

### **Philosophy of Music Education**

As a music educator, I believe that music benefits the entire human race. Consequently, it seems that in order to have students who can benefit society as holistically as possible, music must be an important part of the curriculum. Just as reading, writing and math are subjects, so is music. It has grammar, rules, theories, and requires creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving skills. In terms of what is required of students, they are essentially the same skills as reading, writing and math. However, music is also a subject that goes beyond grammar and rules. Music has an indefinable affective quality that can cause us to feel a range of emotions. Music can cause sadness, nostalgia, in some cases anger, and in others, great joy. I believe that as music educators, it is our responsibility to teach all of music: the grammar, the theories, the problem solving and most of all, the affective outcomes.

### **Knowledge about the subject of music**

Music teachers have a responsibility to educate students about the subject of music. Students should understand what the difference is between a major and minor key. They should know what a fourth sounds like, what a fifth sounds like, the difference between eighth and quarter notes. Just as students have to know that  $25 \times 4 = 100$  to fully understand that four quarters make up a dollar, they have to know the difference between a minor second and a perfect fifth to know why something sounds more open or resonant. Or the difference between whole notes and sixteenth notes to understand why a particular piece has so much forward motion to it. An understanding of the basic foundation of music is imperative to achieving higher levels of music making.

### **Everyone is capable of understanding and engaging with music**

I believe that all students are capable of learning and performing music at a high level. I do not believe that musicians possess some intrinsic gift or talent that others do not have. Anyone is capable of singing or playing music, and it is our job to ensure that our students do sing and play music. Not all students will become world-class performers; unfortunately some of our students might not even touch an instrument after leaving the program. However, I believe that as music educators, we have a responsibility to ensure that every student achieves a basic level of understanding of music, which will allow them to engage with all music in a meaningful way for the rest of their lives.

### **High quality standards**

I believe that all students deserve excellent models and should be held to high standards and expectations. As music teachers, we have a responsibility to demonstrate and to expect excellence from our students. Students should be exposed to only the best repertoire and performances. Just as in reading, or math, we do not ask them to read sub-par books and we do not accept answers that are off by a number. We should not ask them to engage with repertoire that is sub-par and we should not accept inaccurate singing or performances.

### **Affective qualities and outcomes**

Finally, if nothing else, students should be expected to identify and produce emotional qualities in music. I believe that students should be able to identify what they are feeling as they listen to music. In addition, we should ask students to perform music with different affective qualities. Through demonstration and marking of features, I believe it is possible to teach musicality. I expect students to alter their performance in order to be able to achieve a desired emotion from the audience. In order to be a healthy, functioning individual, I also believe that we must engage with our emotions on a regular basis. The music classroom has the potential to be the ideal environment in which students can explore, profess, and elicit emotions.