activities (Reybrouck 2013, Huron 2003). Clearly, assertions about the music of ancient times and prehistoric era cannot avoid being speculative.

Music, diachronically and synchronically, has been used as a mnemonic conveyance for transgenerational interaction and communication (Trehub et al. 2015, Huron 2003). It is a "technology of memory in real time" (DeNora 2003, 156) and contributes in the "maintenance of oral traditions by virtue of its mnemonic powers" (Cross and Morley 2009, 66). Musical traditions can be seen as part of cultural transmission of knowledge (Eerola et al. 2018) since musical pieces are saturated with contextual, social memory (Trehub et al. 2015) as well as autobiographical memories and narratives (Belfi et al. 2016, DeNora 2000). Thus, they constitute our memory, help us to understand our cultural heritage, and nurture our collective consciousness. They are crucial to cultural continuity.

Music is thought to have many effects on individuals. It helps us address the pressures of everyday reality, deal with both joy and suffering, even with loss and death. It alleviates stress and pain, and can help us achieve a deep state of relaxation. The idea that music has cathartic experience (Eerola et al. 2018) calming the body's pain is not new, as music has been used as a healing tool throughout the ages (i.e., Native Americans' music-dance rituals, sacred chanting) to the present day (music therapy, medical use of music as a substitute for painkillers and addictive drugs).

Music contains both material and abstract components. It has tangible as well as intangible aspects. It has a material existence (acoustic, biological, channels) and it is a commodity (scores, funding, recordings, concert tickets, music libraries). The inventions and technical innovations of musical

instruments imply the acquisition of new techniques in music making. Music technology is not just about the 21st century digital innovations and musical devices. It is about every instrument made by humans, about every object created for music purposes—from ritual spaces to venues and concert halls.

Music is a "vital social practice" (Regelski 2017, 55) giving us "modes" and "instrumentalities" for doing social life (DeNora 2003, 157). Historically, music has been used to establish societal unity and promote the integration of society, enforcing conformity to social norms (Merriam 1964). It provides a social space where we can see others' behaviors and attitudes. It consists of values, practices, and meanings that are shared by members of a community. It draws its significance and values from the social context in which it is embedded and, at the same time, gives meaning to that context. As a social activity, it contextualizes and shifts its meanings. The forms that music takes in a given society are determined by its social structures. Music, according to Blacking (1973), is not simply something which occurs in a social context because it consists of a pivotal process of sociality itself. Music, Born (2005) claims, takes myriad social forms: it produces its own varied social relations, inflects existing social relations, and is bound up in the broader institutional forces that provide the basis of its production and reproduction. For Regelski (2018), music stimulates and conditions sociality and, at the same time, it is a product of sociality. Likewise, Bowman (2005) stresses that "the concept of music, though fluid, is moored in human practices." Whatever forms, values, and functions music takes, "it is invariably situated in the social world of human relations and interactions, in practices and traditions that answer to consensually validated standards" (p. 64).

Music everywhere is believed to have an emotional impact. It can evoke strong emotions and it can be used as a tool for emotion and mood regulation (Juslin and Sloboda 2010, Hargreaves et al. 2005). It involves some kind of arousal (Trehub et al. 2015), ranging all the way from extreme pleasure to high

discomfort. It is imbued with connotations of human emotional expression on multiple levels: biological, psychological, social, and cultural (Eerola et al. 2018). It probably gains direct access to human emotional systems without having to be cognitive elaborated (Panksepp and Bernatzky 2002). Group music making can foster empathy and emotional sensitivity (Hallam 2015). Through its abstraction, music is an emotional language.

Music is considered to be pleasant and attractive, even in the case of music-induced sadness. Music sadness is pleasurable because it provides us with rich emotional experiences and offers chances to reflect on concepts such as solitude, human existence, and mortality (Eerola et al. 2018). Noise, on the contrary, evokes annoyance, is often largely uncontrolled and stressful, and has a lot of negative connotations, which refer to both acoustic descriptions and subjective valuations (Reybrouck et al. 2019). However, what is conceived as noise in a music culture could be seen as music in another. For example, avant-garde composers presented industrial noises as music.

In Western societies, historically, music had been produced—composed and performed—by the few and listened to by the many (Cross 2012). In our times, however, we have new patterns for the production, consumption and circulation of music.

Music can be appreciated aesthetically and non-aesthetically. Even in Western societies music is not exclusively an aesthetic object and its value is designated by external conditions where aesthetics is not an issue. Furthermore, understanding music does not entail aesthetic pleasure.

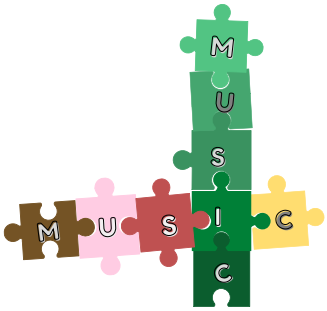
Music provides a way of transferring ideas from the physical realm to the imagined, the virtual, and from the sacred or transcendent world to the 'real' one, to the world of sensation and experience.[10] Music world is a source of knowledge; it is a lens through which we consider and make sense of the world at large. For Blacking (1995), the question is how to act, both morally and politically on this knowledge.

Taken as a whole, music is an open concept, one that cannot be defined by listing some acknowledged properties. To define music, according to Davies (2014, 2012), we should appeal to the contextual features that contribute to the identity of musical works, the intentional use of structural/generative principles in the tradition within which music is created, and the cultural forces that facilitate and structure music practices. We must see the musical and non-musical pressures that constrain music's development and enable its diversity, and the intentions and understandings of music makers and listeners. However, this is a complex task due to the fact that there are many music traditions, each with its own origins, historic trajectory, and set of features and behaviors. Defining what constitutes music tradition may be as difficult as defining music as such.

The more closely and cross-culturally we look at musical activities, behaviors, and values across cultures and times, the clearer it becomes that we need various resources and different types of evidence. Moreover, "a full understanding of musicality and its place in our evolution cannot be attempted without drawing upon a very wide range of investigative disciplines, and considering their findings in light of each other" (Morley 2014, 149). We need an interdisciplinary approach, because the reality of the connection between music, ethics, and politics can be hardly denied. Music definition should do more than garnishing the framing discourse within which music theorizing is placed. In an extreme—but not arbitrary—cogitation, we could say that music is something that a given group of people decides it to be. It has to do with the organization of knowledge, practices and skills within a specific cultural community whose members have common experiences, behaviors, expectations and notions about music.

Philosophizing upon music can illuminate many aspects concerning its history, meanings, purposes, values, practices, functions, and scientific-technical knowledge. All aspects count as a statement about the essence of

music. Inquiry embedded in such discourse can unravel the falsity in 'traditional' dichotomies i.e., mind and body, subject and object, biology and culture (nature versus nurture), theory and praxis, particular and general, individuals and society.



"Music definition" project

I recently took a closer look at the conceptualization of music among post-graduate music students, who were music teachers themselves, in two university programs in music pedagogy. Thirty-six participants were women and twenty-one were men between the ages of 18 and 49 years old. Nearly four fifths of the participants were Greeks and one fifth were Cypriots. About 60% were 30 years old or younger. All of them had teaching experience in various musical educational settings, either in general education, music schools, or conservatories (studio classrooms, music theory classrooms etc.). The material was collected during 2017–2019.

I asked my students and music teachers to think of words associated with the word 'music' and then try to define it. The central question was "What is music?" and I urged them to think "out of the box." I motivated their thinking by setting an imaginary scenario: "some people have never heard music and you have to explain to them what this is". They had enough time to think and write down their own definitions. Three of them asked to share their thoughts orally while I took accurate notes. Then, a whole class discussion followed. It is worth mentioning that this discussion continued in the following lessons, and its content became more and more broad to include issues of music ontology; the values of music in our lives and its social implications; the meaning of music works; the aesthetic experience of music and the debate between 'high' and 'low' music culture. Notably, thinking upon the definition

of music, music educators became aware of the impact it can have on their teaching practices.

The present project does not count for a qualitative research. In addition, finding a general definition had not been the only aspiration of the project. The 57 answers that I collected served as a starting point to examine, negotiate, and reflect on our assumptions about music, art, culture, and music education.

Music educators' definitions of music

To begin with, it is worth noting that several music teachers recognized the difficulty of the task. In their words, "music is everywhere" and "I don't think that question can be answered by non-philosophers." Two of them were surprised and repeated the question, like a child when hearing a word for the first time. Fundamentally, their difficulties arose from being put in a situation of thinking about something for which they lacked the answers.[11]

McLuhan and Fiore (1968) wrote that the "one thing of which the fish is unaware of is water" (175).[12] Indeed, the two authors used this metaphor to describe our blindness to our surroundings and the fact that we are unaware of the environments we "swim in". The same can be said about the participants in this project. Asking them to define music was like asking from a fish to become aware of water. The question is deceptively simple, to say the least.

Music teachers produced quite different definitions. Several felt uneasy and others mentioned that they were puzzled about what exactly music is. The vast majority of them attempted to define it using what they knew from their music studies. By comparing and analyzing music teachers' descriptions of music, we can identify several key themes and common elements. In general,

they perceived music as "an art form", "a universal language", "an expressive form", "the art and science of sounds", "a cultural invention", "a communicative system", "culture and tradition", "a context for sociability", "a symbolic system", and a means for "creative expression" and "expression of our feelings." Others shared views that music is a cultural entity and a pathway to transmit cultural values from one generation to the next.

Music teachers appeared to be aware of the fact that environmental sounds—even the pleasant ones—are not music. Only one of them reported that music "can be found in nature, in bird songs, in sea waves, in the wind whispering." None of the participants incorporated the concept of silence into their definition. None of them said anything about economy, ideologies, the material culture of music, and the moral aspects involved in music narratives. Only one teacher referred to music as a way to value and respect the culture of 'others' (*Music serves as a means of appreciating the heritage of other cultures with a view to similarities and differences in modes of musical expression*).

Some short definitions are as follows:

Music is an art form with philosophical, emotional, social, and political grounds.

Music is an art with form and content. It educates aspects of the self.

With the above exceptions that were limited in few words, most definitions were rather comprehensive:

Music consists of symbols that communicate ideas and feelings. Melody, rhythm, harmony and texture. Through these elements, it affects our soul. The aesthetic function displays our thoughts. Human beings are musical by nature.

Music is an art form as well as a form of knowledge. It bridges thinking and feeling. It is the best way to make sense of our lives and the world. It gives us a sense of freedom.

Music makes life most worth living. It is about self-expression and creativity. In fact, music's main purpose is to give us the desire to explore ourselves and the world around us. Music is an expression of our personal and collective identity.

As expected, the notion of creativity (i.e., *Music is about every creative human being*) appeared in many definitions. In general, the satisfaction of expressive needs and the realization of certain ideals and values were indicated by the majority of the participants. The emotional aspect of music was a central theme for the participants. Some characteristic excerpts are:

Music is an art form and a symbolic system through which people communicate and express their feelings.

Musical activity is a human practice which emotions are a part of.

[Music] *cultivates our minds and our emotional life.*

Many teachers emphasized the communicative power of music. Three characteristic answers have as follows:

Music is a unique means of communication and aesthetic cultivation. It says things that language cannot express. It cultivates empathy for the human condition.

Music is a non-verbal form of communication.

Music is a communicative medium. It is expression and creation. Our emotional experiences are manifested in musical interactions.

Another common element is that music is a central component in social communication and can reinforce societal unity. A closer look at their responses indicates that several of them see music as a society-based activity and recognize that music's social functions play a part in determining music's cultural meanings:

Music serves a social function because it reinforces modes of interpersonal communication and group organization that are most crucial in the subsistence of culture. In almost every society, music holds a core position.

[Music] *is part of the human condition that we find ourselves as individuals and as members of a community.*

In many answers, core elements were that music "enriches life", it is "related to our well-being", and that "music and life are inseparable." Several participants commented on music's capability to transform our lives in many levels: cognitively, emotionally, and ethically. Some relevant excerpts are:

Music elevates us; it expands the borders of our world.

Music can transform life and direct us to self-realization.

[Music] *is an experience of freedom and teaches us how to be humane.*

[Music] *nurtures self-concept, kindness, and compassion.*

[Music] *gives people opportunities for advancement and has many rewards: enjoyment, therapy, and a sense of belonging [...] It helps us cope with stress, solitude and our deepest fears."*

To study music is to study ourselves.

Several definitions were poetic in nature. For instance:

Music is a miracle that human created in order to be released from the constrains of our physical reality. It cultivates our entities as a whole. Music experiences offer us the most intense moments of ecstasy we can have.

Music helps us deal with ambiguity.

Music is music. The only thing we can say is that it expresses the reality of our existence.

Music is so rich and wonderful that it is difficult to describe in a few words. Words fail to describe accurately what music is or how it enriches our lives.

[Music] *nourishes our imagination and demonstrates the power of human creativity. It is the wonder of wonders.*

Music is a unique form of expression and a gift for human life. Music and songs help us discover and create symbolic associations between us and the worlds which we live in. Nothing gives us more consciousness of life than music.

[Music] *shows the way towards freedom and is itself a world of freedom.*

Music is the world as we see it in our dreams.

The above definitions are attractive to read. They reminded me of T. S. Eliot's epigraph "you are the music/ while the music lasts". However, they do not offer us a clear picture of what music is and can be read as abstract thoughts about music.

The investigation of the enigmatic nature of music, easily and unsurprisingly leads into metaphysical adventures. Several descriptions portray music in a transcendent level. Particularly, 16 teachers referred to music's transcendent power to make life more worth living. The following excerpts reveal these notions:

Music is a sacred secret. It awakens existential thoughts.

Music is an enigmatic entity which drives our metaphysical adventures.

Music's power can change our lives. […] Here we feel ourselves outside time.

Music gives us a sense of our smallness.

Music experiences remove us from the ordinary world.

[Music] *unites the physical, the logical, the social, and the spiritual.*

Nobody mentioned body (beyond voice) as a source of music. The indisputable relationships between music, movement, and dance were excluded from their descriptions. Sadly, the concert protocol of Western art music denied "the bodily bases of musical responding and experience and eventually led to audiences who sat still and silent, contemplating music cerebrally, as though they were in church", as Regelski (2019, 84) strongly asserts. We can speculate that the participants are fully immersed in this motionless music world. However, a range of physical and mental capabilities is used in musical activity (Morley 2014, Berleant 2009).

Our bodies constitute a fundamental level of musical understanding. The active body of the listener impulsively reacts to music or turns into a mirror of performer's actions (Kozak 2015). Playing an instrument requires competence

in certain kinetic patterns. The body is the main vehicle of music experience, education, perception, and consciousness.[13] It is not simply functional; it is meaningful. Feelings and emotional states are fundamentally bodily events. Music experience is multimodal and multi-sensory, and music, in this account, can be studied from the point of view of its aural, tactile, or motor induction qualities. This is the case, when trying to "feel" the music rather than merely "hearing" it (Reybrouck et al. 2019, 9). Music experience begins with body awareness and the ability to notice and feel large or small sensations in the body. Simply put, bodies make music and music makes bodies.

In many texts, music educators referred to music education without having been asked.

Every person can be musical. People enjoy music, even without studying it. On the other hand, music studies make individuals more skilled in various domains. More intelligent, more kind, and more generous.

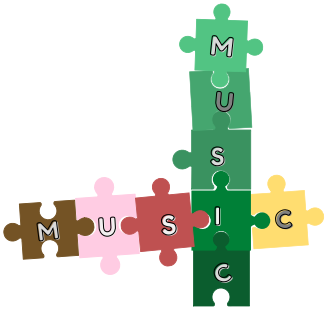
[Music] *requires passion, discipline, concentration, and will. Nevertheless, when thinking of music, we must exclude products like muzak or pop music produced only for youths to empty their pockets.*

[…] *The significance of music in our lives is tremendous. This is the reason we have a responsibility to protect our students from the mechanism of music industries and help them become conscious of the dirty business of music market.*

Music is in human nature. It touches the human soul. Yet, we have to make a clear distinction between the music of market, all things that music industries produce and sell, and the real music made by people who create and play music with sensitivity and for its own sake.

All in all, some definitions are sophisticated and might well fit a holistic understanding of music, but others seem problematic for various reasons. Music teachers did not give full descriptions of 'what music is', but they mostly

referred to ‘what music does’. Their definitions are well suited into the European art music.



Discussions with music educators inspired by the 'music definition project'

The findings of this music definition project brought a number of issues to light. Participants came to the conclusion that many of the simplest questions are the hardest to answer. The project provoked new challenging questions to be investigated. Some of them were: What is music for? Can music help us think about society? What about musical-political activism? Do musical practices acquire meaning and value in the same way music works do? Do we acknowledge the power of music in various music cultures in the same terms we celebrate Western art music? These questions stimulated the students to reflect on their work and aims as active music teachers. Many of them seemed to realize that they made assumptions they had never examined before but taken for granted. A basic agreement that emerged was that, even in the simplest of musical phenomena, there is a multiplicity of aspects we must take into account in order to understand and interpret them. In any case, this project forced music teachers to engage in thoughtful discourse as they reflected on the tension that exists between 'us' and 'others', 'our music' and 'their music', tradition and change, resistance and conformity, and absence and presence, as marked in the fields of music and music education. In particular, the issues that attracted music educators' interest were: music's ontology; the question of the universality of music language; the

communicative power of music; the contextual factors in music making; the importance of silence; the relations between music education and ecological problems; the aesthetic rationale for music education; the 'high-low' debate in music education; and the 'now' of music.

Every musical analysis is an ontological one

Ontology—the physics or metaphysics of being—concerns questions, such as: What brings music into existence? What constitutes music? What is and what isn't music? Is music the score? What is the nature of the relation between a piece of music work and its multiple music texts or performances? What distinguishes music from non-music? What is a musical object? Does a music piece exist in an ideal world as a fixed entity, apart from any performance or its score? Is musical meaning always socially-culturally constructed, fulfilling specific human needs? Does music exist when imagining or remembering it? Ontology implies substance, materiality, historicity, temporality, media, the perceiving body, the perceptual object and so on. Music is opened up for examination in all its polyphony, textuality, codes, and representations. From the very beginning, a semantic multiplicity exists, both in musical and extra-musical level, occasionally like Matryoshka dolls within dolls. Arguably, the most fundamental ontological aspect of music is its temporality.

The ontology of music includes extramusical elements. The music world is not only a theoretical concept or entity but also an instrumental-practical one. Both ontological terms, 'music' and 'world', should be examined to show the difficulties that lie in the way of non-Western music cultures struggling to survive. Born, in her discussion on the ontology of the musical work, writes that music "is perhaps the paradigmatic multiply-mediated, immaterial and material, fluid quasi-object, in which subjects and objects collide and

intermingle" (Born 2005, 7). She contends that the ontology of musical works implies a "hierarchical assemblage", which is manifested in various relations: the composer-hero stands over the interpreter, the conductor over the performer, the interpreter over the listener and so on (26). She goes on saying that we should not ignore music works' dependence on patronage or market exchange, and their embeddedness in broader social relations of class, gender, race and nation.

The current ontological situation of music has changed. New questions have arisen, such as: Are musical works only human creations? Should the computer startup chords be regarded as music? Should the background 'wallpaper' (in shopping malls, restaurants) count as music? What about the advertising jingles and the cellphone ringtones? What about music-recording ontologies? The terms 'composer', 'art', and 'aesthetics' imply different notions for the current state and the function of music. We now refer to 'music producers' as those who create music with the aid of digital technology, and we face new contradictions in the culture of digital media. Certainly, in the media age, our way of thinking about the digital music environment is in flux.

Beyond the theoretical debate over the ontology of music, it is imperative that we address such issues in music education due to a number of reasons, because the notions about the ontology of music form our teaching. Philosophical-ontological thinking can be a process that leads to research questions and an opportunity to examine and challenge our assumptions and assertions. Considering that previous discourses about culture (i.e., modernist account) are outdated yet still endure in our field, we should think upon a definition that better represents the essential components of non-Western ontologies of music. In the same vein, we might consider that the most eminent difficulty that arises from a consideration of the ontological framework of music is that it does not follow the practices of the non-Western

world. Music descriptions can be ontologically imperialistic if they are allowed to be, if they are used in that way.

The above issues served as a starting point for teachers in discussing the questions: What counts as music today?, Where is music in our lives? and Where is music in our students' lives? We also discussed music in Merriam's terms (as a concept, behavior, and sound).

Is music a universal language?

The idea that music is a universal language was detected in many answers the music educators gave during the project. Six participants articulated that music is an ecumenical language, with its own grammar, syntax, and meanings, and with basic elements being rhythm, melody and harmony.

In an attempt to help my students to reflect on their ideas about music universality, I urged them to read Nettl's essay "An Ethnomusicologist Contemplates Universals in Musical Sound and Musical Culture." Nettl's point is that "universals do exist in musical sound and in musical conceptualization and behavior" (Nettl 2000, 472). Nettl mentions the importance of music in ritual and in addressing the supernatural, and the use of music to mark significant events, which also suggest its early use in social organization. He notices that all societies have vocal music and instruments of some sort. All societies have at least some music that contains pulse and some music that uses only three or four pitches. However, while all known human cultures have music and all human beings are capable of producing and responding to music, the universals do not apply to *all* music.

In consideration of Nettl's view, it is apparent that musical universals should be a subject of skepticism. To make my point clear: music is a universal phenomenon of humankind but it is not a universal language. Our discussions

seemed to help teachers identify that there are musics, which do not conform to their criteria.

Music is always about communication and social bonds

Music teachers emphasized the communicative power of music, stating that music always involves acts of communication and interaction. It serves as a vehicle of communication among individuals as well as between individuals and society. But what does music communicate? In a basic transmission model, a musical message is encoded by the composer and transmitted through the performer to the listener. In this chain, the performer decodes composer's message and recodes it within her/his performance. The listener undertakes her/his decoding. This process is influenced by the context and environment within which they take place.

Hargreaves, MacDonald, and Miell (2005) state that music is a fundamental channel of communication providing a means by which people can share complex emotions, intentions, ideas, values, and meanings, both locally and globally. They propose that there are three major determinants of the musical communication process: the characteristics of the music itself; those of the people involved; and those of the situation in which it occurs. These musical, personal, and contextual variables go beyond 'art music' contexts to include political messages, social conventions and ceremonies, nationalistic pride, altered states of consciousness, commercial messages, aesthetic pleasure and so on. They operate in a state of reciprocal feedback, which indicates the causal interrelationships among them. Thus, it is crucial that we develop an understanding of the *how*, *why*, *what*, *who*, and *where* of musical communication. If we were to follow their argument, it would be also fruitful to take up some *why not* questions. DeNora (2000) stresses that music

is not merely a communicative medium as it is a cultural vehicle, which makes it easier for people to combine the past and the present into a coherent whole. Small (1998) maintains that through music we are celebrating "our concepts of ideal relationships" (106).

Music making is a social performance, even when music is performed or listened to alone (Trehub et al. 2015). Even listening to recordings at home has social dimensions as listeners are members of taste groups and are influenced by a series of social norms (Regelski 2019). Even in the case of a single composer who sits in front of her/his piano or keyboard exploring musical ideas, she/he communicates with past composers and speculates her/his future interaction with the audience.[14] However, there are red zones and grey areas in the arena of music communication as music can both unify and divide. A music piece can be a symbol of great power for a group and a symbol of oppression for another group.

Music cannot exist outside of the context in which it appears

Every phenomenon—event, object, practice, behavior—is meaningful in a specific context. In the case of music, without taking into account the context where it is produced, cultivated, transmitted and so on, we cannot make sense of the music world as a whole. Put briefly, the link between music and context is at the heart of this discussion. This leads us to the long-lasting debate between absolutists and referentialists (Reybrouck 2013). However, extreme formalism and extreme contextualism are both equally dangerous. With respect to music education, this means that we need to undertake a contextual analysis in addition to a textual-structural one. Discussing the cross-contextual understanding of music with the music teachers, we came to the agreement that the assumption that merely playing music from other music

cultures can bring different social groups together is mistaken. We do not 'build bridges' or change attitudes towards refugees or immigrants by simply learning a song from their music tradition. Not all musical activities lead to developing children's understanding of cultural diversity.

The notion of 'extra-musical' is a political one. An interesting issue is the specific local and vernacular music practices, and how these practices reflect issues of dominance and marginalization. Teachers' responses suggest widespread acceptance of music diversity but a relatively narrow conception about how this diversity opens up new possibilities in our classes. While they embrace the idea of helping students see that each society has its own cultural values, they did not relate this aim to any issues of human rights, dignity, self-reliance, and social justice.

Jorgensen (2002) maintains that both musicians and music educators "are engaged in a fundamentally social, political, and cultural enterprise" (xiii). Bowman (2007) expresses his worries about the narrow conventional conception of music's nature and value and, therefore, of music education, and emphasizes the need for studying music as a sociopolitical phenomenon. For him, the way forward "must build upon a reconfiguration of what we understand music to be" (111). Certainly, this won't be easy, because the way we tend to think about music is deeply entrenched in our Western aesthetic discourse without considering critical issues, such as social justice and equity. The first important step we should take is the change of "our philosophical assumptions about what music is and is not" (123). The crisis social justice creates [...] cannot be confronted "without major realignments in our understanding of the nature and value of music" (124).

Praxialism rejects the notion of autonomy and universality of individual music works as advocated by aesthetic philosophies, and accounts for the personal agency and social function of music. In the praxial view, music value and meaning are embedded in social processes (Regelski 2003). Regelski

(2017a) refers to the problem of music education's *autonomania* (my emphasis), which has its roots in the 18th Enlightenment philosophers and the Kantian Aesthetics. He describes autonomania as the tendency of school music education to confirm and preserve the principles of the analytical aesthetic theory, separating school music from the music that is going on around us, often ignoring what most people do with the music they love. I strongly agree with Regelski's view: regarding music works as autonomous and therefore a-political is morally dangerous.

What about silence?

Why did music teachers not include the word "silence" in their definitions of music? This is astonishing since the internal notated measured silences (rests) are part of the ongoing musical progress. Also, the expressive unmeasured silences have dramatic effects and are often used by performers in order to provide audiences moments of reflection and anticipation. Silence is a component that gives energy to sounds. When I brought this up, some participants laughed while others felt embarrassed. All of them recognized their mistake. Yet the question remains: Why didn't any of them mention the significance of silence?

Music involves the experience of sound as well as silence. It emerges from silence and returns to it. We may consider silence as the condition for the appearance of the sound (Kraut 2010). When we talk of intentionally produced and rhythmic organized sounds, we must include silences (Kania 2011), which can have an aesthetic character (Anderson 2020). In fact, silence is the canvas for every musical composition and the matrix of all musical activities. It is not merely the absence of sound or empty space between tones. It has an inner-musical function (Kraut 2010). Levinson (1990) argues: "there are very few imaginable musics, and no actual musics, for which silence—the space

between sounds—would not be a structural principle." (270). Moreover, music has a symbol for silence, which traces back to the twelfth-century notation system (Kraut 2010).

Silence—the very absence of sound, as it is often said—is as communicative as the sonorous events around it (Kaduri 2006).[15] It is an articulation of time through its division into meaningful units. It has meaning, just as tones have, and can be decoded in relation to whatever comes before or after it. It is an integral component in musical flow. Although Cage (1963) notes that "[n]ot one sound fears the silence that extinguishes it" (33), silence bears tension, which makes the sounds to be heard louder and more substantial. In fact, silence gives birth to sound, and sound always returns to silence. In many Eastern aesthetic systems, silence is a philosophical utterance, a way of meditation upon our very human nature, a way of life. Daoists, for instance, contemplate sounds as they emerge from and fade into silence. Anderson (2020) perceives the experience of silence as something positive, because it provides the ideal occasion to observe and ponder, and it might be described as ethereal, comforting, consoling, or liberating. Yet, apart from the positive meanings of silence (in the sense of peace, spirituality, modesty, discreteness, prudence), there are other less optimistic ones, such as the 'mocking silence' and the 'silence of contempt' (Kraut 2010).

Trying to explain the omission of silence in participants' definitions, I started to contemplate in a wider perspective. I came to realize that in Western societies, silence is seen as something negative, as a failure in communication (Simon and Garfunkel sang: "And no one dared/ Disturb the sound of silence"). Whereas sound is associated with life, silence has been equated to death, void, and isolation. Taking this a bit further, I dare say that we undergo a kind of silence-phobia, as silence can be extremely loud, terrifying, unveil our loneliness, give rise to a sense of alienation, and urge us to face our deepest thoughts and fears. This is not simply sound versus silence.

It may be about certainty versus indeterminacy; about motion versus inactivity; or about being versus nothingness.

Music definition and environmental awareness

If we accept that the long-term aim of education is to prepare students for their role as active and responsible citizens in a democratic society (Allsup 2012; Woodford 2005), then, critical reflection and sensitivity towards the environment we live in should be central themes in the music class. Music teachers must address the most pressing issue of our time: environmental degradation (Shevock 2017). Seeking to build a responsive society, the care for the natural environment and the development of ecological awareness becomes a cornerstone. While this may seem to be outside of what some consider the scope of our profession, it is in line with interdisciplinary approaches, which are prominent in contemporary educational theory (Morton 2012).

Shevock (2017) argues that music education should be expanded to include ecological literacy, which has been defined as "reflection and action for positive transformation of humanity in regard to the ecological crises we face" (p. 8). In light of the environmental crisis, raising students' ecological awareness is an important aim of general and music education (Morton 2012). Achieving that aim entails an understanding of the importance of living musically in harmony with the earth, recognition of the physical materials used in music, and consciousness about our responsibilities in fostering social-ecological justice. The ecological aspect refers to the ecological-musical discussion of past and existing practices that are needed to sustain the earth and its ecosystems. Also, we should take into account that ecological, political-economic and cultural systems are all connected.

Can we bring ecological thinking into music? I think we can! And this is crucial for a number of reasons. First, the earth has the same rights as humans. Nature is the prime source of life, and music relies on nature: musical sounds exist due to natural resources. Focusing on the intersection of environmentalism and music education, Morton (2012) asks music educators to strive towards an "eco-aesthetics". For her, as all music education resources "begin and end as part of Planet Earth" (p. 477), we must secure a more sustainable planet. In this line of thinking, greater awareness of music cultures of 'others', consideration of their musical values, and empathy with their emotional-musical life can increase sensitivity to the condition and needs of their ecosystem.[16] Further goals in music education should focus on preventing ecological catastrophe and saving natural resources, on environmental awareness and sensitivity, and on controlling of the disastrous consumerism (Titon 2018). Dealing with such issues can be implemented in short-term lesson planning to long-term philosophical positions. Practically speaking, in our classrooms we should prefer found or recycled objects to expensive Orff instruments. For Shevock (2017), instrument-making by students can be a part of resisting waste more broadly.

Lessons about climate change and sustainability are important, but some teachers believe that such issues are not related to the content of music education. However, how ironic is learning so many theoretical things about music harmony but ignoring the importance of harmony in ecological systems? Why do we teach our students about consonance and dissonance in music works and not in human actions?

It is mandatory that students consider their consumerist attitudes and habits and their tendency to purchase new expensive products (i.e., musical-technological gadgets). By this, I do not mean that they must turn their backs on the material advantages of our culture or on their desires for its products. The point here is that students should be encouraged to make decisions that

take the ecological cost into account. Students must be helped so that they develop a music-ecological identity. They must recognize that only people with money and time can obtain musical-technological devices, whereas millions of people across the globe do not have access to such products.

It is imperative that we take responsibility for our musical-ecological actions and consider how music education can lead to destroying the natural resources (i.e., expensive instruments), focusing on issues of overconsumption. It is vital that we remind ourselves that our power to control the environment has dramatically increased (which is a bad aspect of anthropocentrism colored by social-cultural fallacies), but it has generated many more problems than actually solved; problems that many populations suffer from. Taking into account that our civilization is obsessed with the idea of progress, we must ask ourselves "Progress towards what"?

The problem in approaching music merely as 'fine art' and aesthetic entity

The aesthetic rationale for music education has been used as the key to nature and value of music, and transformed into ideology.[17] However, through time, it has become apparent that the notion of aesthetic is a cultural construction, and it was not the timeless absolute its advocates had claimed it was (Bowman 2006, Regelski 2003). Assuming that music works are exhausted by their aesthetic qualities means that the way such works are integrated into forms of life is missed. When music is used to serve a social purpose, it is not just an aesthetic object but also capable of shaping social norms and building collective action. Over and above, defining music as art means adding it to the old, closed system of *fine arts* where artistic expressions, such as graffiti, comics, rock festivals, fashion, jewelry design, tapestry, pottery, home

decoration, popular music videos, building lighting, to name a few, are missing.

The university students in this project tended to ascribe aesthetic-sacred qualities to music. While they did not constantly use the word 'aesthetic', it was certainly implied. Music's cultural and aesthetic values were both acknowledged as part of the Western world we live in. As already stated, many music teachers wrote that music is 'culture', 'art' or 'an art form'—referring to concepts of aesthetics, creativity and expression—and emphasized aesthetic dimensions of music experiences. Yet, when I asked them what they meant by 'art', 'culture', and 'aesthetics', they reacted with nervous laughter and there was a feeling of unease. Clearly, thinking of the concepts of art, art-worlds, and culture, one can realize that there is little agreement about them. The word 'culture' carries an immense diversity of meanings with vague boundaries. Analogously, the scientific definition of 'art' is notoriously difficult. Being able to identify something as art is much less demanding than being able to define it.[18]

Most art definitions assume the preeminence of the Western art-world regarding art creation and appreciation (Davies 2008). Carroll (2001) notices the absence of consensus about what defines art, adding that the question "What is art?"—a central one for philosophers—can be taken in a number of different ways because, at different times, it has signaled a request for different kinds of information.[19] Thus, music-as-an-artform presupposes understanding a set of practices in a specific system of values, which can be examined within a certain historical time and space. When someone identifies a work as art, then the work becomes a candidate for appreciation for its greatness, which, therefore, must be passed to the next generation.

With respect to culture, its various definitions reflect different scientific perspectives for understanding and evaluating human thinking, actions, and historic progress. Even before the advent of globalization, the anthropologists

Kroeber and Kluckholn ([1952] 1963) counted more than 160 formal definitions of culture. Some shared cultural traits were: knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, capabilities, and habits convictions. These traits provide the cultural community with a unique identity, one that distinguishes it from other communities. A general current view is that culture is about common values, memories, narratives, and ways of thinking that groups of people (classes, communities, nations) share in a particular place and at a particular time. Culture is concerned with matters of identity, social organization, symbolic exchange, and structures that serve ends, such as ethnicity, heritage, norms, meanings, and beliefs (Rao and Walton 2004).[20] Music is one of the cultural goods (Klamer 2004), alongside other cultural goods and structures like myths, language, religion, traditions, political systems, ceremonies, temples, and monuments. We can discover music's cultural discourse by examining the culturally defined forms, systems, beliefs, objectives, and values in which members of a cultural group engage with music.

Aesthetic appreciation is intrinsically embedded in culture and historical tradition. The concept of 'beauty' is indisputably central to the aesthetic appreciation of music, although aesthetic experiences comprise other components as well (Eerola et al. 2018). The term 'beauty' is context-dependent and, in addition, there is a wide diversity of beauty theories. Aesthetic aspects resonate with philosophical, political, and ideological issues.

Music education conceived exclusively as aesthetic education undoubtedly marginalizes, and even excludes, critical dimensions of music making as a mode of human action or praxis. From such perspective it may neglect issues of gender and race, music's social and political significance, music's connivance in issues of power, music's role to the construction of individual and collective identities, among many others (Allsup 2012; Woodford 2005). Following Bowman (2006) and Regelski (2017a, 2003), who oppose traditional aesthetic theories, modern music literacy can be seen as a

tool that helps students understand the music discourses and practices which are embedded in the social and cultural nexus. Unfortunately, many music teachers do not question music as a 'fine' art, which exists solely to promote aesthetic experience, a notion that is uncritically propagated by their conservatory and university studies (Regelski 2019). While most of them know little or nothing about aesthetic theories, they choose to favor "the noble-sounding educational and advocacy claims made in its behalf" (Regelski 2019, 98)

Trying to bring in fore the problem with the aesthetic argumentation, I asked the music teachers whether music always encourages us to act responsibly. All of them, without a second thought, answered a loud "Yes!". It was the perfect time for me to refer to Nazis' practices during the Second World War when they used to relax and gain aesthetic pleasure from their horrible operations in the camps while listening to classical music. Thus, everything is political in music, in one way or another.

Acknowledging that music diversity and cultural diversity influence each other (Campbell 2004; Elliott and Silverman 2015), music educators must avoid the tendency to ground their notions of cultural-musical forms merely in aesthetics. Having said that, aesthetic experiences are not trivial or a luxury; they are inherent human needs and desires, the desire for beauty. Yet beauty, and music alike, is always context dependent. Cultural understanding of musical objects and practices is not identical to their aesthetic understanding.

The long-lasting debate between 'high' and 'low' music culture

Music teachers' responses suggest widespread acceptance of music diversity, but relatively less favorable reception to popular music. Interestingly, most of them emphasized the negative aspects of popular music, limiting the

importance of music to the experiences and study of 'serious' music. In fact, these types of responses were the norm. They tended to focus on classical music in the sense that it offers a deeper emotional message. They viewed popular music as enemy in their mission. According to them, classical music is the only way for students to define their aesthetic identity. A teacher stated: *Popular music puts our mind to sleep*. Another wrote: *We have a moral responsibility of keeping popular culture out of our music lessons*. One might reasonably ask why popular music was not considered as 'real' music by music teachers, despite the fact that other popular forms, such as rap, trap, electro etc., are fascinating and meaningful to children and teenagers. I must admit that I find discouraging the fact that teachers who don't know about or listen to popular music feel as if they have the right to have an opinion about it.

Most teachers conceded that they had denied opportunities to explore the perspective of popular music in their class and were uninformed about the research that has proven to find a positive relationship between the use of popular music and student motivation (Vasil et al. 2019, Hess 2019). Thus, we can say that the understanding of the world of popular music has only marginally advanced. Yet, popular music reflects the values of our society, however positive (desirable) or not. By this, I am not saying that all pop musicians are great; and I do not deny the fact that there is the market of music, which drives our consumer habits and purchases, or that media and music industries decide what the public should think what 'good' music is. All I am saying is that we must overcome the notion of the sacred qualities of high art, be skeptical of its exaggeratedly romanticized status, and make steps in valuing and respecting students' popular culture.

Another characteristic in music teachers' answers was the dualistic thinking that divides things into right versus wrong: high culture versus mass/popular/low culture, cultivated tastes versus 'mass' tastes, serious versus ephemeral, intellectuality versus entertainment, professional versus

untrained musicians, and music as background versus foreground activity. However, these borders are artificial. Approaching music through such dichotomies raises issues of elitism and does not permit pluralism and multiplicity of views. Certainly, all high art does not represent the values of dominant (and therefore oppressive) classes. Nevertheless, Music-as-High-Culture and Music-as-Art stand for institutional values, elite practices, concert halls, high-priced objects, great Western art works, connoisseurship, aesthetic judgment criteria, and refined reception. It is a kind of fetish-ization of music. Again, this has direct implications for music education. When we support an old-fashioned way of approaching music, intentionally or not, we reinforce political ideologies, which employ a kind of oppression, ideologies that music education must struggle to define itself against.

Praxial accounts refute 'high culture' by which the elite few define themselves as 'cultivated' in comparison to the 'uncultivated' masses, and address all kinds of music performances and musical 'doings' as equal, reasserting the importance of personal agency and the sociality of music (Regelski 2003). However, teaching music appreciation in schools and music conservatories still entails exposure to and glorification of the greatest masterpieces of the Western canon (Elliott and Silverman 2015, Jorgensen 2002). These works are considered as a putative means to personal improvement. However, they exercise elitism and create a divide between 'art' music and real-life music. In my view, the study of popular culture offers students insights in ways 'high' culture cannot. For instance, through analyzing selected song lyrics, skills that are necessary for democratic thinking and critical citizenship, can be developed. After all, popular music—rap, r&b, trap, electro etc.—plays an important role in students' daily experiences outside school.

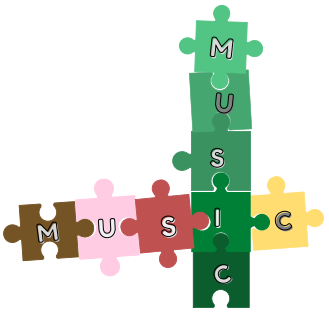
The 'now' of music

Most music teachers did not refer to the 'now' of music. They anchored music to past times and placed more emphasis on the notion of music as one of the 'fine arts', subscribing to the aesthetics of modernism. It seemed they did not understand the music genres of our time, the culture that produces them and the aesthetic-political logic of remixes and mashups. Moreover, they stated their fear for the loss of Western musical supremacy in the school curriculum. It follows from these considerations that music teachers often cannot see beyond what has been established through their institutional studies. In short, their notions of what constitutes music come from a time when theorists provided a privileged place to absolute music and formalism. However, this justification of music is itself the product of a particular historical juncture (the romantic notion of the 19th-century music), one that is now past, and promotes a sort of snobbism.

Today musicians are engaging with digital technologies to generate new models and new practices of difference and interrelation in music (Born 2005). Different kinds of computer software afford unprecedented possibilities for manipulating and transforming musical material. At any rate, music technology has come to stay. A challenge for music educators is to support their students in distinguishing the differences among different ways of composing music, such as using paper and pen, an instrument in hand, or apps on the computer and cellphones. In the meantime, we must bear in mind the digital divide: access to technology is hardly universal.

Yet, music studies have been insufficiently concerned with the ways music forms have changed their meanings and uses. Regelski (2017), in his call for changes to music education, underlines that if school music education's aim is to be relevant to the life well-lived, we must "build bridges to the music-world outside of school" (55). He proposes the "good for" criterion which is useful in how and why music is valued in our societies (Regelski 2020).

So, what next? Do we live at the end of an epoch? Which will be the set of prerequisites for future people in order to participate in the music world (as musicians, composers, producers, listeners, re-mixers and so on)? Will artificial composers render music making differently and how? The short answer is that we don't have a certain answer. But it is clear that progress will depend on how far and quickly music technology develops, and what kind of deontology we will employ.



A few further thoughts with respect to music teachers

Any definition is constructed in the gap between our experience and our description of that experience. In the quanta theory of physics, the observer plays a role in determining the outcome. Similarly, in the case of music definition, each agent claims a relative truth, which is supported by her/his own belief system. Yet, 'truth' about music—if such a thing exists—cannot emerge from a single point of view. It can only come from critical inquiry and the willingness to face the tensions among various approaches. Besides, truth is as relative as assumptions about 'objective' realities and worldviews are. And most of all, truth is prescribed in a discursive system that has the power to establish it from a privileged standpoint.

I strongly believe that the analysis of the current realities and the perspectives of others in our multicultural societies must determine the scope of music education. Put another way, a primary musical-social goal is an improved awareness of other people. This presupposes the investigation of our own values and goals, and a better understanding of our musical and educational selves. That challenge leads us to central questions: Who am I as a music teacher? Am I prejudiced? What are the external and internal forces that shape my thinking? What do my ideas say about my teaching attitudes and values? Becoming aware of one's own notion about music results in greater sensitivity to what others feel and do *with*, *for*, and *through* music.

Bakhtin ([1971] 1986) has stated: "In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be located outside the object of his or her understanding—in time, in space, in culture" (7). The objective, therefore, is to look at ourselves from outside, see the same matter from different points of view, and be open to others' perspectives and music experiences. It is possible, then, that much of what we will discover is incompatible with our previous notions, and we realize that what we thought to be the rule is in fact only a part of the whole.

In their classes, the participants in the project encountered cases of discrimination, oppression, and social inequality, which they did not ignore. Yet, in order to be active actors working for the rights of minority groups, we have to be more critical of our conception regarding music values and functions in non-Western cultures. Given that most today's societies are demographically multicultural, it may be easier for us to enter into multiple perspectives, be aware and sensitive about music minorities, and 'decolonize' our thinking.

As demonstrated in the presentation of the project, music teachers felt the need to include the concept of education in their definition. They also expressed their fundamental responsibility as music teachers to protect their students from the 'bad wolf' of cultural industries and mass media. At the same time, they tended to support a competitive system in which only the most skillful (the 'best', the 'gifted') can survive and succeed. However, this practice unavoidably has negative effects for students with low self-esteem (Regelski 2017). They appeared to ignore the fact that music education in a music conservatory setting is also an industry by itself, which only affluent parents are able to provide for their children (a fact that is another well-kept secret). Systemic models of music education operate in the same manner as multinational music industries.

One of the main issues that became apparent during the project was not just about what is known of music but also the ways and sources by which we have come to conceive it. Notably, the music teachers tended to share a common institutional mentality. The trouble lies in the fact that we often take things for granted, without thinking deeper about them. By saying this, I mean that the participants preferred the safety of their 'McLuhanean see-environments', namely the institutional perspective of classical music, and found it difficult to stand outside the object of their understanding, in Bakhtinean terms. Nonetheless, non-Western ideas of music, at least in some instances, are not easily reconcilable with Western conceptions. Non-Western societies exhibit a range of musical practices and cultural uses that far exceed the bounds of Western theories of music (Cross 2012, 671). In several non-Western cultures, people learn through music practices how to behave morally and work together in harmony with nature.

By philosophizing about music's definition, a personal journey begins which frames one's personal philosophy about music education and requires a practical response. The definitions generated by the music educators illustrated some fundamental problems in the field. In particular, they mostly identified music with meaningful objects of aesthetic value. By doing this, they reproduced a description they inherited from the thinking of modernity, resulting in imprisoning music in a sentimental idealism. I dare say that the doctrine of aestheticism "art for art's sake" appeared to pervade their thinking.[21] This sounds so out of date today in our crisis-of-values societies where horrific phenomena and hideous ideologies—such as terrorism, fundamentalism, racism, and neo-Nazism—gain more and more power. Besides, the music world has changed so rapidly over the course of the 20th century—and even more in 21st century—that previous discourses now seem inappropriate for any meaningful discussion about the essence of music.

I end this section with some questions on issues of democracy and multiculturalism. Do we need a more democratic definition of music and the music world? How can defining music foster democracy? In my opinion, starting a conversation about the definition of music is another way of thinking what it means to be human. This is well accepted but highly abstract. Why is music uniquely valuable as a human activity? What distinguishes music from other human activities, which can also make us act ethically?

The definition provided by the Compact Oxford English Dictionary has as follows: "[Music is] (1) the art of combining vocal or instrumental sounds in a pleasing way, (2) the sound so produced, (3) the written or printed signs representing such sound." What is non-democratic in the above statement? In my view, there are several components missing here: a) bodily sounds b) mechanical-technological sounds c) oral transmission. We would expect to read that: music is a universal phenomenon with manifold various functions and meanings for individuals and social groups; these meanings are as many as the world traditions; they vary depending on the context in which music is used; music is a form of literacy that involves bodily-physical, cognitive, social, emotional, cultural, ethical, and aesthetic abilities; music works stand in specific historical-musical relation to earlier works; their functions are continually evolving; they are created with specific cultural intentions; all musics are equally valid. An alternative path is to seek to define and envisage realities, not words and concepts. One thing is definite: this may be the time of change, as the old definitions are no longer suitable. New definitions have to be conceived and formulated.

The investigation of the definition of music can serve as a starting point to talk about groups of people, many of whom have been overlooked, giving cultural value to their practices. Regarding the treatment of 'others', all participants agreed that we shouldn't rank 'our' music as superior to the music of 'others'. Seeing the world through the eyes of others is something

extremely difficult to achieve, yet well worth striving for. Such attention to diversity and particularity requires that multiculturalism become a pivotal theory (Campbell 2004) under the condition that it helps recognize the status of marginal cases stimulating respect, solidarity, empathy, and caring for others.

It is repeatedly said that music can open us up to experiences of otherness. In our time, the notion of 'otherness' is being commodified for consumption (i.e., exoticism, folklore, tourism) at an unprecedented rate. At the same time, cultural stereotypes still exist globally. Unfortunately, university courses pay little attention to the notion of the superiority of the Western canon. A direct application of this attitude is illustrated in music educators' decision to familiarize their students with the music of Beethoven, Bach, Handel, and other great composers (which are male, white and dead), and introduce them to the experience of aesthetic pleasure.

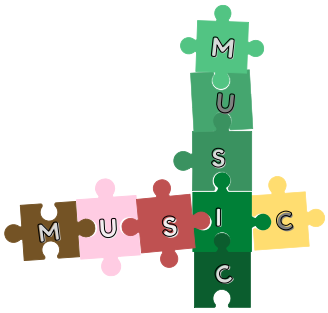
Hegemonic Western-oriented conceptualizing of music can lead to a notion where all values and ideas converge in only one 'correct' direction.[22] It includes what we would think of as outright ethnocentrism[23], neo-Nazism, or racism. Do our values reflect and affirm the values of certain cultural groups at the expense of others? Do we feel safe in our position of dominance? Do we recognize the ways others view the music world and act within it? Do people who have no access to classical masterpieces know less about themselves? Why do we insist on freedom of music expression and ignore the violations of freedom of expression thousands of people across the globe? The investigation of these questions is of vital importance in our times when the migrant/refugee crisis is often accompanied by xenophobia, racism, and violent extremism. These questions can help us consider the asymmetry of power between the affluent West and the impoverished non-Western societies, to fight cultural chauvinism, and, ultimately, work for a more democratic conception of music.

In Western societies, non-Western cultures are generally examined in relation to values, attitudes, and historical perspectives of white people of European descent (Schriver 1998, 64). However, the music values of the Western-type societies, at least the dominant groups, are radically different from those of non-Western societies. Thus, we must question the notion of Western cultural supremacy and privilege within the societies we live in. We must go beyond individual musicians or music works to examine the ideological machinery or elite classes. We must not limit our analysis to what the Western society as 'music'. Small (1998) articulates that scholars of Western music "have quietly carried out a process of elision by means of which the word *music* becomes equated with 'works of music in the Western tradition'" (3, his emphasis).

To recapitulate, music is inflected with political-ethical questions and dilemmas regarding the nature of musical practices and the privileged status that music bears in certain situations. Music works serve cultural, social, political, economic, and ideological functions. As we build up our understanding about what music is for, about the functions of music (Kokkidou 2018), issues of multiculturalism emerge. Multiculturalism is not solely an ethnic or racial matter. It is required that we step outside of ourselves to actually consider how we think, what we are doing, and what our aspirations for music education are; that we transcend West-centrism, confront our own biases, and meditate on the importance of music practices in various communities. Yet, we often use inadequate multicultural stories and musical examples in incomplete ways. In that prism, the multicultural question in music education still remains unanswered.

All in all, the present project was found to have offered participants the opportunity to discuss not only the definition of music but to reflect on their ideas, biases and attitudes about the music world, namely modes of thinking and stereotypical assumptions that have been accumulated over time. It also

provided them with the chance to reflect on what they are doing and what they might like to change in their classes. Teachers reported that this project made them move into unfamiliar territory. But they also admitted that their perceptions could not be cast off so easily.



Music definition project and implications for music education

What does music mean in relation to music education? The ways we conceptualize music have significant implications for music education, in terms of its aims, the repertoire and methods we use, and the expected outcomes of our endeavors as music educators. Once reflecting on the music meanings gained through discussion and conceptual understanding, we have to transfer those insights into practice in the music class. We therefore need to look at the music definition as something more than just a lexicological endeavor. In this, Dewey (1910) is clear: "[Definitions] are not ends in themselves as they are frequently regarded even in elementary education but instrumentalities for facilitating the development of a conception into the form where its applicability to given facts may best be tested. (95) [...] In the reaction against ready-made verbal definitions and rules, the pendulum should never swing to the opposite extreme, that of neglecting to summarize the net meaning that emerges from dealing with particular facts" (212).

How fundamental is the definition of music to the music to be studied? In my opinion, the issue of music's definition should be considered as a dominant one in music education and deserves attention from many perspectives. This discussion should be viewed as a dynamic and dialectical

process. However, it is not an easy matter and has various and different degrees of complexity. What activities should we design and implement, and why? How can these be related personally to a student's life? How can we present a holistic picture of musical world(s) to our students?

I argue that investigating the definition and meaning of music in class can teach students powerful lessons about what means to be 'musical' and to live musically (Elliott and Silverman 2015); about the dialectical condition of music and society; how to construct cultural awareness; and how to act upon complexity that is inherent in musical-cultural worlds. The meaning of music can engage students in a complex set of debates across a set of social and cultural boundaries (language, religion, race, power, disability, gender, sexual orientation, class, status etc.) and help them advance their thinking. The meaning of music is not just on the periphery. It is actually central to what we teach and who we are. However, it has not received the attention it deserves. By realizing the significance of opening a discussion about the definition of music with their students, music educators are more able to evaluate the contextual validity of the content they deliver and transform their teaching practices.

We could think of music as it "gets into action" and what music makes possible, namely what it "affords" (DeNora 2003, 46). Praxialism, in line with pragmatism, stresses that music is of and for the down-to-earth conditions of society and everyday life, thus all musics have a 'good reason' to be (Regelski 2003). Music praxis is always cultural, social, ideological, and political (Regelski 2017, Bowman 2007, Jorgensen 2002). Music performances are political in the sense that they are embedded within structures of power: where they are performed, by whom, and for whom, reveal a great deal about the cultural and social status of the performance as well as the performers (Trehub et al. 2015). Our reaction to music can be either positive or negative in part due to the fact that it carries multiple connotations and has different meanings for different

individuals and societies as well. In this vein, what needs to be considered is: ideologies; belonging; power (slavery, freedom); heterogeneity of subjectivity; movement (diaspora, refugees, labor); development and maintenance of cultural identities; cultural stereotypes; worship (believers' music); the sponsorship of music (church, aristocracy, bourgeoisie, patrons, current cultural policies); musical exchange and economy; and ethics. There are also conflicting values that have to do with issues of diversity, otherness, solidarity, oppression, and privilege.

The process of constructing a music definition can be challenging, providing additional considerations for students. Focusing on the meaning of music, students can think critically about music phenomena and appreciate how music cultures are linked, despite their differences. However, theoretical constructs—such as every definition—are difficult to perceive. That being the case, music teachers must give examples, discover new frontiers, and provide students with opportunities where they can apply their knowledge in practice and think of music definition through activities drawn from real life situations.

In my teaching experience, some activities can be effectively and efficiently triggered by questions such as: What are the boundaries between 'musical' and 'non-musical'? What couldn't be done without music? Or, how could things be totally different due to the absence of music? What makes a sound musical while another is non-musical or just noise? How does a music work become a work of 'art' that is worth consideration? How and why do musical changes happen? How does music serve as a medium for social protest? How does music help us see the world through the eyes of other people?

Another way of thinking critically about the definition of music involves personal music experiences. We can stimulate students through questions such as: What is the role of music in your life? How do your musical tastes influence who you are, what you do and how you do it? How do you satisfy

your needs in your engagement with music? Do you have friends who belong to different music groups from yours? Do you respect the music of others and in what way? Are there any music pieces which remind you of things (people, situations, events) which otherwise could be forgotten? Who are you as a music student? One aspiration is to provide them with meaningful experiences which would be based on their answers as well as help them think, communicate ideas, and develop cultural awareness and an interest in the role of music in their studies and in society. The ultimate goal is to help them think *for*, *through*, *with*, *about*, and *in* music; to develop meta-reflection of music world(s) and apprehend their music identity as an aspect of their self-realization.

A curriculum that puts music's meanings at the core promotes multicultural awareness and empowers students in thinking about music and culture beyond national boundaries and through active learning in real-world examples. An interesting case study could be the banning of music, as it happens, for instance, in many regional systems of the Islamic world. Can this be a protest against loose morals? Could it be an aspect of war against idolatry? Is it an expression of a cultural ideal of asceticism? Can one speak of an over-estimation of music, reflected on a kind of demonization of this irresistible life force? Or is music banned without being demonized (Bedford 2001)? Such questions have always been a part of the agenda of multicultural music education, but they are now coming more imperatively to the fore.

How can our students learn to recognize musicians (composers, performers, producers, arrangers), music communities, rituals, music materiality etc., as factors that influence the meaning of music? Drawing from thematic areas identified in previous sections of the present monograph, we can organize projects with our students inspired by the guiding principles of the 'music definition project'.

1. It is important for our students to know and understand other cultures' ideas about what music is, how music is related to the life of a community, and how it serves and reflects its values and views of the world. Students can be further asked what makes music valuable—in conjunction or contradistinction to other human activities. They can examine and evaluate the functions of music to determine their scope in various settings (Kokkidou 2018) and be aware that "music is deeply social in its genesis" and music's impacts and meanings vary "according to the needs it serves" (Regelski 2017, 43). We can ask them to value music and its functions in their lives, in terms of 'right results' for individuals, groups, and society (Regelski 2020). Finally, they can think of what they want to learn about music.

2. Students can investigate music as a phenomenon (functions, events, systems, traditions, rules etc.) so as to be able to evaluate musical performances and their intent (creativity, prestige, values, functionality). They can further ponder the established cultural-musical norms and values, and identify economical, political, and ideological factors, which influence production, distribution, and reception of music (what people do with music). They can examine music as a tool for activism and find examples and reasons of censorship. Essentially, great progress could be made if students realized that there are core concepts and questions in their music studies that need examination.

3. Students can focus on the material components of music: scores, funding, recordings—from wax cylinder and vinyl albums to compact discs and digital music files—concert tickets, music libraries, in order to conceive music's changing ontology. They can also discuss how original compositions co-exist alongside cover versions and musicians' need to arrange, remix and mashup pre-existing music pieces. Finally, they can arrange a piece they love to play or listen to.

4. Just as some emotions or behaviors are universal and some are culturally defined, the same is true for musical behaviors and expressive forms. Students can trace music's positioning in culture, as part of the nature and function of culture itself, as well as music bio-acoustic catholics.

5. People tend to value music based on their memories, that is, the space-time of the music experience and the specific way it is related to their feelings, thoughts, and desires. The meaning of such experience could be considered as existential. In this vein, we can ask students to contemplate on the question "Who am I musically?", recall a memorable music experience and 'transfer' it into music. They can experiment with musical sounds and gestures (by singing, playing their instrument, dancing, producing music on a computer) in order to create a short piece entitled "A meaningful music experience".

6. What is musicians' status in our culture? What is a classical musician worth in our societies? What kinds of institutions give value to their work? How could we describe the 'now' of music? Are remix and mashup creative practices? Students can discuss in groups the above issues and present their findings in class.

7. Every musical work is comprised of sounds and silences, organized in some way. Students can improvise setting silence as the basic musical feature. They could investigate how a piece can include significant periods of silence. They can use silences structurally, expressively, functionally (within a narration) and/or as a moment of reflection.

8. Younger students can make guesses, through brainstorming, about how our life would be without music. They could enumerate all kinds of music they know and their governing principles and functions. Older students can discuss 'what music is not' (i.e., animals' voices, industrial noise, geometry, chemistry, dress) and 'what is not for' (i.e., eating, surviving, laughing) documenting their responses. Further challenging questions are: is music a place?; an economical force?; a quality of material things?; something we see

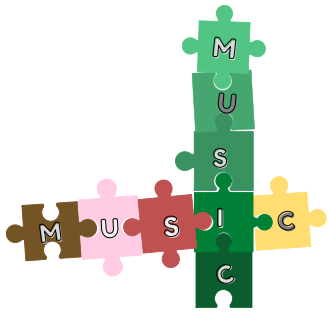
or smell?; which are its neighbors? These questions are demanding since answers require openness, lateral thinking, and metaphorical contemplation. Literally speaking, music is not a place, however it designates places and acoustic spaces; we cannot smell it, but we can smell music instruments; we cannot eat it but it is used in restaurants and can feed our minds; it is not a dress, but every music event and music genre has their own dressing codes; it is not geometry but it has patterns, symbols, analogies, symmetry (and asymmetry), lines and distances (melodies, intervals). Music's neighbors are: poetry (temporality, prosody, abstraction, progress), painting (representation, two-dimensional scores, colors, seizes), dance (time, bodily motion, action, rehearsals), and politics (systems, social influence, rhetoric, hegemony, propaganda), to name a few.

9. It is essential for students to realize why and how music matters for human life and its potentials for improving wellbeing and health (Elliott and Silverman 2015). The 'why', 'how' and 'what if…' approach can enable students to see the past, present, and future music world(s) critically, and begin their own journey towards reflective inquiry into their own music practices.

Summing up, music concerns the whole human being. Questions about the nature, value and meaning of music should be considered and meditated not only for their own sake, but as a road to seek ways by which to act ethically-responsively-pedagogically-musically in our classes. The goal is not to reach a definition of music. Rather, the issue of definition is a pathway to think about music holistically; enhance our awareness on the inequalities, which exist in music education practices; keep in mind that we educate tomorrow's citizens; and make efforts for culturally responsive teaching.

In doing so, we can think of music not only as beautiful and expressive sound patterns but, more importantly, as a complex phenomenon with different cultural-social meanings and far-reaching implications for people of

the world (Elliott and Silverman 2015). In different cultures, ideas about functions, power, influence, as well as aesthetic appreciation of music will vary. Understood this way, we must see "the big picture" of the music world(s) and examine music's social functions across culture and through time (Kokkidou 2018).



Coda I (academic)

It has been said that to save forests, we must think beyond the trees. In the same vein, I argue that to save music education, we must think beyond the musical. A music definition project can provide lenses with which we can connect theoretical perspectives to music life of the real world. It entails the act of understanding society and culture, especially by critique and questioning. It can illuminate the nature of music—as an event, phenomenon, practice, function, object or text. In effect, it can help us develop visions and commitments for music education. It is a starting point for exploring alternatives to hegemonic conceptions of music education and can broaden the scope of our profession. In this light, the study of music definition can be considered as the critical cornerstone of thought in music education. At the outset, it is fruitful to examine multiple avenues of seemingly unrelated sources. The ultimate goal is to gain sight of the big picture of the music world(s) and bring meaning to concepts and ideas by moving beyond mere definitions. Therefore, the definition of music has considerable ideological and moral significance.

Thinking about the definition of music, it becomes clear that this cannot happen by examining merely the structural elements of music. Music is not a closed system; it is always about more than acoustic events or scores. What matters is the context. While we are free to interpret music in a countless number of ways, there are contextual factors (historical period civilization,

society, culture, sub-culture, economy, race, class, gender, religion, etc.), which inform and direct our interpretations.

The way we think about music and music education is closely related to the way we think about human beings. I believe that an important aspect of music education is to develop a broad framework of reference within which theories and practices can be associated with philosophical-ontological inquiry. The overloaded curriculum content can be the biggest threat to meaningful music experiences in school and studio lessons as well.

One may argue, however, that such a demanding task requires much more research. It is an open-ended discussion, and it is related to the understanding of the multidisciplinary nature of music. The term 'music' is under constant construction in a discourse where each term often re-frames the other. It provides a quasi-unconscious map of social patterns and intensities. Music waits to be seen in new dimensions. And values may change. People may develop and adopt new musical or musical-social values.

I hope that this book will stimulate fruitful discussions in our field, among in-service and pre-service music educators. The possibility of cross-disciplinary dialogue seems promising. On the other hand, this dialogue will flourish only if we share some basic agreements about the crisis in our profession (Bowman 2007) and our political and ethical orientations. The relation of music and music education to political or ethical positioning seems more crucial than ever before (Regelski 2017).

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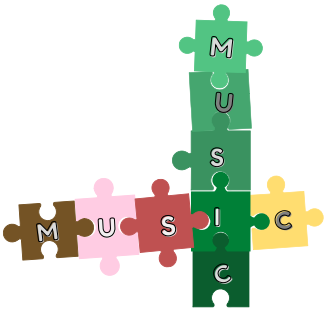

Coda II (emotional-ethical)

This book was finalized in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic and of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery's murders by police officers. In fact, the simultaneous crisis of COVID-19 and police brutality is an equity test. Statistical data shows disparities in death rates: in all age categories, death rates among vulnerable populations (immigrants) and Black and Hispanic/Latino people are much higher than for white people.[24]

Due to COVID-19, our students do not feel safe. Many families have no health care, and many parents are losing their jobs. Due to civil unrest, our students are confused and feel unprotected. This condition of uncertainty and complexity creates a demanding environment for music education.

In our profession and mission, the new realities of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis do not merely mean unexpectedly disrupted routines or a shift to virtual learning. Physical isolation is highly problematic for our students. What does it mean for our future? Happily, during the quarantine days, I watched many videos with musicians playing alone-together, as technology provides the means to do so. Yet, the question remains: when will COVID-19 allow us all to perform without keeping distance, and dance hand in hand?

The death of Floyd, Taylor and Arbery—all victims of racist violence—is an alarm that we are not doing enough to fight systemic racism and address our biases. We must collectively step up our efforts to anti-racist and anti-colonial music education, teaching students the history of racism and

oppression. MayDay response to the conditions of injustice (newsletter, June 12, 2020) is straight and inclusive: "We cannot move forward as a profession until we begin to grapple with our past. Education has been a system of legalized and monetized white supremacy for which generations of Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color have paid an immeasurable price. That cost must be acknowledged, and the privilege that accrued to some at the expense of others must be reckoned with and redressed". So, we must find culturally responsive ways to engage students in a debate about the role that music can play to the ideal of social justice (even to economic-psychological recovery). We must avoid mono-cultural music narratives in our classrooms. We must try better to understand the construction of whiteness and maleness in European music. It is highly doubtful that we succeed if we do not acknowledge the inequities that we inherit and reproduce through our music practices and repertoires.

In these challenging times, we must take public positions that support minorities and vulnerable populations. We have to speak out on issues of injustices and inequality. It is imperative that we do not stay silent. Our voice and our music matter a great deal in this period.

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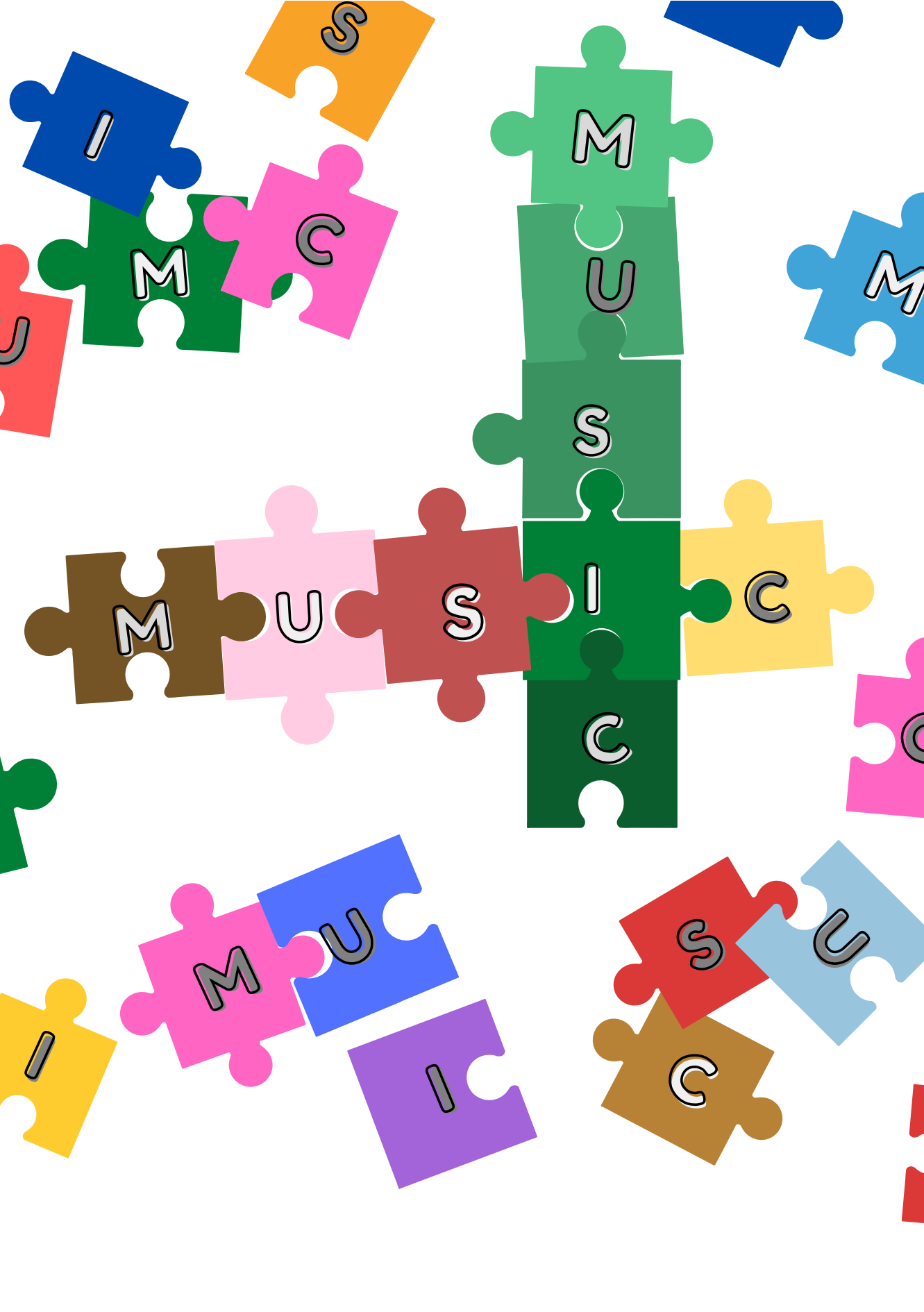
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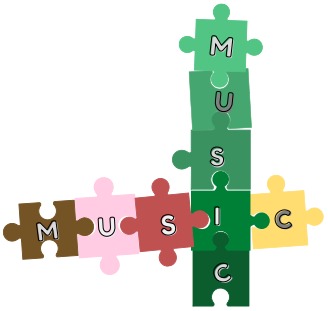

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1 No Muslim is encouraged to see Qur'anic recitation as music, because it substantially repeats the experience of revelation for Muhammad, who, we are told, rehearsed it with the angel. The recitation was imparted to God's messenger. It is about the being of divine revelation and has acquired its character, not according to the human criterion of what is musically expressive or beautiful, but according to the divine criterion of event (Bedford 2001). In addition, instrumental music counts as secular and cannot be used in religious settings.

2 Writing about the role of music in the healing rituals of the Tumbuka of Malawi, the anthropologist Friedson (1996) explains: "drumming serves 'clinical reality' to effect a cure while producing in the listener a mode of 'being-in-the-world' [...] Music and the world are given together. There is no distance between the two; they are equiprimordial" (134).

3 Blacking (1973) refers to music as "humanly organized sound" (12) and proposes that it can be considered as a context in which other events happen, and which could not occur without music. In his thinking, "an anthropological approach to the study of all musical systems makes more sense of them than analyses of the patterns of sound as things in themselves" (xi).

4 For Small (1998), "[I]t is only by understanding what people do as they take part in a musical act that we can hope to understand the function music fulfills in human life" (8).

5 In my research, I came across several definitions. Three of them (Kania's, Hamilton's, and Levinson's definitions) have attracted many scholars' interest. The definition of music that Kania (2011) defends has as follows: "Music is 1) any event intentionally produced or organized 2) to be heard, and 3) either (a) to have some basic musical feature, such as pitch or rhythm, or (b) to be listened to for such features" (12). Hamilton (2007) argues, "for an aesthetic conception of music as an art [...] according to which music is a human activity grounded in the body and bodily movement and interfused with human life"' (5-6). According to Levinson (1990), music is "sounds temporally organized by a person for the purpose of enriching or intensifying experience through active engagement (e.g., listening, dancing, performing) with the sounds regarded primarily, or in significant measure, as sounds" (273). It is worthy of note that Levinson's definition of art differs significantly from his music definition. The above definition does not fit into several music genres, which are composed for other purposes, such as film music and musak. Davies (2008) notices that Levinson's definition excludes music created through aleatoric procedures, background music and much film music, which does not aim to attract attention to itself as sound, and sound art which involves the ordering of sound for aesthetic appreciation but deliberately selecting sounds for their non-musical qualities. Kania (2013) points out that Levinson's definition is "aesthetic" as it requires the musician "to aim at eliciting a certain kind of heightened experience in the audience". He proposes the lullaby be sung as a counter-example to this definition: the singer who puts a baby to sleep intends "precisely the opposite of active engagement on the baby's part"(p. 639).

6 In '4E' music cognition theory—which conceives mental activities as Embodied, Embedded, Extended, and Enactive—"cognition (i) cannot be taken as separate from particular facts of the bodies we have, (ii) is scaffolded by the environment, (iii) is geared towards action in the world with a continuum between life and mind, and (iv) extends outside the skull-skin boundary to loop into the world" (Ryan and Schiavio 2019, 7).

7 The authors go on saying that [c]ultural, social, and contextual factors all contribute in defining and shaping one's musicking" (15).

8 Davies (2012) explains these ways in details. The functional definition of music takes us to consider music's multi-functionality where no single function stands out as primary. Moreover, music can serve opposed functions: to affirm group unity, values and identity, and to exclude others. The operational definition refers to music-specific neural brain regions or circuits which music activates. Today, a great deal of research in neuroscience

tries to explain the effects of music on the brain. This account would be more interesting if it were tied to the evolutionary origins and functions of music behaviors, examining whether music behaviors were evolutionary selected for their adaptive significance. However, not all musical universals need to be grounded in inherited, neurophysiological systems, and for this reason we need to consider the social histories of non-musical practices. The idea of socio-historical definition of music is that we define music as something, which stands in relation to a historical tradition of music making (practices, rules, styles, idioms, resources). In considering this view, the structural accounts are rather narrow. Finally, the structural definition considers music as a formal system or as a 'language' (syntax and semantics) in terms of its structural elements and principles, and their combinations and relationships. This approach to music's definition tends to bypass the crucial fact that music is a culturally embedded human practice. It is therefore necessary to consider contextual and non-musical features and pragmatic implications in the characterization of music.

9 Davies (2008, 2012, 2014) suggests that music can serve a multitude of functions: to be listened to for its own sake (a target of aesthetic contemplation); as a mnemonic device; as a form of communication; as a badge of group identity (to stimulate social involvement and shared identification); to regulate mood and emotions (i.e., to calm or stimulate); for entertainment; for marching and dancing; as accompaniment to a number of events and occasions activities (i.e., as a background 'wallpaper' for other activities, such as dining or shopping); to induce sleep; to make shoppers buy more; to enhance ritual (i.e., hymn singing); in the celebration of achievement and in the mourning of loss; to synchronise the movements of workers; to induce and sustain dissociation, or inward focus (in other words, to cocoon the individual in a wall of sound that excludes others and the world); even to induce cows to give more milk. In addition, music is an emblem of social status, it is treated as a significant measure of each person's individuality according to their distinctive musical tastes, it is a commodity that can be sold and traded, and can be adopted for its therapeutic and medicinal benefits.

10 Kane (2013, 263) offers a broad definition of transcendence: "the positing of any sphere (whether it be religious, secular, philosophical, ethical, aesthetic or otherwise) that exists outside the bounds of the mundane world, and which is manifested to this world only at special or singular moments."

11 Surprisingly, in many projects I have run with preschool students, I noticed that they use the term 'music' correctly and say a lot of things about it, based on their own experiences. Some indicative answers are: "music is when we dance and sing", "music is when we play with instruments in the classroom", "my uncle plays the bouzouki", "my sister learns the piano and shows me how to play it."

12 "One thing about which fish know exactly nothing is water, since they have no anti-environment which would enable them to perceive the element they live in." It is only when it is pulled from the water that the fish becomes acutely aware of its former environment. The challenge in achieving the awareness to notice the formerly unnoticed—what we call "integral awareness" of our total environment—is to create an appropriate "anti-environment" (McLuhan and Fiore 1968, 175).

13 The Greek notion of music included melody, poetry, and dance (the expression of music through movement). It is also interesting to know that the Greek word 'tragoudi' derives from the word *τραγωδία* (tragodia, tragedy). The first term *trago-* means goat, which was one of the metamorphoses of Dionysos (Latin Bacchus). The meaning of the second term *-odi* is ode.

14 Solitary music making for personal pleasure is likely to recall previous experiences of playing and hearing a piece, and evoke memories of learning it (see Trehub et al. 2015).

15 The music of the Baroque era made use of the special effect of silence in music. Baroque composers had used the rhetorical figures of general pause for increasing the expressivity of their works, and to illustrate concepts, such as eternity, death, sublime, and infinity (see Kaduri 2006).

16 An example of this is Feld's (1982) ethnography on Kaluli people of Bosavi, New Guinea who harmonize their music with the sounds of waterfalls and forest animals.

17 In fine-arts-based ideology, Regelski (2019) writes, a cultivated taste group devoted to "high culture" is regarded as superior "to the supposedly less cultivated and allegedly uncultured social classes and their merely entertaining arts" (80). The antidote to this narrow-minded view is to demonstrate a particular concern for music making as social practice, giving high priority to pragmatism that is absent in traditional analytic aesthetic accounts of arts. In short, the value of music education should be dependent on the "pragmatic musical impact on the lives of students, grown into adults" (82).

18 Weitz (1956) has suggested that the concept of art is open and subject to constant revision, because new art forms and styles will always arise. For Stecker (1997), the fact that there are different conceptions of art "does not make the search for a definition futile". It is rather "a good motivation to look for such a definition". Besides, everyone engaged with art theorizes about it and has some conception of it, even if she/he does not clearly articulate it. See Stecker, 1997, 25-26.

19 Art can be approached by means of historical narration, as Carroll (2003) proposes. In his view, artmaking and artgoing are connected with traditions, and every art object should be placed in a certain tradition namely "within a larger, historical constellation of objects" (16). He further notices that, historically, most art has been designed and produced with the intention to serve practical or instrumental purposes, including political and religious purposes, reinforce national and cultural identities, bolster ethos of the group, and celebrate or memorialize important occasions. He concludes that the definition functions as a "reliable standard for assessing whether or not something is a work of art" (78).

20 Rao and Walton (2004) write: "Our general view is that culture is about the relationships among individuals within groups, among groups, and between ideas and perspectives. Culture is concerned with identity, aspiration, symbolic exchange, coordination, and structures and practices that serve relational ends, such as ethnicity, ritual, heritage, norms, meanings, and beliefs. It is not a set of primordial phenomena permanently embedded within national or religious or other groups, but rather a set of contested attributes, constantly in flux, both shaping and being shaped by social and economic aspects of human interaction" (4).

21 The phrase "art for art's sake" is ascribed to Walter Pater. It can be found in a short essay he attached as a conclusion to in his book "Studies in the History of the Renaissance" (1873). Within the field of Music Aesthetics, this view was expressed by Hanslick ([1854] 1957) who stated that "the beauty of musical work is specifically musical […] independent of all alien, extramusical notions. (12) […] "the most essential condition to the aesthetic enjoyment of music is that of listening to a composition for its own sake." (100).

22 Stecker (1997) puts forward a political objection to the project of defining art, writing, "any attempt to define art necessarily is an instrument of repression, exclusion, or disenfranchisement" (26).

23 Ethnocentrism is about the tendency to see one's own group as more important, and more valuable than others (Schriver 1998, 65). It is an ideological system, in conflict with Humanism and Universalism. The postcolonial critic Bhabha (1994) categorically states: "The wider significance of the postmodern condition lies in the awareness that the epistemological 'limits' of those ethnocentric ideas are also the enunciative boundaries of a range of other dissonant, even dissident histories and voices—women, the colonized, postcolonial migration, minority groups, the bearers of policed sexualities" (5).

24 See on <https://www.brookings.edu/> (2020/06/16).

The definition of music is complicated by several factors. Music is everywhere. It holds sociability and individuality, freedom and limits. It is situated historically, philosophically, culturally, politically, economically, and ideologically, in a complex system of symbolic meanings. It has acquired various meanings and bears various connotations. In semiotic terms, music is polysemic: a complex signifier with many signifieds. From the very beginning of human history, people have tried to explain the nature of music and its importance in human life.

This book addresses issues about music's definition, through the implementation of a project conducted between 2017 and 2019 with post-graduate students (pre-service and in-service music educators) who had been teaching music for several years. The ultimate goal was to gain sight of the big picture of the music world(s) and bring meaning to concepts and ideas by moving beyond mere definitions.

Questions about the nature, value and meaning of music should be considered and meditated not only for their own sake, but as a road to seek ways by which to act ethically-pedagogically-musically in our classes. Music waits to be seen in new dimensions. I hope that this book will stimulate fruitful discussions in the field of music education.

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