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Practice to theory and back again. Music matters (2nd edition)

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IV. MUSIC IS WHAT PEOPLE DO *IN 2020*:
MUSIC (EDUCATION) PRACTICES IN TIMES OF THE PANDEMIC

Marissa Silverman

Practice to Theory and Back Again

Music Matters (2nd Edition)

Invitation

The impulse to write this article emerged from an invitation. Paraphrasing the call to participate, I was asked to consider my first contributions to praxialism in music education through my collaboration with one of the leaders in this area of theory-practice scholarship, David Elliott. So, I considered the best way to approach this: for my own self-reflection; to present some background, rationale, and clarity on my investment and involvement with the thinking-and-doing of praxis in/for music education; and to provide some insight into our culminating project, *Music Matters* (2nd edition). I realised something crucial upon this reflection: long before I considered myself dedicated to the praxis of my music making and music teaching and learning, I already was doing the work of a praxial music educator.

However, what is meant here by praxis? Numerous scholars, past and present, have conceptualised, interrogated, and re-invigorated the concept of praxis, as it was established by Aristotle and continues to be redefined across numerous domains of scholarship including philosophy, sociology, education, and beyond. Thus, because of its usage across a long history of scholarship, praxis is a multi-dimensional concept. For me, praxis is active reflection and critically reflective action for the development of personal and community flourishing and wellbeing, the ethical care of oneself and others, and the positive transformation of people and their everyday lives (Elliott & Silverman, 2014; Elliott, 2012; see also Aristotle, 1985; Freire, 1970; Habermas, 1974; hooks, 1994). Central to praxis is careful and caring thinking-and-doing for people's fulfillment and flourishing: cognitive-emotional-bodily, social, cultural, ethical, and educational fulfillment and flourishing (Elliott & Silverman, 2012a, 2012b). I can sum this up with one word, namely eudaimonia (e. g. Silverman, 2012, 2020; Smith & Silverman, 2020).

What does praxis (and therefore eudaimonia) mean for music education? Stated briefly, praxial music education conceives teaching and learning music through musical actions in three related ways: (1) as critically reflective and informed actions that are (2) embedded in and creatively responsive to both traditional and ever-changing musical/cultural/social values and (3) understood, taught, guided, and applied ethically for the positive improvement of students' personal and musical-social-community lives (Elliott, 1995; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Bowman, 2000; Regelski, 2005). It is important to note that some music education scholars equate praxis with a social practice (e. g. Bowman, 2000; see also Higgins, 2011, 2012); some do not (e. g. Elliott, 1995). Whether or not it is understood interchangeably as either a praxis or a social practice, music is seen potentially as a means "for exploring and developing potentials of character, identity, and selfhood" (Bowman, 2014, p. 3).

As Bowman has stated: *'What's unique to and distinctive about praxis (what distinguishes it from other ways of knowing) is phronesis, its ethical grounding […] Poiesis is knowing-in-action that is productive in nature, and its guidance system is technical in nature – in contrast to praxis, whose guidance system is fundamentally ethical'* (personal communication, 4/14/2015).[1] Therefore, to underscore the importance of the ethical component of praxis, I choose not to equate praxis and praxes with social practices. Why? Firstly, not all activities or engagements in music count as ethical, nor should they. Additionally, and within specific contexts, particular doings may seem right for one particular group, but not for others. Not all actions are ethically guided, even though they may occur within a social practice such as music making. By way of example, Elliott (2020) notes:

> In terms of unethical musical actions […] Herbert von Karajan frequently conducted the operas of Richard Wagner […] for Adolf Hitler and the Nazi elite. Indeed, Karajan made the deliberate decision to continue conducting and recording – to engage in unethical, wrong-doing – in Germany throughout the period of the Third Reich, thereby displaying his public support for Hitler and his murderous dictatorship, and feeding his egotistical needs for musical/public recognition and promotion.
> In contrast […] Erich Kleiber […] left Germany for Argentina during the Third Reich […] Kleiber could have continued his conducting career in Germany, but acting ethically […] Additionally, Kleiber rejected his contract with La Scala in Milan in 1939, stating: 'I hear that access to the Scala is denied to Jews. Music, like air and sunlight, should be for all. When in these hard times, this consolation is denied to a human being for reasons of race and religion, then I, both as Christian and artist, feel that I can no longer co-operate.' (Kleiber quoted in Elliott, 2020, p. 108; see also Elliott & Silverman, 2015, p. 21)

[1] Notice Bowman draws our attention to the "ethical component" of praxis, and not a moral imperative. While beyond the scope of this article, Elliott and Silverman (2015) discuss the difference between morality and ethics (pp. 19–21). See also the work of Bernard Williams (1985, 2011).

Clearly, both von Karajan and Kleibers' conducting was right action within the social practice of Western classical music making. Further, von Karajan acted rightly according to Nazi protocols. Still, we might say that aiding and abetting Hitler's atrocities warrant further scrutiny. Indeed, whilst within the social practice of music, von Karajan was a good musician, he should not be considered a praxialist. Indeed, at the front of a praxialist music maker – and music educator – is the crucial educational question, namely: What kind of person is it good to be as a music maker, music teacher, and contributor to the profession of music education? (Bowman, 2014; Elliott & Silverman, 2015). Thus, a music education founded upon praxis is concerned with right action and critically reflective actions in pursuit of a life of flourishing, care, and more, for oneself and for others. To foreshadow some of the conclusions of *Music Matters* (2nd edition):

> [M]usic is, fundamentally, a socially situated human endeavor. Music is a social practice; and when music is conceived and carried out ethically, for full human flourishing and transformation, it is a social *praxis*. Put simply, music was and remains intersubjective: person- and group-centered, not an abstract, esoteric, work-centered art, but a people-centered artistic-social-cultural endeavor. Music is something people do for – and with – each other for a very wide range of human "goods," benefits, and values. Of course, music can be abused by unethical and immoral people […] For example, when music is used to torture people or as an adjunct to racist propaganda, it is not a social practice in the praxial sense; it is not a social *praxis*. (2015, p. 84; see also p. 51)

And eudaimonia? Ethical music making and educative music teaching and learning:

> have the potential to empower students to achieve more than fluent music making and concepts about music and music education, as fundamentally important as these abilities are. What supersedes these skills and concepts is the much larger concept of educating [students] to understand and develop […] full human flourishing, or […] eudaimonia. Eudaimonia includes the pursuit of 'a good life', a meaningful life, a life of friendship with others, resilience, justice for others, health and well-being, happiness (in the deepest sense), personal meaningfulness, self-knowledge, and care for oneself, others, and the positive transformations of their communities—and a good life, an ethical life (Elliott & Silverman, 2020, p. 74).

Indeed, an ethical, eudaimonic music education includes helping students develop "as people who have the 'habits of mind and heart' to make music for all forms of positive social transformation and community betterment, or […] 'artistic citizenship'" (Elliott & Silverman, 2019, p. 74; see also, Elliott, 2012; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Elliott, Silverman & Bowman, 2016).

Regardless of this brief understanding of praxis as connected to music education, conventional wisdom cannot deny that theory is born from practice (i. e., doing). However, theory – particularly when critically reflected upon and transformed through critically reflective and transformed practice – shifts depending on the who, what, why, when, where, and how of a particular domain. Because of this, what follows is somewhat personal,

theoretical, and practical. Please note: while in 2008 I was invited to co-author the second edition of *Music Matters* – originally written solely by Elliott (1995), a book which sought to shift the philosophical discourse away from Reimer's *music education as aesthetic education* (1970) – we co-authored book chapters (e. g. 2012a, 2012b) and articles (e. g. 2014) prior to this publication.

Additionally, I was publishing as a solo author long before my connection to praxial music education seemed professionally solidified. However, I am getting ahead of myself. Actually, my journey of being able to engage in the kind of thinking needed for *Music Matters* (2nd edition) started in 2nd grade, at the age of 7.

Practice or Praxis

Miss Lounsberry was my elementary school music teacher. One day we were singing an American folk song. For some strange reason, I wanted to sing the song an octave lower than the rest of the class, though, I didn't realise that's what I was doing at the time. Ms. Lounsberry stopped playing at the piano, stopped her own singing, stopped the class's singing and said: *'Who is doing that?'* Doing what, I thought? She stared at the class as silence enveloped the room, when we began again. I didn't like singing the song so high, so down the octave I sang. She stopped everything a second time: *'Really? Who is doing that? Who is singing with us in a lower range?'* We all looked at each other not knowing what she was talking about. Then she went down the row of students, asking each student to match pitch, one by one. *'La'*, she would sing. *'Laaaaaaa'*, the students voiced after her, some more in tune than others. When my turn, she had me matching octaves, unlike the rest of the students, for a minute or two. We went back to singing the song, and I again sang it an octave lower though this time she didn't stop the class. When class ended, she asked me to remain: *'Marissa, why did you decide to change the song's starting pitch and sing it down the octave, what I mean is…'*; she went to the piano and explained what she meant. I replied, *'because I like it better that way'*. She nodded and told me to go back to class. From that moment on, Miss Lounsberry gave me extra assignments in music; she taught me recorder and I started going to her house twice per month for years, all free of charge, to sing songs, play recorder, compose music, work on breathing, and more. She made sure I sang in the three elementary school choirs; at each school concert, I always premiered one of my compositions. She brought me to the orchestra teacher to learn violin. She then brought me to the band teacher to learn flute, too. She made it possible that I could make as much music as I wanted. In other words, she was a model praxial music teacher; ethical, caring, dedicated, musically wide-reaching in scope/sequence and genre, and inspiring (Elliott & Silverman, 2015). Her classroom embraced multiple ways of being musical, embraced music making

from around the world in authentic ways; it was a place of self-other discovery and wonder (Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Campbell, 2008).

Much later, and prior to graduating secondary school I was told, first by a woodwind judge at New York State School Music Association's solo festival, and again from a judge at the Suffolk County Music Educators Association large ensemble festival, *'If you can do anything else with your life other than music, do that. Leave music for a hobby'*. Because they were adults, and because they were music teachers, I believed them. I studied literature (poetry was my second passion next to music, so that is what my undergraduate degree is in) at New York University (NYU) and thought about going to law school. However, during my second year at NYU, I missed playing. I hadn't picked up any instruments, let alone my flute, for nearly two years. On a whim, I contacted the then secretary in the Department of Music if there were any opportunities for nonmajors to make music. She said: *'You're in luck. The orchestra is holding open auditions tomorrow.'* I looked under my dorm room bed and found my flute, took it out of its case, played a few scales and went to the audition. Afterwards, Roger Mahadeen, the conductor of the orchestra, said, *'Thank you very much.'* I looked at him and said *'What does that mean?'* He said: *'I usually call all the auditionees, but since you asked you've made it. Register for orchestra. See you next Wednesday night at 6pm.'* From there, other doors opened. I started taking private lessons; something most schools of music don't allow non-majors to do. One day, my flute teacher said to me: *'You need to meet someone on the faculty. His name is Gregory Haimovsky. He's the Director of the NYU Chamber Music Society.'*

I'd heard about Professor Haimovsky. A Russian piano virtuoso who was a graduate of the Tchaikovsky Conservatory with a great pedigree, he performed with renowned musical artists of the Soviet Union; and premiered most of Messiaen's piano music for the USSR. While kind, he was serious and possessed very high standards. He taught only graduate students as part of his Chamber Society, and even though I was an undergraduate, he welcomed me into his classroom. One day when talking he asked: *'What are you doing with your life?' 'Going to law school'*, I said. *'What?'* he exclaimed. *'You're a musician. You're not a lawyer.'* The next semester, his Assistant Director for the Chamber Music Society quit, and he asked me, in his Russian way: *'You will work with me, yes?'* And I did. Again, he was a model musician and artist; dedicated to his craft, he was, above all else, dedicated to helping his students live through the music they made (Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Silverman, 2007). He inspired me to be the musical being – as well as the musician and flutist – I wanted to be but thought I couldn't.

After my undergraduate degree, I returned to school for music performance for my masters (SUNY Purchase College Conservatory of Music) and my PhD (NYU). I performed regularly in orchestras and chamber ensembles for years. During my doctoral studies, I met another professor mid-defending my dissertation topic. While examining the nature of musical interpretation through the lens of Louise Rosenblatt's reader response theory,

quite literally mid-defense, the exam door opened. Without warning, a then stranger began intensely racing through page after page of my work and spoke, though I had no idea who he was or what he was doing there: *'I see in this you haven't read Stephen Davies (1994) on musical meaning; and you should likely read Stan Godlovitch (1998); and you should also read more of Richard Taruskin (1995), and Susan McClary (2000), and Richard Leppert (1993), and Lawrence Kramer (1990), and Peter Kivy (1980, 1990), as well as Lydia Goehr (1992), Francis Sparshott (1982, 1988), and Philip Alperson (1991). This is an amazing, never-been-done-before topic. The faculty are lucky to have such a thinker/performer. But I have to go.'* And he exited the room as quickly as he came in. I turned to Dr. Gilbert, then Director of Doctoral Studies in Music, and said: *'Who was that?'* He answered: *'Dr. David Elliott. He's our new hire in music education from the University of Toronto.'*

By that point in time, I had been teaching chamber music and private flute at NYU, and Dr. Gilbert invited me to teach a graduate research class, as well as the music education woodwind methods course. And so near graduation with my PhD now complete, David (Elliott) took me out to lunch and asked: *'What are you going to do with your life? You're an exceptional musician. But, you're a born educator. You should be teaching in a public*[2] *school.'* In addition to teaching in higher education, I had already been teaching chamber music and private flute at community music schools for years, but I never considered public school music teaching. Why not? Because most of my music teachers dissuaded me from considering the profession of music education; they espoused the wrongly held belief that *'musicians make music; they don't teach music'*. Yet, thanks to David, everything I began to read about the profession of music education moved beyond awful stereotypes about musicians and teachers. So, I went back for an additional graduate degree in education (Pace University) and taught at Long Island City High School in Queens, New York for 5 years. There, I taught literature, band, and general music.

All these experiences helped me teach, think, and write in, about, and through music, which led to my work on the second edition of *Music Matters*. When David asked me if I wanted to co-author this edition with him, I was honoured. At first, we discussed dividing up the work evenly. Mid-researching, I realised, as all researchers likely do, the more I learned, the more I had a lot to learn. In that moment, I asked David: *'Can you help me?'* And he did. We worked on each aspect of the book together for five years. And *Music Matters* (2nd edition) is the fruit of that labour.

Importantly, we began our work on the book when I was teaching in Queens. I had already written about the diversity I experienced in that school of 4300 students (e. g. Silverman, 2013). My first year of teaching was incredibly challenging, for all sorts of reasons. Without much support, I taught large music classes of 55 students per class. Needless to say,

[2] By "public school", David Elliott is referring to an elementary and/or secondary state-owned school that is funded through taxation and the United States government.

I was overwhelmed. By my second year, and as I was writing and publishing, I began to form a philosophical foundation of my own that was based in care ethics, relational principles of enaction, as well as the interpretive strategies I valued from literary scholars such as Louise Rosenblatt, Stanley Fish, Nicholas Karolides, and others (e.g. Silverman, 2007, 2012). The ways I transformed into the kind of teacher I thought my students needed was a process of listening and thinking, and more listening and thinking. Perhaps my students were lucky to have me as their teacher; I'm not sure. But, more importantly, I was lucky to have such students in my life, for as my students and I opened up to each other, we both grew in ways that none of us could have imagined.

Similarly, the kind of teacher I became was (and is) akin to the kind of music maker I sought (and continue to seek) to be. Namely I was disposed to right action for not only myself, but for others: for the music makers I connect(ed) with and to in the acts of music making; for the audience members I attempt(ed) to connect with through the act of music making; and for the praxis of the musical communities I hope(d) to join – the people, places, spaces, heroes, legends, traditions, and more; past, present, and future – by making, performing, creating, and co-creating musical pieces from a variety of epochs, places, and genres. Hence, many of my musical experiences, teaching experiences, dispositions, and beliefs fueled the trajectory of writing *Music Matters* (2nd edition).

Theory: Music Matters

The main goal for this book was that it would help future and practicing music teachers and professors raise questions and think more deeply about music education. We hoped that the readers of *Music Matters* (2nd edition) would take the risks necessary to transform themselves, in order to best serve the lives of their students. No small feat, but philosophy is best when it attempts to change the status quo.

As we state clearly, the book *Music Matters* is not a philosophy in the popular but mistaken sense of a canon to live and die for. It is one possible view and, therefore, should be read as a tool; as a means of helping support the efforts of music teachers (administrators, parents, and others) as they tackle the many theoretical and practical issues involved in music education. Moreover, this tool will be best if it is refined in the future with the help of those who use it. Indeed, if more pre-service and in-service teachers understand and operationalize the ethical unification of theory and practice – or praxis – then music teaching and learning could potentially become more effective and educative, potentially transformed and transformative.

So, how did we develop our particular philosophical pursuit towards the publication of *Music Matters* (2nd edition)? Consider answers to the following questions:

- What is music?
- What is musical creativity?
- How does music arouse and express human emotions?
- What is involved in musical interpretation?
- What is education?
- What is curriculum?

Often music educators, university music students, and/or professional musicians have a difficult time articulating plausible, let alone logical or researched-based answers to the above questions. However, unless music educators, in particular, and musicians/artist-teachers in general, are prepared to provide answers – for themselves and with (the help of) their students – to these very fundamental questions, they have no reasonable starting point for understanding why, what, and how to do what they could be doing as educative and ethical professionals. For example: whose music should teachers teach in the neighborhoods of Astoria and Queens in New York, Los Angeles, California, Sydney, Australia, and so on? Should we teach Mozart, West African drumming and dancing, Jay-Z, Taylor Swift, Balinese gamelan music, Philip Glass, or other kinds of music? Why? How? Where do students' desires and dreams enter the equation?

Please note: When asking such questions of pre-service and in-service music teachers and artist-teachers, I am not suggesting there is one right way to answer such queries. Instead, the pursuit of critical reflection as connected to educative teaching and learning praxis is the goal of the inquiry.

To write this book, we asked and attempted to answer – for us – the above-noted questions, in addition to many, many more questions. This meant studying and integrating research across numerous fields including (but not limited to) the philosophy of music (e. g. Alperson, 1991; Davies, 1994; Goehr, 1992; Kivy, 1990, 2001), mind and personhood (see, Noë, 2004, 2012; Chappell, 2011; Cunningham, 2000; Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1992; Thompson, 2007); music psychology and music neuroscience (e. g. Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Juslin & Sloboda, 2001, 2010; Hallam, Cross & Thaut, 2009), sociology of music (e. g. Becker, 2004; Turino, 2008), educational philosophy (e. g. Apple, 2003; Blake et. al., 2003; Carr, 2000; Dewey, 1916; Greene, 1995; Higgins, 2011, 2012; hooks, 1994, 2000; Noddings, 1984), and music education (e. g. Abeles & Custodero, 2010; Bowman & Frega, 2012; Goble, 2003, 2010; Jorgensen, 1997, 2003). In what follows, I'll discuss only some major themes of music(s), education(s), personhood, and musical experiences as they relate to *Music Matters*.[3]

[3] Please note: Rather than consistently include citations from *Music Matters* (2nd edition) throughout the remainder of this article, what follows relies heavily on *Music Matters*, unless otherwise cited.

Music(s)

Notably, four basic dimensions come into play when we attempt to understand the natures and values of music. Therefore, we use the word musics: (1) People: music makers and listeners (or musicers), including dancers, fans, worshippers, recording/sound engineers, critics, sound technicians, rock-band roadies, and very importantly music therapists. All possible musical (2) processes and (3) products including all forms musicing,[4] or musical performing, improvising, composing, arranging, film scoring, participatory music making, all forms of musicing via social media and music technology, and more. All of these dimensions remind us that music is a protean art form – that can absorb, combine, present, and re-present all aspects of personal, social, cultural, political, gendered, ecological life. Fourthly (4) contexts: the social, historical, political, economic, gendered, ecological, and architectural situations in which musics were or are being made by students, amateurs, and professional music makers.

These four dimensions form a transformative system of dialectic relationships. And because the relationships formed among these domains of a specific musical praxis require the intersection of social agents and social contexts, we can expect these relationships to generate a wide range of beliefs and controversies about who counts as good, valuable, ethical and unethical musicers, processes, products, and contexts.

What does this mean for music teaching and learning? To take just one example: To perform, compose, remix, arrange, mash-up, or improvise expressively or creatively, music teachers and students need to think and act outside the box; outside music as the notes, the piece, and the work. Notably, each specific musical situation assumes the responsibility of students and teachers to reflect critically about and in their musicing and listening.

Education(s)

Similarly, four basic dimensions come into play when we attempt to understand the nature of education. (1) Persons: learners and teachers of all ages, kinds, abilities, and desires, as well as parents, administrators, and others educational; (2) processes: all educative and ethical forms of action and interactions – nonformal, informal, formal teaching, mentoring, coaching, and so forth – and encounters leading to the growth, development, and continued pursuit of educational and musically educational (3) outcomes and (4) values. Therefore, we use the word educations. When one takes these details and combines them with the fact that education takes many different forms in every country across the globe, it makes more sense to talk about educations, plural. This, then, brings us to understand the concept of music, education, and music education as social praxes.

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[4] Musicing means: "performing, improvising, composing, arranging, conducting, recording, sampling, sound sculpting, musicing and moving, musicing and dancing, musicing and healing, musicing and worshipping, and so on, in all types of cultural situations" (Elliott & Silverman, 2015, p. 16).

Personhood and Musical Experiences

Music and education are human endeavors. Music is made by and for people. Notably, something we would recognise as music has been occurring for hundreds of thousands of years; it has morphed, transformed, and, all the while, maintained its significance (e. g. Mithen, 2005; Cross, 2011; Huron, 2006). As MacDonald states: "We are all musical. Every human being has a biological, social and cultural guarantee of musicianship" (2008, p. 39). Because music has been part of the fabric of human beings and being human (e. g. MacDonald, 2008), its stands to reason that some form of education (i. e., teaching and learning) has, too, occurred for hundreds of thousands of years. We can conclude, then, that musics and music teaching and learning have mattered deeply to individuals and social communities for hundreds of thousands of years, otherwise human beings would no longer engage with musics, educations, and the processes and products found therein.

Because of the long life of such potential praxes, at the heart of *Music Matters* (2nd edition) is a focus on helping people develop the abilities and dispositions to pursue exceedingly important human life goals and values for themselves and others (e. g. eudaimonia; see Aristotle, 1985; Silverman, 2012; Elliott & Silverman, 2014; see also Smith & Silverman, 2020). Importantly, praxial music education emphasizes the meanings, values, and purposes of any or all forms of musicing and listening "in the social, cultural contexts in which they have arisen and the unique ways in which people in those contexts experience and understand them" (Goble, 2010, p. 245). Thus, this is why personhood is an important dimension of praxial thinking-doing.

Music Matters (2nd edition) tries to convey the holistic nature of each person as greater than the sum of his or her unified dimensions, which are always in a fluid and contingent state of becoming. Our body-brain-mind, conscious-nonconscious experiences of our worlds, environments, and contexts enable our powers of attention, perception, cognition, emotion and volition, which, in turn, empower creativity, spirituality, imagination and – depending on the quality of the significant others in one's life – underpin and lay the groundwork for the development of happiness, personal growth, resilience, and more. All dimensions of personhood interweave, feedback, and feed-forward. Moreover, there is a porous, interactive continuity between persons and all dimensions of their world. Thus, and because we exist in communion with and connected to our environments, consciousness is not locked inside your head: consciousness is simultaneously in oneself and in/of one's worlds. Notably, there has been a very significant paradigm shift in the worlds of cognitive science, and other related fields, including so-called music cognition. The shift of this paradigm is coined the *4-E Concept* of body-brain-mind (e. g. Gallagher, 2017; Krueger, 2018; Thompson & Stapleton, 2009; Silverman, 2020; van der Schyff & Krueger, 2019). The thrust of this conceptualisation of body-brain-mind considers our simultaneously embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended sense of self, which is at the core of the foundational considerations in *Music Matters* (2nd edition). What does this mean?

To say we are embodied beings is to say that all aspects of our selves are completely unified. Let us get rid of any separate, dualistic conceptualisations of body and mind – instead, let us discuss and examine body-mind, body-mind-brain, and so on. The human body-brain-mind is in our entire organism which also continuously interacts and transacts with, is situated in, and is being transformed by our worlds, environments, and contexts – meaning we are embodied, embedded, and extended, like our musicing and listening. To say that we are enactive beings emphasises that persons actively bring forth and create him/her/their self by interacting (and transacting) with other persons and all aspects of his/her/their worlds, environments, and contexts.

As philosopher Noë (2009) puts it, "brain, body, and world form a process of dynamic interaction. That is where we find ourselves" (p. 95; italics added). A person and her environment bring each other into being (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1992): "Like two partners in a dance who bring forth each other's movements, person and environment enact each other through their social coupling" (Thompson, 2007, pp. 204–205). Because of this, we are in the world as much as the world is in us; concurrently, we co-construct the world as much as the world co-constructs us.

What does this mean for music education? Given that we are embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended, a person is not an isolated, passive information processor. And we are not brains-alone, which is today's version of Descartes' dualistic mind-body split. So when encountering music education advocacy claims about how music boosts the brain or music makes us smarter, first ask: what kinds of music and musical engagements, listening to the music of Jay-Z, Timberlake, Ewe drumming and dancing, Steve Reich, or misogynist rap, or White Power punk by The Dentists and Tragic Minds? Composing a minimalist piece that takes inspiration from Philip Glass's *Satyagraha*? Improvising over the chord changes of Neal Hefti's (for Count Basie) *Lil' Darlin'*? Or, remixing Lauryn Hill's *Can't Take My Eyes Off You*? Then ask: What does 'music boosts the brain' mean? As Ramachandran (2004) states: the brain "is the most complexly organized structure in the universe" (pp. 2–3; see also LeDoux, 2002). The brain contains one hundred billion nerve cells or neurons that engage in "something like one thousand to ten thousand contacts with other neurons" (p. 3) So, the brain is entirely capable of making and maintaining about one hundred trillion synaptic connections. Notably, "the number of possible permutations and combinations of brain activity […] exceeds the number of elementary particles in the known universe" (p. 3). Thus, "the entire history of brain science has been characterized by every new discovery being hopelessly mis/over-interpreted […] In brain science our [current] level of understanding is so [primitive that] we can be very confident any [general claim] is going to be wrong, and possibly in a serious way" (Aporic, 2013, cited in Elliott & Silverman, 2017, pp. 30–31).

Important to our discussion of our embodied, embedded, extended, and enactive personhood is the examination and distinction between emotions and feelings. Emotions arise from a combination of factors that cause an avalanche of changes in the

body-brain-mind and, therefore, across our conscious and nonconscious processes and engagements in our worlds. Feelings arise when we become conscious of our bodily feelings of one or more emotions, and our living contexts. To put it succinctly, emotions are public; feelings are private. What does this mean for our musical experiences?

Emotions are aroused by the continuous interactions of all our body-brain-mind, world, environmental, and contextual circumstances, including: brain stem responses to musical dynamics and timbres, the ways in which our personhood systems synchronise with musical beats and grooves; how music is connected with the places and spaces we hear it; the ways mirror neurons allow us to hear resemblances between musical emotions and melodic contours and music and movement; and other musical-personal-social interactions. Feelings occur when we are consciously aware of our emotional processes, and so we feel music – whether through emotional arousal, contagion, naming, or some other process – literally, metaphorically, reactively, and intersubjectively when our emotions matter to us in some particular way. Indeed, one of the many aims of a praxial music education is to assist students to connect to, with, and through musics by feeling into musicing and listening (Elliott & Silverman, 2016). Such musical feelings and engagements intimately feed into and fuel our understanding of the musics we experience.

Musical Understanding

We suggest that there are numerous types of situated, embodied/enactive musical thinking and knowings (or MTKs) that make up the musical understanding (musicianship plus listenership) that underpins the musicing and listening we do in each kind of music. Thus, a simple take-away is that if teachers are only drilling the routines or one part of procedural action knowledge, such as knowing how to properly play the notes of a particular piece of music, then they are only teaching technical know-how. To play musically requires that teachers help students understand that how to integrate many other embodied ways of knowing and feeling music (e. g. Silverman, 2020). The same applies to listening.

Because musical understanding is embodied and socially and culturally emergent, musicers and listeners of each music they encounter and learn often become invested in preserving, developing, advancing, and codifying the processes and products of their music. In terms of listening, music teachers should help listeners go beyond listening for elements and form because by doing so students can learn to hear the ways that pieces embody and communicate many layers of personal, social, and cultural meanings.

Final Thoughts

Philosophy and theory are only as good as those engaged in critically reflective action in pursuit of refining a given framework and foundation for bettering practice. Therefore, the 2nd edition of *Music Matters* is just one perspective that we hope readers may find useful as a teaching tool and a thinking tool for philosophy-building, and the creation of general guidelines for everyday music teaching and learning. Additionally, and in many ways, *Music Matters* is a composite of years of life-wide experiences, all of which provided fuel for the contents of this book as well as other publications.

Speaking solely for myself, none of my writing is intended to replace what has already been done or is being done now or will be done. For me, my work – which is inclusive of *Music Matters* – is one small step to better understand myself in relation to my praxis; to better understand why I do what I do in the hopes of being the best I can be for those I connect with as students and practitioners.

So, where might the next thirty years bring praxial music education as well as the music education profession? Only the teachers, students, and community members who visit and revisit the foundational principles of music education will know for sure.

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