

By J. Terry Gates

Today, I want to do three things: first to introduce you to the international work and purposes of the MayDay Group; second to share some of the world-wide theoretical issues that have developed in our discussions and on which we are now working. Last, I will invite you to join our dialog, contribute to the work of our Group and participate in the kinds of symposia we hold. I'll tell you about this at the end of my presentation.

Early in 1993, Thomas Regelski and I had a conversation about the isolation from each other of music education theorists. The more we talked to others, the more we found that they were not sharing ideas with each other frequently, systematically, and internationally; nor were they routinely taking advantage of the ease of communication that the internet provides. This was the condition just five years ago, in spite of the increasing numbers of new resources in the theoretical area of music education. New theoretical books were published by David Elliott, Bennett Reimer, Keith Swanwick, Robert Walker, Harold Fiske and others. In the US, a Philosophy Special Research Interest Group was approved in our national music educators association. The Philosophy of Music Education Review was being created for music education philosophers and a triennial international philosophy symposium was being established, thanks to Estelle Jorgensen's hard work. The British Journal of Music Education was making its mark in theorizing of all sorts, led by Keith Swanwick and John Paynter, and Richard Colwell's then-new Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning solicited and courageously printed critical articles. Australian, Austrian and Canadian journals accepted theoretical articles. The status of all this today is that the triennial symposiums continue, and all but one of the journals are still available. The Quarterly is now gone, but a new Finnish journal accepts theoretical articles in English.

Wonderful as all this was and still is for the most part, it was not enough. Although the leaders of these projects eagerly sought international voices, there was little evidence that these methods would get theorists in contact with each other frequently enough to allow them to compare notes, to keep each other informed and challenged, and to try out lines of thinking while manuscripts were still in draft form.

In addition, Tom and I recognized a growing need for better theorizing. In music education research the open critical review of research and theory once provided

by the Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education and the Quarterly disappeared when Richard Colwell and Manny Brand left those journals as editors. The process of refereeing manuscripts for journals and conventions is not an open process, and there is no defense against the claim of an editor or convention program coordinator who says that there are too few good manuscripts or session proposals, or that they had to rush a critique into print before the original writer was offered a chance to respond.

What emerged from this need on May first, 1993, was the first meeting of what became the MayDay Group. We invited some of our nearby friends to come at their own expense to a weekend exploration of each other's minds in Buffalo, New York. In addition, Keith Swanwick was gracious enough to come from England to participate. Some came because they were curious, others because they had something on their minds that they wanted to share, still others because had political agendas of one kind or another.

Since then, we have developed tentative solutions for the dialog problem and found people around the world who care that our profession is internally held to high critical standards. Our current members are professionally situated in Austria, Australia, Canada, Finland, Great Britain, Japan, Korea and The United States. Thomas Regelski and I founded the MayDay Group and continue to coordinate it. We have lost some members and gained others, but the Group has doubled in size to almost 60 in the five years since it was founded, almost entirely by word-of-mouth. [Since late July, the membership grew to 80 and Germany, China and South Africa can be added to the list of countries.]

The MayDay Group

The name of the MayDay Group will give you something of its flavor. This name was the informal reference Tom and I made to the people we invited to Buffalo in 1993, but it survived our consideration of several alternative names (some of them quite academic and stuffy) which tells me something of its relevance:

First: Our first meeting was on May 1, 1993. In European-American culture, May first is called May Day, a day when, traditionally, secret admirers leave bouquets of flowers at the doorsteps of people they care about. The people we invited to Buffalo care about music education.

Second: MayDay is the international distress signal. We think our profession is in distress, especially in the seven areas noted in our pamphlet, *Action for Change in Music Education*. We insist on being an international group. This lifts the discussions we have above the local and national politics of our profession and, at the same time, broadens the base of experience upon which we each can draw.

Third: Although MayDay is a springtime celebration of renewal and fertility in some cultures, it is also a date that was used to commemorate revolutionary action in some societies. Professional renewal and fertility are beneficial, I guess, and we as individuals find ways to “recharge our batteries”; but renewal for the profession without collective action is unlikely. We intend to move our agenda forward.

To act on our beliefs, we currently maintain three programs:

The first project, and the one closest to our mission, is our communication network/ We have maintained email contact since we started, and that is our primary means of interaction. Our web site was developed in May, 1997. It is updated periodically and on it you’ll find various kinds of content. You can use the web site’s “current members” page to send email to any member of the MayDay Group, or another page to access many international and national music education organizations’ web sites. We invite you to explore the rest of our web site, if only to keep an eye on us.

We also maintain a discussion list on the internet for members, to address comments and send information to the Group by email. This is a place where members will challenge each other and criticize the directions of the Group. Charles Keil, for example, started quite a series of comments by wondering when we theorists would ever put our ideas to work with real kids ... to “put our tires on the road and make them SQUEEEEEEL,” as he said it. Other members put similar challenges out, and we need to find answers to such questions.

Our second program is our weekend colloquiums, now held in Spring and Fall. A few weeks ago, in Dallas, we heard seven critical papers, five of them on David Elliott’s praxialism. David had drafts or abstracts of these papers in advance and responded to them in Dallas. In addition to these five, Pentti Maatannen of Finland and Paul Woodford of Canada criticized various aspects of philosophical method as applied to music education. Our next meeting will be in Toronto in October 22-25, when we will consider and expand upon Keith Swanwick’s analysis for the

MayDay Group of the issues of cultural and social influences on music teaching and learning, the second issue in Action for Change.... On April 30, 1999 Patricia Campbell will host our colloquium in Seattle on how music education can affect culture, the third of our issues, and in October of 1999 we'll meet at a place yet to be announced. To "make the tires squeal" we are devoting some of these two colloquia to direct applications and inviting the profession through various means. Our colloquium in 2000 will be in June in Helsinki, Finland, following the Philosophy of Music Education Symposium to be held that year in England. Except for 2000, twice-yearly colloquium topics on music education issues are planned well into the future. Check the events page on this web site for a schedule.

These colloquia couldn't be simpler: We get a place to meet, and then we invite our members to come to an intense philosophical discussion of music education issues, usually with some invited presentations as discussion starters. We usually start on Friday evening and go at it until Sunday noon.

A third project is the publication by various means of longer theoretical papers. Some members' beliefs — and an outline of our agenda for theorizing — are contained in our set of guiding ideals for music education in the pamphlet Action for Change in Music Education. It took about 18 months to develop. We are eager to see these ideals analyzed, informed with our best thinking and used as the basis for criticizing practice. I'll have more to say about these seven ideals in a few minutes.

We have tentatively isolated these seven issues for critical analysis and are currently beginning a set of monographs that we call the Music Education Critical Analysis Series, or MECAS, to explore them; most of our weekend colloquia in the next five years will be on these issues, one by one. The Critical Analysis Series is intended to examine our assumptions, clarify issues arising from this examination and analyze both the issues and our beliefs critically. The first of the Series, a paper on Critical Theory applied to music teaching by Thomas Regelski, is on our web site; the second, on Music as Culture by Keith Swanwick, is on this web site, accompanied by several related papers. Our meeting in Fall 1998 in Toronto will be on that issue, no 2 in Action for Change

The Concerns of the MayDay Group

What keeps us going? Internationally, we see two broad needs, and these form the

broad purposes of the MayDay Group. They're printed in Action for Change... and they appear on the home page of our web site.

(a) to apply critical theory and critical thinking to the purposes and practices of music education, and

(b) to affirm the central importance of musical participation in human life and, thus, the value of music in the general education of all people.

The MayDay Group is all about how we bring what we do to consciousness. For years, many of us have felt the need for a better theoretical formulation of our work and worked separately to develop one. James Mursell, Charles Leonhard, Abraham Schwadron, Bennett Reimer, Murray Schafer, Edwin Gordon, Paul Farnsworth, Thomas Regelski, Keith Swanwick, David Elliott and other theorists gathered adherents around their views. Ancestries developed, such as the Mursell-Leonhard-Reimer sequence in America. Other pedagogical theorists focused on some segment of our profession: Sinichi Suzuki, Paul Rolland, Carl Orff, Zoltan Kodály, Heitor Villa-Lobos and many others come to mind. These people and their students worked to advance their ideas in practice. Max Kaplan, Christopher Small, Charles Fowler, Estelle Jorgensen, Robert Walker, Pentti Maattanen, Antoine Hennion, Wayne Bowman and others published extended ideas about music education theory, but stopped short of gathering adherents deliberately. Harry Broudy, Phillip Phenix, Maxine Greene, Francis Sparshott, Elliot Eisner, Howard Gardner and others had much to say about music education in their more general educational writings.

Theory development was also done in groups. Among Americans, Harold Abeles, Charles Hoffer and Robert Klotman published an excellent theoretical overview of the field. Malcolm Tait and Paul Haack jointly developed a music education theory. Still others pulled short works from many theorists into single collections. John Paynter in England, as well as Michael Mark in America, and he and Charles Gary, provided our current histories of ideas about music education. My edited 1988 book is a collection of American critical and theoretical papers, as was the National Society for Secondary Education's 1958 yearbook, *Basic Concepts in Music Education*, and Richard Colwell's update of it, *Basic Concepts...II*. We've had meetings to motivate theory formation, too. In America, Max Kaplan and Robert Choate put together the Tanglewood Symposium in 1967 and Ronald Thomas assembled thinking practitioners for the Manhattanville Music Curriculum

Project. The Yale Symposium, the Ann Arbor Symposia, the Wesleyan Symposium and others fit here. In the Pacific, Gary McPherson, Toru Mitsui, Tadahiro Murao, Masafumi Ogawa, Susan Chung, Myung-Sook Auh and others regularly organize conferences and symposia on music education issues. Tore West, Heidi Westerlund and Pentti Maattanen in Scandinavia organize symposia there, as do Lucy Green and others in England. There are still others, of course, and I apologize to those I left off this list; it was accidental.

The point is that the MayDay Group is part of this theoretical dialog. What makes us distinct from national music education associations and the International Society for Music Education is that we intend that the dialog be continuous rather than periodic, and we intend to be critical of music education practice. That is, we intend to hold a point of view that music in education should be carried out by people critical of their own teaching and skeptical of their unexamined pedagogical habits. We want to support music education by being fussy about the ways in which we rationalize it.

An aside: It is disturbing to note that most of the names I've mentioned here were males, most of them white males with firm roots in western civilization's musical traditions. For reasons I'll mention in a few minutes, the western civilization business is doubly disturbing. Both are being corrected. As of July 1998, a third of our members are female and we have members in Asia as well as in Europe, North America and Australia. The MayDay Group has slowly added members, by invitation at first and now by an open door to those who can and will contribute to the dialog. The MayDay Group is eager to engage anyone who feels the urgency we feel about our profession, has the love we have for it and has sufficient interest in our work to examine both research and practice critically.

The MayDay Group Agenda

I'd like to turn now to the The MayDay Group's seven guiding ideals, printed in Action for Change.... These are not principles, since they arise from our beliefs rather than from research. They are not exactly utopian conditions, although we'd all be better off if we were justified in observing them in actual music education practice. They are, like "good living" or "fine tone quality," more or less fixed orientations for directing our professional efforts and judging the results.

The first ideal is about the kinds of musical action we should hold up as excellent.

1. Musical action that is fully mindful of musical results is the necessary condition of music-making and, therefore, of an effective music education.

Some music is about life — that is the best music, regardless of what tradition it comes from. Other music imitates music or musicians — composers call music “derivative” if it imitates other musicians’ styles; commercial music critics and jazz experts wish imitative performers would “find their own style.” In addition to life music and imitative music, there are sounds called music that are neither about life nor about other music — pencil music or finger-music. Technical exercises and some etudes fit here. Finally, there is “ear candy” — music-like sounds intended to feed the market demand based on fashion and simple appetites.

Here’s the point: Too few people know the difference. Too much mindless sound-making happens. Too many well-meaning people give too much credit for mechanical music making and over-produced performances. Too much emphasis is placed on music-related activity that seems creative and entertaining but leaves little behind in the person when the fun is over. Wouldn’t it be great to have students who take seriously what they do in music, people who remember from class to class what they learned in the last class, people who know what to fix in the music they are making, people who are eager to get to the next step in whatever they are working on in music? A critical approach to music making is an indispensable first step in producing this result. A critical approach is also a dominant and permanent attitude, not just a first step.

Critically reflective musicianship is what happens when a person intends to do something effective musically, and uses that intention as a standard to assess what actually happens. Independent musicianship develops in students when they truly have musical options — choices — and when they are encouraged to use them, demonstrate them, evaluate them and listen to others evaluate the results or use them. They adopt and adapt the music they make and hear, for their own musical purposes. They articulate their judgments and live by them. In ways such as these, and more, students become mindful of the musical results they are producing and become careful about making good musical life spaces for themselves and others. Values develop alongside knowledge and skill, and all these become the personal possession of each student and the collective possession of the society they are in the daily process of creating.

2. The social and cultural contexts of musical actions are integral to musical

meaning and cannot be ignored or minimized in music education.

Music, the person, the society and the culture are interlocked members of a musical life, and therefore of music education theorizing.

Case 1: A young Hispanic girl's letter to the editor was published not long ago in Rochester, New York. She lamented in her letter that her Anglo appearance separated her from her Hispanic friends. The letter was about how Hispanic she was: She ate the food, danced the dances, spoke the language, wore the clothes and listened to the music; but still she complained that she was not accepted fully.

This girl earnestly and deliberately used music and dance as ways to fit in with the group to which she wanted desperately to belong.

Case 2: An instrumental music teacher in Buffalo, New York attempts to motivate his students to practice at home. One group of his students reported that they were told by their church not to practice at all, much less practice at home. He investigated their report by discussing it with the students' religious leader. The religious leader's reasoning went this way: musical talent is a gift from God and it was arrogant to think that it could be improved by practicing.

The religious values of these students brought them into conflict with the musical and pedagogical values of their teacher.

Case 3: My wife and I visited a middle school in a suburb of London, England, where we observed students working to put melodies, harmonies and rhythms together in stylistically-authentic arrangements. They were making demo tapes as group projects. The teacher reported that a group from last year's class went beyond the assignment: They called a producer at EMI records in London to pitch their demo tape, that is, to try to get EMI to produce it. They invited him to lunch. Not only did the producer agree to meet them for lunch and discuss their project, he even bought the lunch.

No — their song never was produced. But the kids lived some of the real-world context that provided both the basis and, in their case, the consequence of their classroom project.

Musical values extend beyond music for its own sake to these kinds of situations. Students sense this and long for it. They will live their musical lives in context, not in theoretical isolation or even in personal isolation. Choosing music for a wedding, deciding musical policies on a symphony orchestra board, selling grapefruit and candy to support the school musical theatre presentation, preserving a sensitive trumpet embouchure while playing skillfully in a marching band, applying for a government grant to make a music documentary video, buying CDs and music videos, selecting and sorting published music, building musical instruments, singing and dancing the traditions of one's people — all of these contribute to and draw strength from some level of musical meaning.

Most of these examples are from the center of a limited set of white European-American musical traditions. There is a wider musical world, even in that set, and most of our students live in it, or will come in contact with it no matter where their 21st century lives take them. Aesthetic criticism often conflicts with, or fails to illuminate, real-world musical practices. We need a broader rationale, and we can empower our students better with a broader, better curriculum. We can put them in personal control of a broader set of musical choices and skills so that they can live well, musically, in the information age.

We can lead our students to value musical choices and gain musical skills, but can music teachers improve music in the communities around them? We think we must.

3. Since human musical actions create, sustain and re-shape musical cultures, music educators can and should formally channel this cultural process, influencing the directions in which it develops and the individual and collective human values it serves.

For me, human musical action — in the school and in the community — is the core of a professional agenda. Music is broad and deep enough to contribute to many uses and functions in life, but other musicians and their patrons are rationally focused on their own, unique interests: Symphony orchestra managers and performers want symphony patrons who know something about the music and will support the performers financially. Recording company producers want customers. Street musicians want donations. Barbershop quartet singers want an audience. Church musicians want to contribute to worship. Film music composers want to enhance the effect on the screen so that they can keep their careers going.

Performing arts center directors, media policy makers and ministers of culture want audiences from clearly-defined segments of the population. Piano technicians and instrument repair people want customers. None of these is musically in contact with the whole, messy, heterogeneous population at the same time. Instead, they knowingly select their populations by type, or the populations select the providers by choosing the event or service that interests them.

The elementary and secondary school music teacher isn't so lucky, and, ironically, herein lies music education's power. In every classroom music teacher's week s/he meets a community's future lawyers, garbage collectors, teachers, carpenters, government officials, automobile mechanics, social workers and industrial tycoons; and roughly half of her week's students are potential mothers and the other half are potential fathers. The future criminals are there, too, and so are some potential saints. We touch our students with music, even after they graduate, and through them we can improve the musical life of the homes and communities they will eventually create. Zoltan Kodály was right: We are teaching the grandchildren of the students before us, and that gives our work both a sense of permanence and a sense of responsibility. Only the music educator has a professional interest in the musical health of all of a community and all of its people — not the symphony orchestra board member, not the instrument repair person.

Providing opportunities and motivation for current and life-long music participation, opening the doors to musical alternatives unknown to our students and empowering our students with the capacity to reach across musical cultures easily can re-energize musical life. This can bring music participation back to a central place in these humans' lives and in the communities they create for themselves. Given the stance of the music educator in communities, continuing music participation remains high on the theorist's agenda.

Communities are full of musical institutions of all kinds, including those that are in schools, colleges and conservatories. All of these have musical policies. What about institutions?

4. The contributions made by schools, colleges and other musical institutions are important to musical culture, but these need to be systematically examined and evaluated in terms of the directions and extent of their influence.

Because most of us here work in schools or in some other sort of institution, we

gather easily around the assumption that these institutions are wonderful, important, crucial to society's success and flawlessly devoted to their clients. Other people, including our clients, sometimes, aren't so sure. The MayDay approach is to examine our assumptions about institutions critically, using the institution's own stated purposes, rationales and processes as a first level of analysis. We recognize that music teachers in institutions are both the agency for change and the gatekeeper for change — we can initiate change and we can prevent or permit change initiated by others or by social conditions. Critical analysis can help us to carry out this role wisely.

As an example of what music teachers can do from an institutional base, I'm going to talk about the USA for a minute: The American symphony orchestra as an institution has changed remarkably in 30 years. Then, our repertoires and public events were modeled after the great European orchestras. Now, American orchestras' yearly repertoire has a higher percentage of popular music and a lower percentage of new music than before; soloists and conductors are chosen less for their elite credentials and more for their communication skills with audiences; a year's programme of concerts and other services function more and more socially and educationally and less for connoisseurs; and the framing of the symphony's presentations — the design of the events themselves — is more inviting and “user-friendly” than before. Almost all of this is in response to changing interests of the American audience.

Here's the point: Much of today's symphony audience and most of its policy makers in America were in elementary school and junior high school thirty years ago. What happened in their musical education? Tanglewood. All of the changes in the American orchestra I listed above were defined at Tanglewood in the summer of 1967 and encouraged by various means in American music education since then. It is arguably safe to say that, in the US, in one generation, music educators created the contemporary institution we call the American symphony orchestra. Now, thirty years after Tanglewood, we can recognize the effect of the values identified there — indirectly — on American institutions such as the symphony orchestra. Kodály was right again — we ARE educating the grandchildren of our students.

Music teachers caused this, but at the same time some teachers and symphony board members complain that popular taste has ruined the American orchestra. That is scapegoating. An aside: Although the analysis would be different, music teachers now working in America are products of the effect of popular music since Vatican II on Roman Catholic Church music and since the 1960s on the music in

main-line Protestant churches. These issues have caused rancorous professional debates.

We must now react to these phenomena analytically, at a level above complaining and reacting badly to our own successes, or the ubiquity of popular music idioms. And we must be smarter about how we provide our students with personal defenses against the kinds of cultural imperialism that blinds people by their own appetite for “ear candy” — music not about life but about making money. Publishing companies, the mass media, the internet, the computer software industry, toy companies, retailers are after our students’ musical loyalties and our students must carve a musical life out of this jungle. Not only must we equip them handle this problem better, we can also work with these institutions and our schools to make a better jungle.

Without knowledge not usually found within music education, how can we do this? Good theorizing and good teaching take into account much more than musical information and skill. We must reach beyond our usual disciplinary boundaries in theorizing, social action, curriculum design and teacher education.

5. In order to be effective, music educators must establish and maintain contact with ideas and people from other disciplines.

Cross-disciplinary contact has intellectual benefits: It clarifies our perspectives, it keeps our field from becoming inbred and it gives us opportunities to interpret our interests to current and future leaders in other disciplines. Although this issue in its entirety will receive our analytical attention, I’m going to spend a minute only on the teacher education aspect of this. I’ve just told you about an American success with symphony orchestras. Now you can learn from an American mistake. I must hasten to add that I am virtually alone in thinking this is a mistake.

American music teacher educators made a serious error many years ago, I believe, when they gradually increased their students’ isolation from their future colleagues in other fields. Music students have always complained about the content in general courses in educational psychology, or educational history or sociology, or curriculum design, or testing. Their complaint was that they saw little direct relevance to music teaching in these courses. Because their complaint played into the economic and political interests of music departments — interests that have little to do with high quality teacher education — these topics were made part of

music department courses instead and students were excused from the general courses that other teacher education students took together. To make matter worse department heads and music education professors bragged about these changes in national meetings.

What is happening as a result of this is that American music teachers aren't included in local school policy making committees. We often have to fight our way into these discussions and we wonder why. We shouldn't wonder. Simply put, this happens because teachers from other fields aren't accustomed during college to seeing music teachers in such discussions. We music educators actively preserve our isolation from other teaching fields in colleges and universities while pre-service teachers in other fields meet collectively, in educational psychology classes, methods classes, sociology classes, student teaching seminars and on and on. This continues on the job. Our graduates in music pay a high price for their pre-service isolation.

In theorizing about such matters, the list of disciplines that form the basis for understanding music and people hasn't changed much — psychology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy and the rest. The quality of on-the-job cross-disciplinary discussions is higher if those in the conversation can stretch their thoughts to these foundations that disciplines share. Too many cross-disciplinary discussions, and the projects that sometimes result from them, dance around on the surface. We in the arts too often are asked to decorate someone else's discipline, rather than create a framework together that requires our shared students to connect an effective, engaging surface of some arts product with form, function and structure in two or more disciplines.

We seldom think about such things deeply. The MayDay Group approach is sympathetic to reflective teaching and learning, action research, and a results-oriented approach to our work. Thomas Regelski uses the term “methodolatry” to refer to the mindless use of teaching techniques. When music teachers merely imitate some conductor's or other teacher's habits, or implement without thought a clinician's or a college professor's recommended teaching techniques, teachers can easily blame these experts when their tricks don't work in some middle school classroom. We can excuse our failures because someone else told us what to do and it didn't work.

When we close the door of our classroom or studio and start to work with our

students, our teaching is intensely personal. Each of us must shape it ourselves so that it is professionally successful for us and, more importantly, for our students. The student also must carry that success out of our classrooms in some usable form. That is where reflection comes in — we must look for evidence that this is happening. We must also be tough critics of our own success by asking, “Does it really amount to something for the student? What can my graduates actually do with what they’ve learned from me? If I changed my teaching, could they do more?”

Action research is one way to determine the general answer to that kind of question, and the teacher needs a working knowledge of more controlled research as well. Our research establishment is important, but it lacks a clear structure and has only a weak effect on practice.

6. The research and theoretical bases for music education must simultaneously be refined and radically broadened both in terms of their theoretical interest and practical relevance.

The International Society for Music Education and its publications, research sessions and commissions; the MENC’s Society for Research in Music Education, their Journal of Research in Music Education and Update; Brian Roberts’ Canadian journal; Richard Colwell’s and Manny Brand’s Quarterly Review of Music Teaching and Learning; Estelle Jorgensen’s Philosophy of Music Education Review; Frank Calloway’s leadership in Australia and Gary McPherson’s Australian journal; the launching of the British Journal of Music Education by Keith Swanwick and John Paynter; Kurt Blaukopf’s Institute for Music Sociology in Vienna; and more — all of these were established within the professional lives of some of us in this room. We have talked with, worked with, or are, the people who shaped the ways our research effort connects with our profession. However, this connection has not yet been made.

Here’s why: Most large fields — medicine, psychology, social work, management, even manufacturing — recognize at least three different but intentionally articulated levels of research activity: Let’s call them basic research, engineering and technology. Researchers at one level ground their work on other work at the same level, but they also use findings of researchers at other levels. A person who is working in technology knows the engineering research related to what he or she is working on, and may even know the basic research on which the engineering is

based. To do anything else would be a waste of time and resources. The rare accidents that produce breakthroughs are remarked upon just because they are rare. Most research is deliberate, methodical work.

Perhaps because of the youthfulness of our research, we call every project that gathers and analyzes data research ... period. We have not systematically made clear a research project's relationship to other levels of research much less its relationship to practice. In my view, this is the first task — categorizing our research efforts by the type, source and consequence of research problems and findings.

Here's the point: Once we know where a project fits in an articulated, multi-functional research structure, an adequate research criticism can be more clearly applied to specific projects. Research agendas become communicable. There is a sound basis for judging a project innovative rather than declaring that merely clever projects are seminal, which we do too easily. The rationale for the research project and the dissemination of findings occur in a more unified research context. And appropriate research criticism can be based on best practice for the type or category of the project — best practice in the scientific principles that stretch across disciplines, not just those in music education. The political challenge is to recognize that good criticism will improve practice in research as well as in teaching. All of it must be good and all of it is important to the success of our enterprise.

One caveat about research and teaching, and closer to critical thinking in education: We're fond of the myth that teaching is scientific. William James started this myth unintentionally a century ago, but he warned against the deliberate construction of teaching behavior from science. For him and for us, the creativity of teachers — what Elliott Eisner called “educational imagination” — was and is the bedrock for our profession's effectiveness. Pestalozzi, Froebel and other pedagogues, even Comenius, had a clear view of the extent to which teaching should or could be scientific. John Dewey, a student of James's, had this clear view as well. Great teachers in all generations practice the art but may be reluctant to analyze their practice. That is for others, they usually say. To turn that around is a mistake: Science is analytical but does not directly create practice without some engineering in between.

We can create a better sense, however, of how the science and the art of teaching

can inform each other, and we can't do that by maintaining the myth that the two are combined in our field. The confused meanings of the collection of effort we currently call research must be sorted out first. When the classroom door closes and a teacher starts to work with students, the teacher is neither controlled by research nor worried much by that fact, and that's understandable. We can do better.

All of these matters culminate in educational plans and policies that directly affect music teaching and learning. Primary among these is curriculum.

7. An extensive and intensive consideration of curriculum for music education is needed as a foundation to greater professional unity and must be guided by a sound philosophical process.

These days the buzzword is policy, mainly policies that shape curriculum, assessment and educational reform. National curriculums and national tests, common in Europe and Asia, are new in the USA. Keith Swanwick spent a busy weekend a few years ago preserving some musical sanity in Britain's national music test. Michael Greene, Paul Lehman and others spent a busy few weeks pushing the US Congress to see arts education as a national priority.

But curriculum decisions are made closer to home. All of us are asked to shape educational plans and to communicate these plans through some sort of curriculum document. We must do this better. We must form the habit of using a tough philosophical approach to deciding how we are going to spend our time with our students. We must apply sound curriculum development processes, and we must base broad instructional decisions on warranted musical, psychological and sociological principles as well as on action research. If we do, we can speak more authoritatively about our decisions. Our beliefs, ideas and actions will begin to form a unified system that makes sense, not only to ourselves but also to others.

In countries represented so far by the MayDay Group, local control of school policy varies. In America local control is held sacred. Where local options exist, adopting national standards locally, or accommodating local programs to them, must not be done mindlessly.

Many curricular issues must still be resolved critically, and the content as well as the sequence of it must be critically reviewed before a program can be built to

implement the curriculum. In this ISME conference, the word Ubuntu has a nice ring to it, but its meaning raises issues of what actual plans to make for students when school opens about cross-cultural musical understanding; multiculturalism; interdisciplinary integration; race, ethnicity, gender, religion, class and the politics of recognition through music; the role of religious music in government schools; musical subcultures like Afro-pop, reggae, salsa, ska, hip-hop and rap; the inclusion of special learners; cultural institutions and their roles in public education; etc. At a very basic level, there is a pressing theoretical issue: the teaching of musicianship through performance lacks a clear rationale — we do it but we can't explain it enough to criticize it, even to ourselves.

We cannot merely continue to rationalize our own professional habits by claiming that they are licensed by the habits of some remembered musical ancestors. Those who were excellent were likely very reflective about their work, but we missed that when we were their students. Doing things out of habit only leaves our teaching actions and our students' learning in our classes bereft of thought and lacking in conscious articulation with other musical content. The curriculum is our plan for helping our students achieve the high standards of a good, mindful, empowering musical life and we don't criticize our plans well at all. The curriculum is the conductor's score for the opera we call our music program. If we can't analyze it and criticize it, we can't improve it deliberately much less "conduct" effectively from it.

In summary

The challenge for the profession is clear. As you'll see in a minute, we must equip ourselves and the next generation of music teachers for the fight of our lives. And curriculum and its related assessments, whether defined at the national, province, state or local school levels will be the battleground.

Before we get to the professional challenge that has emerged from this five years of MayDay Group work, let me summarize what I've said so far. Here's a one-sentence version — a bottom line — of each of the MayDay Group's action ideals:

1. Critically reflective music-making is basic to music education.
2. Consideration of music's social and cultural contexts is integral to good theory and practice.

3. Music teachers can influence cultural change.
4. Schools, colleges and other musical institutions affect musical culture, but need critical evaluation.
5. Research and study of music teaching and learning need an inter-disciplinary approach.
6. The knowledge base of music educators should be both refined and broad.
7. Curriculum considerations are basic and should be guided by a critical, philosophical approach.

We are now systematically exploring these seven issues, articulated further in Action for Change.... Some MayDay Group members are exploring these philosophically. Some are using these as discussion points in graduate and undergraduate seminars. We hope you will, too.

Can anyone organize the kind of intense weekend colloquia we have? Of course. But, we find it important to cross national boundaries because doing so reveals how localized much of our thinking and rationalizing is. An international group puts our localized concerns in better perspective, as we know from ISME, and we learn from each other's varying national successes and failures. At the beginning of my talk, I listed this and two other MayDay Group programmes to expand the dialog and engage the profession, and we hope you will discuss your views on this, or your desire to be part of our network, with me or other MayDay Group members here.

We are eager to help groups to duplicate the MayDay weekend experience in their regions, so others can have the intellectual benefits of serious thought on a theoretical level. There are some simple ground rules and Tom Regelski or I will be happy to work with any group that wants to explore a weekend of critical thinking as a kind of renewal. Our internet site has more. Its address is:

<http://www.maydaygroup.org/>

We have many questions as you can see by our pamphlet, Action for Change... ,

and each person in the MayDay Group develops well-considered answers for some of them. The groups that meet here and met in the Commissions last week have questions, too, and so do our students. Asking them fruitfully and seriously, as our best theorists do throughout their lives, is serious business. The MayDay Group and its work are not for the faint of heart.

The challenge ahead

I've given lots of thought to the internationality of the MayDay Group. I've been both pleased and surprised that the issues we are raising resonate across national borders so easily, and resonate with music teachers I talk with from many parts of the world.

After I got over being pleased and surprised, I got alarmed. The only conclusion I could support with the facts is that the school-based preservation system for music — at least in the industrialized world — is headed for serious, systemic trouble. That's big stuff. The knowledgeable music educators of the MayDay Group sense that something's wrong. MayDay Group folks in Austria, Australia, Canada, China, England, Finland, Germany, Japan, Korea, South Africa and the US — all firmly parts of “the industrialized world” — are in touch not only with their country's professional trends but also what's happening in other countries. We are editors, authors, music teachers at all levels, national research leaders, policy makers and organizers of symposiums and colloquiums. We are also teacher educators who listen to hundreds of stories from the field each year and have watched it for decades.

If music education is in trouble at the systemic level (or even if there is some equally disturbing alternative explanation for the MayDay Group's international appeal) then we must immediately begin to draw folks into action in large numbers or risk — what?

Perhaps, we risk abandoning music education to some cultural processes that represent disturbing futures:

...to cultural processes such as the mass media that demand too little of general education,

...to cultural processes such as advertising that convince people to buy musical

products that diminish rather than expand human musical potential,

...to cultural processes such as many government leaders' political interests that push us back to a tribal, xenophobic approach to musical living, when the information age moves us in just the opposite direction, and

...to cultural processes such as retailing and commercial broadcasting that indoctrinate us with the commercial view: that musical insights should be no deeper than one's childhood appetites and no wider than the personal borders of one's convenient life-space.

For these reasons, we must strengthen the MayDay Group approach, expand the reach of these ideals, and take our concern for critical thinking to the grassroots. We must help each other to use our own countries' various and varied successes in the struggle for human musical empowerment. Furthermore, we can and must use information-age processes to do it. That is the MayDay Group agenda.

When teachers believe in what they're doing, can articulate the ideas that link belief with action, and can demonstrate these beliefs through the musical actions of other people (their students) then we can have a more powerful effect on music in our various societies. Successful music education is what we all stand for. The MayDay Group feels an urgency in this purpose, and we don't have much time.