# A Social History of Music in US Schools: The Coalescence of Research and Practice

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ABSTRACT: Our aim in this article is to provide a critical review of the research on music in K–12 schools, from its historical origins and pedagogical developments to contemporary practices in a time of new and ongoing cultural awakenings. The article is rooted in a conceptualization of music education philosophy and practice found in the United States. We address the role of music in society and its schools, as well as the long-standing aims and purposes that define music education. The article chronicles the evolution of music education in schools, examines the reasons given for the enthusiastic continuation of bands, choirs, orchestras, and general music courses, and describes the turn in the mid-twentieth century toward research that would help shape contemporary pedagogical practices and learning processes. While the first part of the article offers a social history of American music education contexts and pedagogies, the second part reveals the coalescence of research and practice in the field over the course of some seventy years, with streams of influence arriving from musicology, psychology, sociology, and anthropology that have generated research questions and pedagogical policies and applications. Prevalent topics in contemporary research are reviewed, including developmental matters, modalities of musicianship, music education contexts, justifications for public school music education, teacher education, identities of students and teachers, and the issue of tradition and change in the formation of school music canons. We address societal factors that shape music education scholarship, including demographic currents and the diverse communities of US families whose children comprise school-age populations. Finally, we briefly consider the promise of music education for young learners and for the future of research in the field through a reevaluation of the aims of teaching music in schools and ways that it can serve the common good.

KEYWORDS: music education, K–12 music, social history of music education, pedagogies, canon, cultural diversity

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Music education is a field defined by music and its pedagogy and by the local, national, and international contexts in which it transpires. It consists of teachers and learners, carefully designed pedagogical sequences, and multiple streams of cultural and community interests that influence the nature of music, musical behaviors, and musical values. As a field, music education is a sphere of professional activity associated with government-authorized public schools and nongovernmental, privately funded schools that provide music instruction to children and youth from kindergarten through the twelfth grade. Music education in the United States encompasses the gamut of vocal and instrumental training, along with designated experiences in listening, movement, and creative expression. K–12 music education processes spill off into after-school programs, preschool and early childhood centers, and postsecondary school adult and community settings; music in higher education encompasses an array of music performances and academic studies within colleges, universities, and conservatories. These extend from K–12 music education, even as they are distinguished from it. While acknowledging that music learning happens through a variety of enculturative processes in families, through mediated means, and in realms far beyond those of formal practice, the field of music education is typically associated with musical experiences and study that occur

in institutions and through sequentially organized activities that are facilitated by trained, educated (and often state-certified) teaching musicians.

This article seeks to clarify what occurs in music education research as it is conceptualized in the United States, designed into curricular programs, and delivered in instructional processes in elementary and secondary schools. Part I describes US K–12 music education, particularly from the late nineteenth century up to the middle of the twentieth century, and reviews pedagogical developments during this period. All of this serves as the context for the main discussion of contemporary music education research. Part II begins with realms of scholarship that have emerged in the field since the 1950s through the influence of musicology, psychology, sociology, and anthropology, including developmental matters, modalities of musicianship, music education contexts, justifications for public school music education, teacher education, identities of students and teachers, and the issue of tradition and change in the formation of music school canons.

## PART I: MUSIC EDUCATION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Parallel to K–12 education writ large (Nisbet 2005), scholarly research on the topic of music teaching and learning is a relatively recent development (Leonhard and Colwell 1976). In nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America, the work of figures such as Horace Mann, John Dewey, and their male contemporaries imbued the field of education with a sense of gravitas, convincing scholars for the first time that the topic of education was worthy of "rigorous," scientific study in academia (Judd 1918). Of course, education research can be traced back to a time long before the involvement of these men, but as a domain long administered by women, both in the home and later in schools, traditional practices of education did not fit the narrow turn-of-the-century conceptualization of scholarly research. At that time, research in education and across the social sciences required a necessary distancing of the researcher from their subject to maintain scientific objectivity, and educators traditionally practiced paradigms of research that have only recently been recognized as valid—ones that today are referred to as applied research, action research, or Indigenous methodologies (Brannick and Coghlan 2007; TallBear 2014). Since they systematically collect student data and use it to inform their work, teachers have, in fact, been researchers since time immemorial, and to this day educational praxis continues to be influenced by history, philosophy, theory, data, and action (Mertler 2009; Kincheloe 2012; Niemi 2019). Educational research is tightly connected with the acts of teaching and learning, and as a result, it is not always possible to disentangle the history of education from the research on it. Likewise, music education research is linked with school practice (McCarthy and Goble 2005).

### A CONTEXTUAL HISTORY OF US MUSIC EDUCATION'S ORIGINS

Music education is an international phenomenon with an extensive history in the schooling of children and youth. Long before the eras of Western colonization and imperialism, and in places across the world, music has been formally taught and learned in a grand variety of contexts. From the seventeenth century onward, the music education of settlers in the US was rooted in the expressive practices of Europe, particularly England, France, and Spain, and eventually Germany. Early practices of music education were located in churches, where psalm-singing and hymnody took place and where rehearsals were focused on transmitting repertoire and singing style, in addition to such extramusical aims as the transmission of biblical stories and Christian ontology. Singing schools, many of them week-long community affairs taught by itinerant singing school masters, evolved to provide instruction in notational literacy and vocal technique so as to preserve and extend the knowledge of song repertoires (Keene 1987, 24).

By the nineteenth century, a vision for the education of all children in a publicly funded common school system was emerging in the United States, which already had as its model the community-funded common

schools in New England, whose intent was to weave religious education into a curriculum that also included reading, writing, and math. The leader of the campaign to establish standardized, tax-funded schooling was Horace Mann, a Massachusetts lawyer and state senator. As immigrants continued arriving in the US, many of whom did not hold Protestant beliefs, foundational studies once of a strictly religious character shifted to include math and literacy, supplemented by history and geography (Kaestle 1983). While the era of the locally supported common school had faded by the early twentieth century, and while decisions about education moved from local school boards to professional organizations of teachers and to federal and state bodies that funded the new public education (Goyette 2017), the vision of educating all children established the broader philosophies of reform like those of Mann, even when the practical realities often resulted in unequal opportunities for children and youth in rural and/or impoverished areas and across race, gender, and culture (Keene 1987; Varenne 2018).

Within the context of the common school's attention to spiritual and moral issues came the rise of public school music education. In 1838, the musical education of children and youth in American schools was formally established in Boston by singing teacher Lowell Mason, who introduced a songful presence within the school day (Birge 1937). Mason was well known as a hymn collector; his works include a compilation of Anglo-American-styled Sunday school music titled *The Juvenile Psalmist* (Mason 1829) and a children's school-music collection titled *The Juvenile Lyre* (Mason 1831; see Howe 1997). In an effort to bring European song into schools, he initiated the Better Music Movement, particularly through the 1834 publication of *The Manual of the Boston Academy of Music*, an edited translation of a German collection of school songs (see Pemberton 1985). While spirituals, field hollers, blues, and other African American genres were sounding in Black communities in the south, these musics were left out of the approved repertoire of songs and singing practice in schools by White teachers, who were largely unaware of music beyond their own European-based education and training (Brooks 1984).

Formal government-sponsored music education upheld the musical identities of students from the dominant culture, and this focus on European music traditions carried over into practices that fostered assimilation. In mission schools and other loci for the settler schooling of Indigenous children, the students' traditional music practices were banned, and music education there sought to assimilate students to Western norms (Winston 2019). While students still engaged in acts of resistance and found means of expressing their agency (Veerbeek 2020), the harm perpetuated by these practices on Indigenous children and others holding minoritized identities is a necessary frame of reference for understanding contemporary music education research that seeks to develop pedagogies that are culturally relevant and can help sustain local music traditions.

## PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

As the nineteenth century came to a close, the idea of pedagogical sequences was evolving in music teaching, along with the spread of vocal music classes in elementary schools, and this led to the development of a wide array of graded music textbooks and summer training sessions, which would enable all-subject classroom teachers to learn scientific and systematic methods for teaching music. Spearheaded by Luther Whiting Mason, a superintendent of music in the Boston primary schools, the design of detailed lesson plans came into use for teaching songs by rote (i.e., aural transmission), even as learning by note (i.e., written notation) brought up the other side of a professional debate about the value of the two approaches (Howe 1997). Learning by rote, it was argued, developed aural skills, requiring a strong musician to model the music accurately, and advocacy for this approach took place during a time when most teachers were all-subject generalists rather than musically trained specialists. Conversely, learning by note brought with it the tools for translating centuries of notated music into contemporary practice and was thought to guarantee that students could become independent, notationally literate musicians once they left the sphere of their music teacher's influence (Volk 1993). Graded series books offered guidance to teachers on the rote approach; these included *The National Music Course*, by

Luther Whiting Mason (1870), and a wide selection of books on note-learning, such as *The Normal Music Course*, published in 1883 by Hosea Edson Holt and John Wheeler Tufts (Birge 1937). While each method had its benefits, notational literacy triumphed in the nineteenth century, and music teachers' interest in the development of their students' aural skills markedly diminished and nearly disappeared from this time forward.

For nearly a century after the first appearance of music in schools, music educators focused their efforts on singing, notational literacy, theory fundamentals, music appreciation, and the lives of European composers (Birge 1937; Humphreys 2016). With the invention of the Victrola in 1901 and the marketing of the Victor-Victrola Talking Machine, listening lessons offered homage to "great composers," as operatic and orchestral masterpieces by Verdi, Wagner, Mozart, and Mendelssohn could be carried into the music classroom. Although the first commercially available recordings featured a range of styles that included blues, early American jazz, and the folk, art, and ritual musics of China, Egypt, India, Japan, Korea, and Turkey, Western art music was standard fare for school use at this time (Volk 1998). Listening lessons were slow to extend beyond the European masterworks but eventually did so via educational programs on radio and a gradually rising awareness of the music and musicians that came to the US through immigration (Mark and Gary 2007; Campbell 2018).

In the opening decades of the twentieth century, choral music continued to make inroads as a secondary school venture. The instrumental music study that had been mostly a private, tuition-based, after-school activity in the nineteenth century—something that was largely for children whose families valued music and could afford it—was becoming regularized in urban schools along the east coast, notably in group violin lessons and school orchestras. Violin makers and makers of clarinets, flutes, and trumpets were kept busy with requests to outfit the music-educational precursors to in-school activity, including community orchestras and bands. During the golden age of brass bands, between 1865 and 1920, there were about ten thousand of these ensembles in the country (Mark and Gary 2007). The *fin de siècle* phenomenon of the "music man" carried on for several decades into the twentieth century. Here, manufacturers sent traveling musicians to communities to entice school personnel to establish bands, which would then require the purchase of instruments and uniforms. The end of World War I brought bandsmen from the battlefields of France and Germany to be hired as music teachers in American schools, to work with young wind, brass, and percussion musicians in concert and marching bands (Humphreys 1989). Touring orchestras and church choirs intent on the performance of the European art music repertoire were also influencing the organization of instrumental ensembles, glee clubs, and mixed choirs. It bears mentioning that while an increasing number of secondary schools were staffed by specialist teachers in choral and instrumental music, public schooling for all students in the early twentieth century did not typically extend beyond the elementary grades, and most students who attended high school at that time were White, urban, and middle class (Humphreys 2002; Goyette 2017). Further, since racially segregated schools were the norm in this period, many children of color were attending schools where formal music programs were absent from the curriculum and where instrumental music was rarely offered (Anderson 1988, 14–35).

During this time, the music curriculum for children in elementary schools continued to evolve. Motivated by the philosophical discourse of the progressive education movement, led by John Dewey, educators pressed the curriculum beyond its Boston beginnings, emphasizing singing experience and developing programs that reached into the realm of creative music-making, active listening, and the integration of music with studies in history, culture, and science (Kelly 2012). Dewey's (1938) ideas fostered a view of schools as learning communities for children, ones that involved flexible, cooperative, and child-centered activities. Satis N. Coleman's work in the New York City schools of this period helped to seed ideas for children's comprehensive musical experiences in schools (Coleman 1929; Southcott 2009), with particular attention to creative explorations in music and sound, which laid the foundation for curricular developments in improvisation and composition.

The eurhythmics technique of Swiss musician-educator Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865–1950), which evolved in Europe in the heyday of modern and creative dance (ca. 1900–1930), was imported into American classrooms starting around the 1930s. Teachers played piano for students, stimulating them to move in response to elemen-

tal features of the music, such as rhythm, melody, phrase structure, and formal design (Campbell 1991b; Jacobi 2012). Jaques-Dalcroze (1921) believed that the "whole organism," both mind and body, needed to be musically engaged and that the body was the intermediary between sound and thought. In his pedagogy, rhythm, solfège, and improvisation are expressed, internalized, and understood in and through the body by moving to various kinds of musical nuance (Campbell 1991b). Institutionalized through the Dalcroze Society of America, the influence of eurhythmics on US music education continues to this day.

Rhythm bands were emerging in elementary schools in the 1920s and continued in popularity through much of the twentieth century. These enabled children to learn rhythmic notation by playing in ensembles that involved a spectrum of percussion instruments, such as hand drums, wood blocks, triangles, and rattles. Likewise, the recorder was adapted from German schools as a means of teaching children eye-hand coordination and notational literacy and to provide a pathway into the study of wind instruments in school bands (Burakoff 1966). Such a blended program of musical study, complete with listening, movement, literacy, and performance, became known as "general music." This label was first applied to the elementary school curriculum, but it also became pertinent to secondary school music classes that develop musical knowledge and skills through a wide array of musical experiences, including focused listening, performance, participatory musicking, and creative musical expression (Abril and Gault 2016).

As a result of the statements and standards emanating from the Music Educators National Conference in the 1950s, general music, bands, choirs, and orchestras became iconic representations of formalized music education in the schools of this time, and periodic performances of school ensembles served as a vivid testimony of a societal commitment to a style of music education that was more frequently re-creative, that is, performance based (emphasizing the playing of preexisting compositions), and that typically avoided creative-inventive musical experiences. While there are, of course, many ways to be musically creative in performance-based ensembles, the music education of this period focused on the closed form of playing musical works written by others, while the open forms of improvisation and composing original works remained sidelined in traditional band, choir, and orchestra (BCO) programs (Small 1998; Deliège and Wiggins 2006; Allsup 2016). These ensembles quickly became trademarks of American-style music education, particularly at the secondary school level but often in the upper elementary school grades as well. As the civil rights movement raised awareness of the urgent need for racial equality, some communities began to provide minoritized students with access to quality education, including music education, beginning a decades-long transformation of curricular content and method. The emergence of extracurricular jazz ensembles—which at the time were called "dance bands" and in earlier decades had been forbidden in schools due to their associations with saloons and bawdy houses—brought the Jazz Age into mid-century educational practice. With the growth of transportation and new communication technologies at this time came cross-cultural exchanges in culture and the arts, which led to the international sharing of music and pedagogical practices (Mark and Gary 2007).

## MID-TWENTIETH-CENTURY PEDAGOGIES: SUZUKI, ORFF, AND KODÁLY

The study of teaching and learning, in music or any other subject, is sometimes referred to as "pedagogical action research" (Niemi 2019). Since pedagogy is a dynamic process, so too is action research, which follows the course of attending to the often unpredictable daily interactions of teachers and students. The German-born American social psychologist Kurt Lewin advocated action research as a component of a new, enlivened psychology. While it was often criticized by scholars who valued positivistic approaches to research, especially those in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Lewin's perspective held its own as a process of inquiry that honors reflective thought, discussion, and decision-making in the natural circumstances of human exchange (Adelman 1993; Lewin 1951). Related to this is Paulo Freire's ([1968] 2018) influential view of pedagogy as a social process (see also Suzina and Tufte 2020), which posits that the research that transpires in classrooms is most tenable when it is at-

tuned to the nuances and complexities of teaching-learning processes. Three approaches to music education that developed in the mid-twentieth century—Shinichi Suzuki's method of instrumental instruction, Carl Orff's *Schulwerk*, and Zoltán Kodály's vocal method—were aligned with these visions of pedagogy, and these teaching methods continue to be adopted, critiqued, and reimagined by music education practitioners and researchers today. All remain prominent in university-level teacher education courses and in-service teacher development, thereby influencing contemporary classroom practices.

The Suzuki method emerged as one of the most highly successful pedagogies for instrumental instruction and ensemble work. When American string teachers gathered at a conference in 1958 to watch a video of 750 Japanese children play Bach's *Concerto for Two Violins* at the Tokyo Sports Palace, they were transfixed, and this event led to a growing relationship between American music educators and Shinichi Suzuki (1898–1998) over subsequent decades (Kendall 1973). Soon thereafter, the method expanded beyond the violin to other classical instruments, notably the piano and cello, as Americans and others outside Japan invoked Suzuki's philosophy. Taking inspiration from language acquisition, Suzuki believed in fostering the right "environment" for learning music (1983, 8–16). This environment was a caring one, filled with encouragement from the teacher as well as the presence of the parent (hence his book's title, *Nurtured by Love*). It was well suited to young children, often three to five years old, who learn by ear, memorize repertoire, and play in large groups that perform in unison (Hermann 1981). The method has influenced beginning instrument instruction and string programs throughout American schools, studios, and community centers.

Orff Schulwerk (*Schulwerk* is a German word that literally means "schoolwork") is a pedagogical approach commonly found in elementary schools, where teachers prioritize a process of imitation, exploration, improvisation, and composition. Intended to be flexible, the stereotypical Orff lesson might include rhythmic speech, singing, movement, and the playing of instruments, such as non-pitched percussion or pitched instruments (often xylophones or recorders) with limited pitch sets (e.g., a pentatonic scale). Creative experiences in Orff are regulated to limit the learner's choices but allow for improvisatory success according to predetermined musical outcomes (Goodkin 2001). As a product of its time, the method was first developed in the 1920s by Carl Orff (1895–1982) as an initiative at a Munich dance school for teaching adult women students simple musical forms to accompany their study of dance and gymnastics. Orff and his influential student and collaborator Gunild Keetman later adapted the process to the musical education of children (Keetman 1974). In the mid-1960s, interest in Orff's work was fostered by the establishment of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association (Spitz 2019). Although playful creativity is the core of Orff's pedagogical approach, the institutionalization of Orff Schulwerk often works against his tenets when the instructional process is reified and the method applied in a strict and unmindful manner (Benedict 2009). Additionally, there is a certain dissonance between Orff's philosophy as it developed in its historical context and its application in the music education of US schoolchildren today (Abril 2013), with songs and musical features still drawn from western European art music rather than from the experiences, interests, and needs of the country's multicultural population. Such problems are compounded when music educators assume that children are only capable of elementary forms of music-making, underestimating the musicality of children and their informal musicking outside of school, at home and in the community (S. Davis 2013).

The vocally oriented Kodály method is applied by teachers who prioritize the development of the singing voice and inner ear. A focus on pitch and rhythm sets, melody, and solfège defines this pedagogy, where teachers utilize, analyze, and sequence "quality" folk songs and use solfège syllables and their associated Curwen-Glover hand signs in instruction. Simple *sol* and *mi* songs and singing games soon progress to full-fledged folk songs, adding diatonic and chromatic notes, one by one, over the course of students' instruction (Houlahan and Tacka 2015). The Hungarian musician, composer, and folk song collector Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967) was keen to collect local songs and pieces of instrumental music and to analyze and categorize them. He and his colleague Béla Bartók belonged to the populist movement in Hungary that had romanticized peasants and local folk

communities in its quest for national unity (Benedict 2010). Kodály's ethnomusicological interests in cultural preservation and revitalization gave rise to his promotion of local music education—specifically, the singing of Hungarian folk songs by children in schools. Through the International Society for Music Education and the International Folk Music Council, his work spread in the 1950s and 1960s (Choksy 1999) and was institutionalized by the Organization of American Kodály Educators.

Many teachers who subscribe to the Kodály method today conduct highly capable children's and youth choirs (deVries 2001) that emphasize performing in tune and in time, reading music, and singing complex polyphonic works. As musicians themselves, teachers strive to develop strong musicianship in their students, but external pressure—from parents, administrators, and colleagues who observe and evaluate music teachers through student performances and competitions—reinforces the prioritization of the final product over the instructional process. With the lingering influence of early American music education's attention to vocal music and singing quality, teachers turn to Kodály for techniques to attain these aims. Proponents of Kodály in the US, aided by Hungarian interpreters of the approach, were active in the 1960s and 1970s in asserting the importance of local folk music within the learned repertoire. But even while turning to "American" folk music for lesson content, teachers often prioritized the music of White and African American communities, while the musics of other cultures were less commonly introduced. Because the repertoire is not reflective of the country's diverse and heterogeneous communities, Kodály practices in the US are still somewhat at odds with the method's claim to lift up and be responsive to the music of the people.

While the pedagogical approaches of Jaques-Dalcroze from the turn of the twentieth century and Suzuki, Orff, and Kodály from mid-century are embraced today by many American music educators in elementary school music programs, their techniques are less often transferred to secondary school ensembles. Because these methods originated in a different time and place, they must be carefully adapted to serve contemporary education in the US. Like the approaches of other pedagogues, they are historically specific, and the thoughtless replication of their methods and repertoires canonizes them in a way that is dissonant with their original philosophies of responsiveness to student musicians. That said, these methods can retain their original power if they are reimagined for individual, contemporary contexts (Juntunen and Westerlund 2011). Techniques for aural skill development and creative expression are deeply embedded within the workings of these methods and can be applied to the music of many cultures, including art, folk-traditional, and popular genres. In fact, students' own musical preferences, as well as the music of local communities, can be employed successfully with these pedagogical techniques. Their approaches continue to have an outsized influence on music instruction in schools, despite the development of more recent international and US pedagogies in the second half of the twentieth century.

## MID-CENTURY AMERICAN-BASED PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Pedagogical changes to music education in the US arose from mid-century symposia, programs, and projects, with directives emerging from music scholars, composers, and performers whose experience originated from outside the realm of school music. The Yale Seminar of 1963, a study group of musicologists assembled to address what they considered to be the failure of school music programs to produce a musically literate public, launched a project that resulted in the Julliard Repertory Library, a compiled repertoire comprised mostly of Western art music that would "upgrade music education programs" (Steele 1992). While a rich resource that included "early music" (i.e., Western art music from before the Baroque period), several musical gems from the world's folk cultures, and contemporary compositions in the Western art tradition, this compilation was largely unknown to practicing music educators, because the project was created by musicologists external to the practice of school music and developed without sufficient input from music educators. Another group of university-level composition faculty joined with independent active composers in the Contemporary Music Project, which ran

from 1959 to 1973 (Covey 2013). Funded by the Ford Foundation, the project sought to place composers in residence in public schools in order to increase the incidence of student-initiated creative composition by introducing students and teachers to contemporary music and the compositional process. Following the later-stage developments of the Contemporary Music Project, the ten-year Comprehensive Musicianship Project, also supported by the Ford Foundation, funded professional performing musicians to teach in schools. Its approach wove performance experience together with analytical listening, composition and improvisation, and lessons in music history and theory (Willoughby 1990).

During this period of societal renewal (ca. 1960–75), a review and renovation of music education practices was sparked by the influential 1967 Tanglewood Symposium, a key gathering aimed at examining music education's purpose within a rapidly changing world. Sponsored by the Music Educators National Conference and located at the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in western Massachusetts, this watershed event drew performing musicians, sociologists, scientists, business leaders, and educators together to discuss the role of music education in contemporary society, examine aims and approaches to music education, and recommend forms of music instruction in schools that would be relevant and effective for the foreseeable future. The report that came out of the symposium, often referred to as "The Tanglewood Declaration" (Choate 1968), argued for the importance of music as a required subject for study in the curriculum of elementary and secondary schools, and it set in motion a transformation of school music programs, in the US and internationally. The report recommended that "music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures belongs in the curriculum," that everyone from preschool children to adults be offered opportunities to become musically educated, that developments in technology be applied to music study, and that the interests and needs of "culturally deprived" students in urban schools and special education students be served (139).

Much of music education's current roles and purposes in US schools can be traced to the Tanglewood Symposium. At that time, vectors were pointing to the considerable task of facilitating music learning by all students—younger and older students, urban, suburban, and rural students, and students of every identity and capacity. For every societal challenge, music could be made to play a meaningful part. The initiation in 1965 of Project Head Start, which sought to provide preschool training to poor and disadvantaged children, led to an awareness of the importance of early childhood education at large (Vinovskis 1993), which almost immediately tipped toward music and movement activities for exercising little minds and bodies. The growth of attention to learners with special needs was launched with the 1975 passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Osgood 2008), and school music educators joined hands with music therapists and special educators to musically educate all children, with appropriate accommodations and modifications as necessary (Jellison 2015). When the US Supreme Court in 1954 overturned the "separate but equal" doctrine, which had maintained an inherently unequal treatment of people of color in American society and its schools, a wide range of educators, including those in music, were keen to revise curricular goals to encompass multicultural and intercultural understanding (Banks and Banks [1989] 2020). The Tanglewood Symposium had fueled the fire to diversify musical offerings, with long-term plans for teachers to learn new music and pedagogical techniques, the likes of which they had never encountered in their school and university training, though it would take time for these aspirational changes to be realized in practice (Cutietta and Thompson 2000).

Several creative music-making ventures arose in the 1960s that influenced American school music programs through the late twentieth century. In New York, a group of musicians associated with Manhattanville College gathered to evolve a program aimed at growing the musicianship of teachers (and, inevitably, their students) through performance, composition, and improvisation. The Manhattanville Music Curriculum Project, or MMCP (see Walker 1984), sought artistic, personal, and social relevance for music education, and the pioneering musicians who shaped the project advocated not for factual musical learning but for student participation in musical experiences that fostered cognitive, attitudinal, skill, and aesthetic learning (Thomas 1970). Core to MMCP workshops were opportunities for teachers to perform or participate in widely diverse kinds of

music, as well as to compose and improvise music, so that they could then generate these experiences for their own students. Along with the Contemporary Music Project's initiative to place composers in schools and the Comprehensive Musicianship Project's efforts to teach "performance with understanding," MMCP gained widespread attention. In all three projects, musicians and educators were actively involved in demonstrating and consulting with teachers in schools across the country; these projects embraced fresh perspectives on repertoire and pedagogical method and carried teachers and their students through decades of creative musical activity (Sindberg 2012; Berg and Sindberg 2014).

A number of eminent specialists in pedagogical theory and method were active in the US during this period, offering their innovative ideas and endless devotion to the musical education of students in schools and preparing university music students for teaching careers. Their names are legion, and many are remembered for their research publications and high-profile university positions, as well as their excellence as school-based music educators. Richard J. Colwell's (1971) meticulous attention to the assessment of musical achievement was a cornerstone of music education's development of competencies during the testing frenzy of the 1970s. As a result of his work, classroom practice was geared toward notational literacy and conscious attention to musical elements like pitch, rhythm, form, and dynamic expression. Edwin E. Gordon's (1971) assessment of musical aptitude was an important indicator to teachers of the multiple qualities of children's musicality, and his development of "music learning theory" and the concept of "audiation" brought attention to the grounding of notational literacy in aural-oral learning processes. For Gordon (2012), audiation refers to the process of reading a score, mentally "hearing" the music it describes without the physical sound being present, and inferring the music's meaning and function. He viewed audiation as a learned capacity, one that was accelerated by aural learning and literacy exercises but also dependent on innate musicality, which differs from student to student.

Other music educationists of the time were likewise engaged in pedagogically based research and theoretical analysis. Bennett Reimer (1989) ventured into the realm of philosophical aesthetics and argued for an approach that understands music education as a kind of aesthetic education, in which music is learned as the sublime expression of the human experience. Reimer's influence can be felt in curricula for children that emphasize directed listening to the great works of Western art music. Barbara Reeder Lundquist's (1991) model of pedagogy—which was characteristically charged with high enthusiasm and invitations to sing, play, and move—focused on helping students understand the sociocultural meanings of the music of sub-Saharan Africa and the African diaspora. Clifford K. Madsen (Madsen, Cotter, and Madsen 1968) expertly applied behaviorist theory to research on the musical and social behaviors of students and teachers, bridging the gap between music learning and the more general process of human learning in education and therapy. His research procedures served as a model for generations of young researchers, even as the results of his work were applied to the modification of student behaviors in music settings. Pathmaker Marilyn Pflederer Zimmerman (1984), initially a music teacher who specialized in working with young children, delved into the developmental theory of Jean Piaget to understand the music interactions and learning processes of children across ages and stages from infancy to adolescence.

Music educators in the US developed pedagogical approaches to fit local circumstances, even as they responded to national declarations from researchers and government bodies, as well as societal trends in music, the arts, and education. Multiple initiatives involving government and corporate support for the arts swept through the last decades of the twentieth century, encouraged by such reports as David Rockefeller's *Coming to Our Senses* (Arts, Education, and Americans Panel 1977) and Harvard University's *Project Zero* (Wilson 2018), which developed new ideas about school-community partnerships in arts education (D. J. Davis 1993). Some projects were supported by federal agencies, such as the National Endowment for the Arts, while professional organizations advanced the field through efforts such as the Music Educators National Conference's collaboration with the National Association for Music Merchants in the promotion of guitar classes, piano or keyboard lessons, and computer-assisted instruction (Bodilly, Augustine, and Zakaras 2008).

Research was yet to land full force in this era, which saw the development of new pedagogical methods by educators from the United States in addition to the gradual Americanization of pedagogies from abroad. While various US-based events and movements influenced American music instruction, most were sporadic, regional, or limited in their influence and did not have the branding power of Dalcroze, Orff, and Kodály (and, in instrumental music, Suzuki), which held an unwavering grip on the profession after they were introduced (Choksy et al. 1985). Perhaps the earlier pedagogues offered something more tangible when their work was condensed: Dalcroze allows students to move and embody musicality and musical concepts through eurhythmics; Orff is a method of learning to be creative when working with words and instruments; and Kodály provides sequencing and techniques for the instruction of singing in young learners. The pedagogies emerging in the US in the second half of the century were less concrete in their proposals to fill in the gaps that existed in music education. Concepts such as audiation and comprehensive musicianship are harder for parents and administrators to grasp than a group of thirty children on as many xylophones, playing their hearts out. As music educators are regularly tasked with seeking support from administrators in their ongoing professional learning and development, concrete rather than abstract outcomes are ultimately more persuasive in the demonstration of what can be accomplished through music education. The aura of Western art music continued to influence music education in the US, with educators drawing on pedagogies from this tradition, the European concert repertoire they entail, and the sequential steps of their curricula, which sought to train students to become Western classical musicians.

## CONTEMPORARY PEDAGOGICAL DIRECTIONS

Two full decades into the twenty-first century, music continues to be taught and learned in US schools. University music programs continue to recruit skilled musicians interested in pursuing music education training, passing on to new generations of children the music they have grown to love and sustaining traditional practices, while also developing new and relevant techniques. Three directions in music education have emerged in the twenty-first century that entail both musical repertoires and teaching method: world music pedagogy, popular music pedagogy, and the elevation of musical participation over the single goal of eliciting "the perfect performance." Notably, these approaches are linked to research within and beyond the field of music education and are grounded by theoretical underpinnings from the disciplines of psychology, sociology, musicology, and anthropology (and ethnomusicology).

In an effort to include more of the world's diverse music cultures in curricula, world music pedagogy (WMP) has taken hold as a contemporary direction for teaching. With roots in ethnomusicology, WMP centers the wisdom of culture-bearers and vetted archival recordings to bring into classrooms music cultures that have traditionally been excluded by the long-running focus on Western art music. From Balinese gamelan to South Indian Carnatic singing and from Siku Andean panpipes to Chopi Timbila xylophones, WMP provides learning pathways and pedagogical guidance for teachers who may not be "insiders" to these musical traditions and cultures but know the importance of representing a wider range of the world's musical expression. Developed by Patricia Shehan Campbell, WMP is a pedagogy rooted in listening that seeks to foster music-making engagements, increase creative opportunities for knowing music, and use music as a gateway to intercultural understanding (Campbell 2004). Since students in WMP often encounter timbres, rhythms, pitch sets, languages, and stylings from unfamiliar cultures, they are encouraged to listen repeatedly to short excerpts of recordings, allowing them time to process what they hear. A sequence of attentive, engaged, and participatory musicking experiences and enactive listening leads to actual performance: students progress through deeper understandings before taking the music from recordings or culture-bearing musicians and re-creating it themselves. World music pedagogy's emphasis on listening rests on the research on orality and processes prominent in folk, traditional, art, and popular music from around the world (Ong 1982; Campbell 1991a; McLucas 2010). Its pedagogical strands are supported by research in music cognition (Sloboda 1985; Deutsch 2013) and the development of affective

and emotional responses to music (Gregory and Varney 1996). Along with the pedagogy's attention to music's sonic features also comes an intent to develop students' integrated and interdisciplinary study of music and to understand music *as* culture and *in* society (Campbell and Lum 2019), as theorized in works by ethnomusicologists Bonnie Wade (2004), Thomas Turino (2008), and Timothy Rice (2017).

Another contemporary direction has coevolved with a desire by teachers and students to embrace popular music. Music educator Lucy Green (2002) pioneered research on how popular musicians learn and study music. Following her work, music educators have not just turned to popular music as a set of learning styles to emulate but have also used it as a source for curricula. "Modern band" has become an offering in some schools, and its flexible orchestration includes keyboards, guitars, drum sets, and vocals (B. Powell 2021). This new direction has been generously funded by popular music performers and others who are perhaps nostalgic for their own experience in garage bands and engagement with these genres. Sometimes, popular music programs reach students who might not otherwise choose to participate in more standard school BCO ensembles. In this way, modern band ensembles and popular music education tap into forms of music learning that are already extant online, in earbuds and playlists, and in garages and basements, attempting to bring the successes that students find in those contexts into the classroom (Smith 2014). Recent research has pushed for the further curricular inclusion of hip-hop, which has been marginalized in popular music education (Kruse 2016).

Recognizing the range of ways that people participate in music (Keil and Feld 1994; Small 1998; Turino 2008), music educators are providing opportunities for musical engagement that are not based in performing the music that others have composed but are more participatory in nature (Campbell 2018). This represents a third direction in contemporary pedagogies, one that embraces process over product and prioritizes amateurism over de facto semiprofessionalism (Kratus 2019). With roots in philosophic inquiry and aesthetic education (Greene 2001), Randall Allsup (2016) has called for a necessary remixing of the music classroom in which the rigid master-teacher and apprentice model is replaced by more open, student-centered, and directed learning experiences. These philosophies are equally at play outside of schools, as musicians work to engage local community members in music (Higgins 2012; Higgins and Willingham 2017). Techniques at play in communities are in turn used in schools by teachers, who are broadening participation in music programs by abandoning a sole focus on concert-based work and performance ensembles.

These contemporary pedagogical directions, bolstered by research inside and beyond the field of music education, are becoming increasingly commonplace in US schools. Partly due to state certification requirements that respond slowly to changing interests, university programs in music education continue to prioritize more traditional courses like brass methods, conducting, and rehearsal techniques. In this context, veteran teachers are taking time from their summers to engage with and find resources and support for these new pedagogical practices.

## PART II: A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF RESEARCH ON MUSIC EDUCATION PRACTICE

The previous section detailed developments in music education, from its origins in schools to the creation of new teaching methods and pedagogical shifts—topics that have not always been considered as academic research. As we have argued, practices and refinements enacted by educators should nevertheless be seen as a kind of educational praxis that is systematically informed by the teachers' surroundings and their students. Developments in the nineteenth century led to the 1907 founding of the Music Supervisors' National Conference (MSNC), which became a section of the National Education Association (NEA). The organization was later renamed the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) and eventually adopted its current title, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). The organization's flagship research publication, the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, was launched in 1953 as "a vehicle for the publication of the best

research produced each year by the many advanced students in various colleges and universities throughout the country" (Britton 1953, 155–156). So while K–12 music education had been developing in the US for some time, academic research on the topic only coalesced as a discipline in the mid-twentieth century, building on the aforementioned developments that long predate it. This section begins with a review of the methodological influences in music education that developed as scholars looked to neighboring disciplines for a cross-pollination of research lenses and paradigms. After that, we discuss areas of interest in contemporary music education research that have received considerable attention since 2010.

## DISCIPLINARY INFLUENCES ON MUSIC EDUCATION RESEARCH

While the periods in the timeline that we discuss below are porous, and research practices do not have clear expiration dates, certain eras of music education research can be identified. Each of these was marked by influences from adjacent disciplines, including psychology, sociology, musicology, and anthropology (and ethnomusicology).

Early research in music education was often descriptive (Yarbrough 1984), and publications routinely drew from dissertations that were musicological in nature. In the first half of the twentieth century, the discipline of musicology had grown steadily in the United States, partly as a result of the migration of historical musicologists from Europe between the world wars (Kerman 1965). As the humanistic study of music found its way forward among American musicologists, music educationists recognized the value of its meticulous methods and the connotation of serious study that they carried, and some hoped that these could be mobilized in music education to make their own discipline more rigorous (Faulkner 1956). While these aspirations provided credence to a nascent field of research, music education scholarship was, in its early years, viewed by American musicologists as simply " 'elementary' musicology" (Hibberd 1959, 25). The founding editor of the *Journal of Research in Music Education,* Allen P. Britton, is credited with seizing the potential of the musicological methods for music education's historical development. In fact, in 1949 he had completed a PhD in musicology on the topic of theoretical introductions to early American tune-books. During his thirty years on the faculty at the University of Michigan, Britton directed fifty-one dissertations that were musicological in nature, many of which were published in the field's research journal in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s (Heller 2001).

Music educators have long been intrigued with research on the psychology of music, questions of music and the mind, and matters of music perception, learning, listening, and performance in cognitive science (Seashore 1967; Sloboda 1985; Storr 1993; Lehmann, Sloboda, and Woody 2007). Research in psychoacoustics (Benade 1990), music learning and retention (Patel 2008; Margulis 2014), and the origins and development of human musicality (Thompson 2009) have helped to hone the pedagogical techniques utilized in classrooms, ensemble rehearsals, and studio lessons. The first examples of psychological research directly relevant to the practice of music education can be traced to work on musical aptitude tests such as that of Carl Seashore, which emerged in the period from World War I through the 1930s amid the zeitgeist of investigating talent and genetics (Devaney 2019). While this aptitude research was seldom formulated for publication, its statistical results were employed by school music administrators and educators to select students who would be awarded the use of school-owned instruments for participation in bands and orchestras. Not until the 1960s did psychological research come to be initiated and developed by music educators, who raised questions specific to music teaching and learning practices in schools and followed through with experimental designs and quantitative analyses (Petzold 1963). In the 1970s and 1980s, perspectives from educational and developmental psychology were influential in reducing the gap between the psychology of music and music education (Lathrop 1970; Hargreaves 1986). A bout of new research tumbled forward when music educators "discovered" Jean Piaget's theories of developmental learning levels, with notable work in this area by Marilyn Zimmerman (1984). Jeanne Bamberger's (1991) study of young children's performance on music perception tasks offered a broader view of cognitive development in music while also suggesting parallels between music and language. Attention to social and cultural psychology

has emerged more recently (Barrett 2011; Ward-Steinman and Schmidt 2011), as music education researchers studied the impact of music on human development and well-being, socialization, and the relationship between self and collective expression (Welch et al. 2020; Carlson et al. 2021; Lamont 2021). As sociologists began interrogating music as a social construct (Kaplan 1951; Small 1998), music educators slowly began to realize that some of the extant scholarship in the field was in fact sociological in nature (McCarthy 2000), giving rise to another emerging influence on scholarship at and shortly after the close of the twentieth century (Sang 1987; B. Roberts 1991; Custodero 2002; Jones 2005).

Inspirations from anthropology and the closely aligned field of ethnomusicology have germinated some of the most novel approaches to music education research. Since the late 1990s, ethnographic work (Barz and Cooley 2008) has been used to describe children's musical practices, both in and out of school (Campbell [1998] 2010; Marsh 2008), and music education research continues to consider a multitude of field sites (DeNora 2000; Koops 2014), which extend the scope of music education research beyond K–12 institutions, even as they detail important findings that are notable for all music educators. Contemporary ethnographic research in music education details a full array of sites of musical learning (Lum and Campbell 2007; Beegle 2010; Bond 2015; J. C. Roberts 2015) and focuses on children as well as the sociomusical interactions of adolescent students in school and after-school ensembles (Hebert 2005; Bartolome 2013; Coppola 2019). Case study research on specific units of musical study taught in schools has been carried out by teacher-researchers who explicitly make connections between these two roles, interweaving and remixing traditional ethnographic techniques with autoethnography (Howard 2018; Cantarelli Vita 2021).

The research methods that music education scholars use are often tied to those of their disciplinary influences, with educators informed by ethnomusicology, for example, using ethnography in their studies of children's music and musical learning processes. As a result, the field has come to include a range of methodologies including approaches from history (e.g., Clark 2019), philosophy (e.g., L. Tan 2016), sociology (e.g., Hebert 2010), and pedagogy (e.g., Crawford 2017). Analyzing these diverse methods, scholars often draw a distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell and Creswell 2018). Since classrooms involve preset configurations of students that make the random recruitment of research subjects difficult, quantitative research on school music education is often quasi-experimental (Madsen and Madsen 1997). Survey research is a common mode of collecting quantitative data on the views, beliefs, and values of teachers and students relative to repertoire, classroom projects, pedagogical techniques, and performance experiences (Rawlings 2016). Qualitative methods have come to encompass multiple techniques in contemporary research, ranging from phenomenology to narrative inquiry. Recently, "mixed methods" research, which merges quantitative and qualitative procedures, has received increased attention, providing thoroughgoing and comprehensive answers to questions of music teaching and learning (Fitzpatrick 2014).

## CONTEMPORARY TOPICS IN MUSIC EDUCATION

The following section discusses a range of topics that contemporary American music education scholars are examining today. They expand the field's commitment to research, which began some seventy years ago.

**Developmental Matters.** Music education in K–12 schools in the US typically involves children from ages five to eighteen. This is an immense topic, as there are significant developmental differences between kindergarteners, sixth grade students, and high school seniors. Research on music and development, whether by scholars of music education or those from other disciplines, is pertinent to the growth and refinement of music teaching and learning practices. Ideas about childhood development in areas outside of music, such as the stage and phase theories developed by internationally renowned scholars such as Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner, Lauren Sosniak, Gregory Bateson, and Catherine Ellis, have had a lasting impact on a field where a knowledge of children's expressive capacities across age and experience is paramount.

While a vast body of research exists on musical development from infancy to age three, which deserves its own review (Barrett 2012; Young 2016), we begin our discussion with studies that focus on students from age five to seven, when the transition to school begins and the influence of family, peers, community, the media, and school on the child are woven together (Marsh 2012; Ilari and Young 2016). Researchers have documented the importance of play (Niland 2009), spontaneity (Campbell 1991c), and movement (Campbell 1991b) in the early years of school music education. Related research on the topics of "flow" (a state of immersed engagement in activity; see Csikszentmihalyi 1991; Custodero 2002) and peer learning (Luce 2001; Allsup 2003) provide music educators with important considerations when designing learning experiences. More general research on the development of specific capabilities in musical cognition (e.g., melodic processing; see Trehub, Bull, and Thorpe 1984) or abilities (e.g., motor skills; see Sidnell 1986) further informs teachers' selection of musical material and their expectations when working with children. The developmental research on adolescents frequently centers on social dynamics and identify formation (Saunders 2010; Spruce and Odena 2012) in addition to the physiological changes that are especially important in choral classrooms, where teachers must navigate the way that the singing voices of their students change over time (Sweet 2019). For teachers of adolescents and those who work with K–12 students of any age, the application of teaching philosophies that allow for student agency, voice, and choice aligns with research that suggests student interest in school music increases when teachers listen to and accommodate the preferences of their students (J. C. Roberts 2015).

**Modalities of Musicianship.** School-based music classes, and especially general music classes, involve many modalities of musicianship when working on particular skills and musical concepts, be they melodic contour, rhythm, form, or creative-expressive features (Persellin 1992). The emphasis that US secondary school music programs place on choral and instrumental ensembles has required educators from the primary grades forward to adopt a performance-based pedagogy that focuses on singing in tune and in time, as well as ensembles of non-pitched percussion instruments, xylophones, recorders, ukuleles, and guitars (Haning 2021). Across the grade levels, students are offered opportunities to work with many components of musicianship, including notational literacy, eurhythmic movement, and creative modes of expression in improvisation and composition. With so many modalities of musicianship at play in school classrooms, research has sought to explore the diverse forms of learning that take place there.

All music educators support the development of students' musical fluency, although the prioritization of literacy (and its meaning) is contested. Traditional Western staff notation is one form of literacy that is commonly featured throughout the grade levels, but so too are literacies that pertain to the ability to read lead sheets and chord charts, respond to nonstandard graphic notation, work with lyrics, or speak about music. Many music cultures have both folk and art traditions that thrive without the use of written notation, and in this context the role of music literacy in US schools has been contested (Campbell 1989). Further, students with significant musical capacities may well find standard Western music notation to be both challenging and limiting (Kivijarvi and Vakeva 2020). Yet traditional BCO models rely heavily on the student's ability to read parts and octavos, even as lifelong musical learning and community music practices are requiring less use of standard notation. For many educators, musical literacy is conceptualized in terms of the ability to read music, while writing music too remains undeservedly sidelined (Waller 2010).

The employment of movement in music classrooms, both for pedagogical purposes and as a creative outlet, stems from the influence of Jaques-Dalcroze and progressive education (Campbell 1991b) and is valued for its potential to provide a more comprehensive training of the ear, the body, and the brain (Dutton 2015). In music classes, movement often appears in the shape of dance, including folk and traditional dances (Biber 2016), as well as dance to popular music that is choreographed by the teacher or creatively developed by each student (Chatzopoulos, Doganis, and Kollias 2018). Because children are able to master musical concepts before they are able to express them in words, movement can be a schema for responding to and expressing understandings of music, especially for young learners (Shiobara 1994). Some studies show that children enjoy engaging in

movement during singing games (J. C. Roberts 2016), and recent scholarship has turned to the notion of embodiment as a framework for supporting the incorporation of kinesthetic practices in the classroom (Nijs and Bremmer 2019).

While many aspects of musicking are creative, certain paradigms of performance in American music education restrict creativity (Small 1998). Certainly, the penchant for performing composed works vocally and on instruments (Trollinger 2006) has oriented music education toward re-creation and musical re-production, rather than encouraging the student's individual expressivity. Yet there is a growing consensus among music educators that school music can teach students to hone performance skills and introduce them to the processes of improvisation and composition (Richardson 1983; Dixon and Chalmers 1990; Running 2008; A.-G. Tan et al. 2019). Both philosophical and quantitative approaches to music education have been used to understand and measure creativity (Webster 1992; Burnard 2006), even as definitions of what constitutes creativity continue to be shaped by new research (Webster 2009). In this regard, Pamela Burnard (2000) put forward a model of the relationship between improvisation and creativity in music education that aligns with traditional pedagogical sequencing; her approach encourages students to begin improvising within parameters that limit their range of musical choices while allowing them to improvise successfully. This practical model has aligned with research on the musical creativity of children in elementary school classrooms (Wiggins 1999; Beegle 2010), and other research shows how these early, playful experiences of improvisation can later be solidified into a more formalized process of composition (Campbell 2009). Technology has afforded new possibilities of musical engagement in the lives of adolescents (Ruthmann and Dillon 2012) and in secondary school music classrooms (Ruthmann and Mantie 2017), often with implications for creativity (Burnard 2007).

**Music Education Contexts.** Music education includes much more than K–12, school-based activities; practicing music educators are active in community settings, and where they have gone, the research follows. Stephanie Pitts (2012) has written on the many locations of musical learning that take place prior to and well beyond the school years, including the significant extracurricular music-making that occurs formally and informally in the home, in after-school programs and lessons, among peers, and in the community. Areas of research on teaching-learning contexts for music range from the therapeutic uses of music for adults with dementia (Murphy et al. 2018) to families' at-home musical practices during the COVID-19 pandemic (Dahm et al. 2022). Although community music (Higgins 2012; Higgins and Willingham 2017) is its own area of scholarship and practice—one that crisscrosses music education, music therapy, and applied ethnomusicology—the research in this field has inspired music educators to examine and emulate the successes of informal music learning (S. Davis 2013; Kastner 2020). For example, community music research on garage bands (Campbell 1995; Jaffurs 2004) and music-making on YouTube (Cayari 2018) is relevant to teachers who are in touch with students' musical lives, both in and outside of school contexts.

Studies concerning K–12 music education address a variety of issues found in schools and draw on a range of theories and ideas. Music educators today are tasked with encouraging holistic learning and fostering student growth, both musically and extramusically. In this context, the important research on elementary general music is closely tied to work on social-emotional learning and mindfulness (Varner 2020, 2022) and on trauma-informed practice (Walzer 2021). As teachers today are asked to accommodate all students in their classrooms, strategies such as differentiation (teaching to students with differing abilities and preexisting bases of knowledge) are especially important (Tomlinson et al. 2003). While elementary school music education is often taught by state-certified music teachers, research has also documented how generalist, all-subject teachers without musical backgrounds use music in their classrooms, responding to the call to teach music classes even when they lack specialist knowledge or training (Jeanneret and DeGraffenreid 2012).

While not all elementary schools offer music as a curricular offering, those that do typically ensure that all their students receive instruction. At the secondary school level, however, participation in music studies is elective, whether in performance ensembles or in courses such as theory, songwriting, guitar, or music technology.

An important topic of research, then, is the participation and retention of high school–aged music students in what for them are optional curricular offerings (Hash 2022). To attract students who might not gravitate toward traditional, performance-based BCO ensembles, schools have begun to offer alternative ensembles, such as modern band (B. Powell 2021) and mariachi groups (Sheehy 2006), along with the now-historic presence of jazz bands and jazz choirs (West 2015). In some cases, performance ensembles in the US are involved in competitions at the district or state level. Emerging research is considering the harmful side effects of the competitive paradigms of music education that such ensembles often entail and the high-stakes testing and performance that they involve (S. R. Powell 2021; Tucker 2022). Some of this research has close ties to critical perspectives on policy and the influence of neoliberalism on music teachers, their classrooms, school communities, and education in general (Nussbaum 2022; West 2012).

**Justifications for Public School Music Education.** A variety of research and policy papers have documented how contemporary US schools have, under conditions of neoliberalism, been subject to funding cuts that sideline the arts (Prescott 1981; Major 2013). The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act prioritized the standards and assessments required to receive federal funding (Goyette 2017). Its successor, the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act, modified but did not eliminate the earlier act's focus on assessment (Close, Amrein-Beardsley, and Collins 2018). Some teachers argue that students' music learning should be tested at the national and/or state level to give this subject more legitimacy, while others press for the inherent value of not needing to "teach to a test" (Klein 2016). In university teacher preparation programs, standardized tests are still required in the traditional paths toward certification, requiring prospective teachers to pass multiple tests covering both general knowledge and music content (May et al. 2017). Prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, universities have in recent years begun to reevaluate the emphasis that they formerly placed on standardized tests for admitting students into music education programs (Abramo and Bernard 2020). These alternating cycles in the prioritization of testing and assessment are paralleled in music education research.

In response to funding cuts and shifting priorities in assessment, scholarship highlighting the rationales, aims, and objectives for including music in schools has been an important stream of research (Westerlund 2008). Such justifications precede the most recent policy debates, going back to the very first inclusion of music in schools (Jorgensen 1994). Singing was central to nineteenth-century music instruction and was justified on the basis of its contribution to moral education (via the messages of its song texts), physical education (via the exercise it provides to the lungs and vital organs), and intellectual education (via the contribution it makes to memory, since songs for performance were typically learned through notation and then memorized). School administrators and school board members were equally drawn to these "extramusical" rationales, rather than to arguments about teaching music for music's sake or the idea that music should be taught for its sheer beauty and expressive value (Jorgensen 1997).

In the 1990s, music's contribution to children's intellectual-cognitive development became a central argument for its inclusion in curricula, although the flurry of interest around the "Mozart effect" and the idea that "music makes you smarter" (Rauscher and Shaw 1998) was soon replaced by arguments about music's positive impact on children's social-emotional learning (Váradi 2022). While music education has survived the economic conditions that press civic leaders and citizens to question its value in the curriculum, those within the profession have attuned themselves to the need to regularly uphold music's benefits to children, even as they remain watchful of the possibilities for support from corporate and private foundations. Contemporary pedagogical directions that make room for outcomes other than performance have allowed researchers to consider other benefits of music education, such as its ability to foster democratic sensibilities (Woodford 2004; Allsup 2016).

**Teacher Education.** While this essay focuses on US school music education, an important component of music education research considers not just K–12 music students but music teachers and their training in schools, ongoing professional development, and lifelong careers. Given the field's interest in applied work, research on preservice teachers (i.e., music students—traditionally undergraduates—preparing to be teachers

themselves) and in-service teachers is plentiful. Because these populations are accessible to researchers, and also because of the complications involved in conducting research on children, studies of eighteen- to twenty-two-year-old music education majors are especially common. Under the leadership of Irma H. Collins, the *Journal of Music Teacher Education* was established in 1991. It gave attention to the increasing state reforms impacting the field, promoted studies of music teacher preparation, and addressed the needs of young music educators (B. E. Nichols 2013). Today, the journal covers scholarship pertinent to the training of music teachers, with topics such as admission requirements (Payne and Ward 2020), coursework (Culp and Salvador 2021), professional development (Stanley, Snell, and Edgar 2014), student teaching (Draves 2013), and case study research on the development of an individual teacher's identity (Draves 2019). Two especially pressing areas of concern are diversifying the field of music education and supporting teachers throughout their careers (Madsen and Hancock 2002; Clements 2009; Conway and Hibbard 2018; Robison et al. 2020). Research on teacher education is situated within a larger discourse that considers the role that universities play in supporting music students as twenty-first-century musicians (Sarath, Myers, and Campbell 2017).

**Identities of Students and Teachers.** Over the last decade, education research has opened wide to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. With the reflexive turn in anthropology that began in the 1980s (Babcock 1980), and amid influential work by scholars of color and researchers utilizing feminist and Indigenous paradigms, education research is beginning to make space for voices and perspectives that have been excluded and sidelined. Concepts such as intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989) were influential in providing justifications for research that sought to consider student and teacher identities in a holistic manner. A key figure in the multicultural education movement, James A. Banks (Banks and Banks [1989] 2020) led the way to reforming school environments so that they better reflected the social and cultural diversity of their students and communities. His five dimensions of multicultural education—content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure—detail how the entire spectrum of school teaching and learning could be reformed, including what was taught, how it was taught, and where it was taught. Geneva Gay (2000) coined the term "culturally responsive teaching," a pedagogy that encourages teachers to learn about and adapt to their students' cultures, languages, and experiences, and her work continues to be influential in teacher training (Hammond 2015). The concept of "culturally relevant pedagogy" was theorized by Gloria Ladson-Billings (2014), who studied the practices of educators who successfully built relationships with their students, adapting and revising learning and instruction to make them meaningful to the young people they taught. As these movements expanded, they have sometimes been misrepresented and reduced in their potency to vapid "buzzwords." Recently, the notion of "culturally sustaining pedagogy" (Paris and Alim 2017) has been developed in an effort to reinvigorate these reforms; this work draws attention to student, teacher, parent, and community identities, seeks to ensure that harmful practices of institutionalized schooling are dismantled, and advocates for (re)building education to serve students and their communities.

Representing the efforts of several generations of educationists and everyday teachers, the various movements for diversity, equity, and inclusion in education share a common interest in helping teachers serve students whose cultures have been devalued. They extend beyond schools and are part of wider movements that seek to grapple with the history of colonialism and racism that permeates American society. While people from BIPOC communities have long struggled with these realities, many White Americans are only now coming to terms with the notion of systemic inequity (Kendi 2019). In search of ways of negotiating their own racial identities (Robinson 2006), some White music educators are building relationships with culture-bearers from diverse communities and collaborating with them on school music programs (Klinger 1996; Hess 2013; Bradley 2015). Sometimes music educators develop partnerships with culturally appointed tradition-holders, allowing the teacher to represent a broader array of cultural identities and forms of musical expression, and illustrating to their students the value of these traditions. Strategies for diversifying the classroom also include embracing

a framework of teacher facilitation, wherein teachers are not expected to be the experts but instead position themselves as learners alongside their students (Kruse 2020).

Demographic research by Kenneth Elpus and Carlos Abril (Elpus and Abril 2011, 2019; Elpus 2015a, 2015b) has documented the lack of diversity in US school music today, which can be seen among both teachers and students. US music teachers skew male and are overwhelmingly White (Hewitt and Thompson 2006). Gender stereotypes are common in music education, with women tracked into teaching general music and choirs, and men taking on the role of instrumental conductor-teachers. As we make sense of music educator identities, further studies are needed to consider how those identities impact the work that teachers do, the experiences they bring to the classroom, and the representations they offer their students and communities. While the profession probes ways of recruiting a more diverse workforce, research suggests that incoming undergraduates to music education programs have been most impacted by their own experience with music teachers (Bergee and Demorest 2003). Their stories are beginning to be told in research publications, often as individual case studies (Schmidt and Smith 2017) and recently through narrative inquiry (S. R. Powell and Celeste 2020; Draves and Vargas 2022). Outreach efforts have seen success in addressing these issues (Robison et al. 2020), and various strategies are underway to draw a diversity of community members into school music programs.

Music education research on gender and sexuality began with a consideration of the sex stereotyping of instruments (Abeles and Porter 1978) and illustrated the young age at which these gendered associations are learned. Since the first studies were developed, a substantial amount of research has been conducted on instruments and gender (Wych 2012). In addition to the scholarship on band and orchestral instruments, research on student perceptions of the gendering of the voice and singing has also been conducted (Warzecha 2013). In related work, Julia Koza (1992, 1994) analyzed the representation of women in US music education textbooks and publications, finding women to be underrepresented and stereotyped in visual depictions of music-making. Roberta Lamb's (1994) feminist critiques of music education philosophy made way for more nuanced descriptions of gender and its intersections with other identities (e.g., Carter 2013). Research on sexuality and queer identities is relatively nascent in music education, with some of the first research documenting the ways that LGBTQ+ teachers and students negotiate heteronormativity in music instruction (Panetta 2021). Research on transgender teachers and students is emerging but remains relatively scarce (J. Nichols 2013; Bartolome 2016; Palkki 2020), and much of this literature relates to choral programs.

As music educators work to accommodate all learners, research on students with disabilities has been another important area of growth. Such work is often related to the identities associated with specific disabilities, such as students with autism (Scott 2016; Draper 2022), dyslexia (Reifinger 2019), or visual impairments (Baker and Green 2016). Broader research on music education and disability stresses the importance of inclusive classrooms and of adopting a culturally responsive perspective for working with diverse learners (Gerrity, Hourigan, and Horton 2013; Jellison 2015; Lapka 2016; Sisson 2022). Similar conclusions have been drawn in work on other forms of marginalized student identities, such as those of English Language Learners (Carlow 2006; Lorah, Sanders, and Morrison 2014) or rural or urban student populations (Isbell 2005; Hunt 2009; VanDeusen 2016). All of this research shows that teachers must be responsive to individual students and their communities if they are to foster positive learning outcomes.

As individuals and social movements imagine practices of antiracism, decolonization, activism, and allyship, ideas about diversity, equity, and inclusion from the music education literature reverberate in music classrooms, schools, and the wider communities in which they are embedded. At the same time, music education is grappling with the historical and ongoing privilege that has been afforded to Western art music and European pedagogies. In this context, culturally responsive teaching offers much to a field that has for some time been disconnected from the music that students engage with on their own (Lind and McKoy 2016). Scholars continue to think through what it means to decolonize the music classroom (Bradley 2012), reckon with the field's history (Gould 2007; McCarthy 2015), and reconceptualize their work through an activist lens, in which music education

is responsive to emerging events and ongoing forms of oppression while helping students to develop critical thinking skills and find avenues for expressing experiences and challenging oppression (Hess 2019).

**Tradition and Change in Music Canons.** A "canon" of curricular music results from the approved songs and musical selections that regularly appear in school music lessons, performance programs, and festivals. Even as inroads have been made to diversify the canon, ongoing critiques note the perpetuation of Western hegemony in American music education (Griffiths 2020). There continue to be waves of attention, flowing and ebbing for over a half century, devoted to making the repertoire used in music classes more diverse by including music from composers with minoritized identities (Leonard 2019; Orzolek 2021). At the same time, music educators are researching the painful histories and contexts of many of the American folk songs used in music classrooms, highlighting their origins on plantations, in minstrel shows, or in the settings of Jim Crow America (Ermolaeva 2019; Urbach 2019). As music educators reveal how familiar songs use racist caricatures, stereotypes, and negative lyrics and imagery that were previously unknown, forgotten, or ignored, many teachers are working to remove those songs from their curricula (Hess 2021).

Teachers are increasingly in agreement that if "American" music is to be featured in the school music curriculum, the issue of race cannot be ignored. In fact, critical race theory (Crenshaw 1989; Goldberg 1993; Gillborn 2008) is commonly viewed by music teachers (Liu 2022) as an important approach to curriculum and instruction. Such a perspective examines the way that racism intersects with other forms of power and is institutionalized by society and its schools (Lynn and Parker 2006). Within music classrooms, teachers are discovering that the lens of critical race theory offers one way to navigate topics like race records, blues, jazz, gospel, country, and the origins of rock and roll (Hannah-Jones 2019). Similarly, Ed Sarath (2013) argues that "American" music is so intricately tied up with African American music that music educators must fundamentally change the way that music genres are prioritized in schools. While jazz is certainly present in US music curricula, it could very well become the foundation of American music education if the anchor of Western art music was removed (Sarath 2013). A fuller reimagining of the music education repertoire in the US would also necessitate the inclusion of musical expressions from Indigenous and immigrant groups.

Some music educators are concerned that efforts to multiculturalize music education may turn tokenistic, moving from the realm of thoughtfully considered cultural appreciation to unmindful cultural appropriation. Juliet Hess (2012) considers how different curricular models can be more or less tokenistic and suggests ways of introducing new musics into the curriculum in a relational fashion that reduces the dangers of othering. In the fields of ethnomusicology and musicology, Kofi Agawu (2003) has similarly considered the ways in which "African" music has been stereotyped and othered, suggesting that any encounters with the musics of Africa begin by highlighting the similarity of African and American musics, rather than emphasizing their difference. Because music teachers spend seven to eight hours a day teaching and planning lessons, they are drawn more to practical solutions than to philosophical questions, and they appreciate praxial recommendations that provide channels for navigating cultural knowledge in ways that are compassionate toward and understanding of the people whose music they teach (Howard 2020).

While a critical consideration of the contexts of songs and repertoire is one way to address problems in music curricula, a parallel line of inquiry considers the "hidden curriculum." A concept developed in the late twentieth century, the hidden curriculum refers to the kinds of socialization learned and taught in schools, where conformity is rewarded over creativity (Jackson 1968). Traditional conductor-led ensembles model this kind of conformity, where students learn how to adapt themselves to the group, reproduce the score as written, and take direction from the teacher. The hidden curriculum is a line of thinking that considers the relationship between schools and society (Lynch 1989) and can be used to question the aims of music education that lie below the surface (Krueger 1985). Understood in this way, curriculum, canon, and repertoire all deserve careful consideration, as they have the capacity to impose culturally specific and authoritarian behavioral expectations and values on students.

## CONCLUSION

While music has been passed down from generation to generation since time immemorial, music education in US schools is still a relatively novel phenomenon. For almost two centuries, music has found a fit among other curricular subjects in schools, with educators personalizing their pedagogical methods and continually defining and defending their line of work. Music figures prominently within the soundscapes of contemporary schools, from singing voices to the sounds of instruments that are plucked and bowed, shaken and struck, or blown through horns and tubes. It is a regular presence in elementary schools, and in secondary schools it becomes an elective course, a social group, and a cultivated community of individuals. Across a wide range of disciplines, scholars have shown that music can be utilized to help regulate mood (Saarikallio and Erkkilä 2007), cope with stress (Pelletier 2004), provide a channel for self (and collective) expression (Clayton 2008), hone metacognition (Hallam 2001), develop social intelligence (Juchniewicz 2014), find connections (Dahm et al. 2022), and build resilience (Goodrich 2020). For some young learners, participation in school music activity is central to their identity, and it can even be a pathway to their dream of becoming a performer, composer, or teacher of music.

Despite music's many benefits, every era has seen critics question the relevance of music for education, its mission, and its current "fit" in the comprehensive schooling of children and youth. Teachers, professors, parents, citizens at large, and students do not always agree in their ideas about the role of music in schools. Some believe that public education should prepare students to enter the workforce and that it should prioritize science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, as these fields serve, they say, as a pipeline that leads to jobs (Bybee 2013). For over a century, others have argued that public education should advance our democratic society (Dewey 1916) or uphold the intrinsic value of learning for learning's sake (Roche 2017). Within this larger discourse are situated debates about the role of music education in the lives of children and in the making of a healthy populace, citizenry, or republic. Does music take away time from more important subjects? Does it provide a break from the rigor of "real" studies? Can it be justified, with evidence, that music improves math scores or "makes you smarter"? Should it be defended as a space where students can study culture and engage in conversation about identities, histories, languages, and potentials for living the principles of social justice? Should music education prepare students to become professional or amateur musicians? Is its purpose to allow people to participate in music as a human phenomenon, an expressive need? Music education can serve and has served many roles, some of which have yet to be fully realized as educators, students, and scholars push against the traditional boundaries of music in schools.

Music education researchers have furthered their field with carefully considered research questions and techniques, and the scholarship has changed dramatically over the course of the last seventy years. Novel literature is emerging that complicates and nuances some of the earliest understandings of music education from musicology and the dominant culture. Meanwhile, music teaching and learning continue to be reimagined in classrooms, as educators engage in applied work. As twentieth- and twenty-first-century critiques of assimilative practices and the hidden curriculum have called into question the role of education in society, and as technological innovations have shifted a focus from factual knowledge to creative and collaborative capacities, music education seems well positioned to lead the way toward a student-centered and holistic future for schooling. And as traditional models of general music, bands, choirs, and orchestras remain in schools, educators continue to teach musicianship and musicality while also incorporating more expansive and ambitious aims—fostering creativity, collaboration, artistry, passion, empathy, leadership, self-discovery, and activism. Pedagogies and canons are being revisited to ensure that they serve the students and communities with whom educators work. In this context, fostering community connections remains imperative, so that the music-making that takes place in schools does not remain an insular phenomenon but is grounded by and connected to students, families, communities, and a collective vision of what music education can and should be.

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