



One Globe, Many Voices, Many Challenges: Revisiting Music Teacher Preparation

Keith A. Koster
Department of Music
Christopher Newport University
Newport News, VA 23606
keith.koster@cnu.edu

For centuries, musicians and music educators have trekked the globe in search of the world's music, performance styles, and pedagogy. Yo-Yo Ma explored the Silk Road in search of its melodies. American music educators travelled to Kecskemét Hungary to learn the tenets of the Kodály method. Today, young and old alike—as long as there is an internet connection—can explore and experience the world's music at their fingertips. How well do American music teacher preparation programs reflect the kinds of access to global music, experiences that will enhance their ability to be effective music educators in the 21st century?

Seven years ago, a research team determined that over half of American colleges and universities did not offer global music courses. Of the colleges and universities that offered both global music courses and degrees in music education, few required a global music course to be completed by music education majors (Koster and Gratto, 2001). Since that report, more music departments are offering global music courses for their students. These survey-type courses are available not only for music education students but also for non-music majors.

Two researchers compiled a comprehensive review of world music and music education research conducted over a twenty year period. While a considerable amount of research between 1973 and 1993 involved philosophical and historical matters, student and teacher attitudes about achievement and preparation, as well as evaluative pedagogical measures that included lesson plans, instructional resources and syllabi, the research team concluded that, “the areas of materials evaluation, teacher preparation, attitudes, and philosophical and historical issues remain relatively unexplored” (Quesada & Volk, 1997, p. 44).



A report in 2000 addressed the future of music education and sought to establish a rationale for pursuing the study of global music. “There are many excellent activities and very sophisticated music experiences that take place in our general music classes that usually include much more world music experience when compared to their traditional counterparts” (Madsen, 2000, p. 86). Any value of studying world music would be “in direct proportion to the student’s involvement in world music and/or different cultural experiences” (Madsen, 2000, p. 86). Madsen concurred “that all students should have access to these different cultural opportunities” (Madsen, 2000, p. 86). However, music educators will need to examine the feasibility of integrating global music courses into the current school curriculum. Philosophical aspects, curricular models, and pedagogical paradigms will need to be studied as well. Preparing both current and future music educators with the content knowledge, available resources, and suggested experiences about global music will also be important.

Music course offerings in American public schools seem behind the times as well. Performance-based ensembles such as the traditional marching, concert, and symphonic bands, orchestra and chorus continue to represent the core music courses that are available to middle- and secondary-level students. For those who play a non-western instrument or sing in a style outside of the European tradition, these students have a choice to make. They can either enter the traditional ensemble classroom and assimilate through learning to play or sing in the traditional style or elect not to participate in the traditional instrumental or choral ensemble. Music educators should be concerned about how successful we serve the musical needs of all students not only those who play traditional band or orchestral instruments, or who sing in the western choral style. On a more positive note, middle- and secondary-level schools are now offering non-traditional instrumental and choral ensembles, many more of these ensembles are available to students now than were thirty years ago. Unfortunately, many music educators have little experience or content knowledge with global music. Information about how to establish non-traditional ensembles in the elementary-, middle-, and secondary-level



schools is frequently published by professional music education organizations such as the Music Educators National Conference (MENC). Some of these publications include first-person accounts from current music educators who—while trained in the western tradition—have now integrated global music ensembles into their schools. These music educators usually provide encouraging information about the values of integrating such ensemble for their students (Randall, 2008). Valuable resources are usually provided as well.

Music teacher preparation programs seem slow to respond to the multicultural diversity now considered commonplace in our schools. Demographically, music classrooms are more culturally diverse than they were thirty years ago. And while it may appear that elementary-, middle-, and secondary-level music educators are seem satisfied with the current slate of traditional music course offerings in their schools, the music teaching profession should be concerned about how well the diverse musical needs of all students are being met. Especially, those students who do not have appropriate skills, interest, or prior experiences performing traditional band, orchestral, or choral music.

In an age of *No Child Left Behind*, the quality of teacher preparation programs at American colleges and universities is under scrutiny. Researchers and educators have begun to focus on a particular aspect of teacher preparation that has been shown to have the greatest impact on student achievement, the instructional effectiveness of the teacher (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Currently, before teacher licensure can be granted to a music educator and depending on the state with which they seek credentialing, prospective music teachers are expected to complete a series of music examinations. These examinations now include global music content. The consequences of not passing the music examinations may be quite severe. Music educators can be removed from their teaching position or denied licensure. In order to prepare music educators for these examinations, many music education programs around the country have added a global music course into the already course-heavy traditional music education curriculum. However, does the completion of one global music course really provide the future music educator with



the kinds of experiences that they will need to effectively integrate global music into their music classrooms?

Today, nearly all states have incorporated national standards in arts education (dance, music, theatre, visual arts) into the statewide curricula. Many state education departments have adequately articulated the many values of providing quality instruction in music, how music should be taught, and what learners should be expected to demonstrate post instruction. At least three of the national standards in music education embrace global music experiences, such as Content Standard 6 “Listening to, analyzing, and describing music,” Content Standard 8 “Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts,” and Content Standard 9 “Understanding music in relation to history and culture” (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994, pp. 61-63). Several states lead the way in articulating a rationale that better serves to enhance our understanding of living in a culturally diverse world. The following excerpt is from the Florida Department of Education: “Although it seems ethnocentric and arbitrary, the concept of dividing art into cultural categories of western and nonwestern may be a useful place to start in western society. This approach corresponds with recognized historical, political, and (to some extent) geographical boundaries. It certainly offers a perspective for thinking about and defining the arts. For example, the western arts tradition can be traced back to at least the classic Greek civilization. Present-day countries and societies that consistently have subscribed to that tradition can be readily identified. The nonwestern tradition, on the other hand, includes all those cultures that do not trace their roots back to the Western, or classic Greek foundation. In this context nonwestern means *many* traditions, each with its own cultural foundation. The traditional art of China, for example, is built upon the accumulation of imperial dynasties that defined and valued art in very different ways from their neighbors in India. In spite of attempts to categorize art, however, we must remember that every art form is a unique expression of a particular culture or society. Each was produced, defined, and valued within the context of a particular culture or society and thus cannot be judged *outside* the culture. One cannot say, for



example, that ritual performances and the making of containers in tribal societies are not art forms because they serve functional purposes. One should examine the values of those societies and how they mesh with spiritual and historical traditions, as well as with the art forms that serve them. This approach should be the focus of understanding art and teaching it to others. The aim of multicultural education in Florida is to prepare 'students to live, learn, communicate, and work to achieve common goals in a culturally diverse world by fostering understanding, appreciation, and respect for people of other ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, language, and cultural backgrounds'" (Florida Department of Education, 2002, pp. 174-178).

Categorizing the arts into cultural areas and downplaying the predominance of one culture's art over another can be a great way to begin integrating global music experiences into the music classroom. Unless music educators are predisposed to global music experiences, they may not be able to accurately judge nonwestern music as worthy as western music. While professional music education organizations include global music presentations at local, state, regional, national, and international meetings, music education specialists should be encouraged to establish additional global music experiences that are more authentic, within a particular culture.

The traditional music education curriculum found in American colleges and universities remains largely rooted in the western tradition. Music education majors complete a series of courses in music theory, aural skills, music history, technology, and applied skills such as conducting, major instrument performance study, and participation in traditional instrumental and choral ensembles. Music education students also complete a series of courses that i.) introduce the music teaching profession, ii.) address historical and philosophical aspects of music education, iii.) provide appropriate teaching methods and techniques, iv.) establish measurement, evaluation, and assessment strategies for the music classroom. Music education students are expected to complete documented fieldwork experiences that consist of observing, assisting, and teaching music in area schools. Outside the music education curriculum, coursework is completed in the areas of psychology,



sociology, and teacher education. Institutions also have their set of requirements typically referred to as “general education” courses. These courses represent a cross section of many different disciplines. The traditional music education program of study is course-heavy, time, and labor intensive.

In order to prepare future music educators to effectively teach global music in their classrooms, music education programs should integrate more global music experiences into the traditional curriculum. While there is little room to add extra courses into the traditional music education curriculum, a practical solution might be to adopt music textbooks that integrate global music content into traditional music courses such as theory, aural skills, pedagogy, and music history. Who can say whether or not a student struggling with elements of music theory might be better served if nonwestern musical examples were also presented, studied, or analyzed? By including global music content into traditional music theory textbooks as well as experiences in the classroom, music education students will be better prepared to integrate theoretical aspects of global music into their future classrooms.

The traditional music theory curriculum includes a series of courses in aural skills such as sight-singing and ear training. Aural skills courses might better serve music education students by adopting textbooks that include more global music examples for sight-singing and sight reading. Because a considerable amount of global music incorporates the use of the singing voice, it seems plausible that nonwestern music could be included in aural skills courses. Few, aural skills texts currently include any global music content. By integrating global music content into theory and aural skills courses, analysis, melodic dictation, sight-singing, and critical listening skills can be enhanced. Therefore, music textbook publishers are encouraged to seek authors who integrate appropriate global music content into traditional theory and aural skills textbooks, teaching, and ancillary materials. Music theory faculty who teach the western approach might benefit from gaining more information about global music theory.

In music appreciation, musicology, and ethnomusicology courses, there are many textbooks and teaching resources that incorporate global music. These



textbooks usually include aural examples for initial exposure, study, and analysis. Music education majors who complete these courses are likely benefitting from the global perspective that is already an inherent part of these courses, especially those taught by ethnomusicologists.

In applied settings, artist faculty should be encouraged to expand their knowledge of global music performance practices. Perhaps a nonwestern approach to breathing, posture, or diction might enhance the quality of their teaching? Music education majors who study applied music with an artist faculty member well-versed in global music performance practices can only benefit from such an experience. These music educators might better integrate similar teaching and learning experiences into their own classrooms.

Many music education publications frequently include articles about integrating global music into the performance-based classroom. Recently, “Eight Simple Rules for Singing Multicultural Music” appeared in the *Music Educators Journal*. The report included practical considerations for music educators. Before presenting global music in the traditional choral classroom, music educators need to “connect with culture, focus on one style at a time, listen widely, provide the context, seek authentic sources, learn the language, teach authentically, and leave your comfort zone” (Parr, 2006, pp. 34 – 37). Fortunately, choral music publishers are offering choral music educators with more authentic global music selections that have been carefully transcribed for the choral ensemble. In order to assist choral music educators, these global music editions include important and accessible information about diction, authentic performance practice, and cultural considerations. While global performance ensembles are beginning to flourish on many American college and university campuses, music education majors will benefit from participation in these types of non-traditional ensembles.

Undergraduate- and graduate-level music education textbooks pertaining to philosophical and foundational aspects of music teaching, and teaching methodologies usually include information about global music. Much of the content in these textbooks has written by music education specialists who have significant



experiences with global music. Few traditional instrumental methods textbooks contain information about global music. Publishers of instrumental techniques books should encourage authors to include practical information about global music. String methods textbooks could be expanded to include information and suggested related experiences about nonwestern stringed instruments such as the koto, folk harp, dulcimer, and Javanese fiddle. Woodwind techniques textbooks could include content and additional experiences about nonwestern woodwind instruments such as the Navajo flute, mouth organ, ocarina, and the duduk. Brass techniques textbooks could also include content and experiences about the nonwestern brass instruments such as the Far East and African trumpets. Fortunately, several percussion techniques textbooks include practical and accessible information about nonwestern percussion instruments. One noted text provides not only aural and visual demonstrations of each family of selected nonwestern percussion instruments but also performances of several global percussion ensembles. Providing future instrumental music educators with opportunities to learn about the vast family of global music instruments will better prepare them for integrating global music content and experiences into their instrumental classrooms.

Today, American college and university students are studying abroad in unprecedented numbers. However, fewer than ten American institutions offer study abroad programs specifically designed for music education majors. Of those institutions that offer study abroad programs for music education majors, nearly all of those experiences are in the western or European tradition. Many take place in the major cities in Europe such as Paris, London, Rome, and Berlin. In order to provide global music experiences for music education majors, music education specialists should create study abroad options for these students in nonwestern venues.

One mid-sized regional university in the Mid-Atlantic allows music education students to complete a portion of their student teaching fieldwork in Panama or Belize. Education students at a different Mid-Atlantic university can complete their student teaching in New Zealand. While these experiences are not designed in the



same way as study abroad programs, both experiences might be considered a first step in providing future music educators with nonwestern global music experiences.

Students who completed part of their student teaching practicum outside of the United States found that their knowledge of pedagogy and practice was adequate for their classrooms. These students benefitted greatly from the authentic experiences with people outside of the United States. One music education student returned with a greater understanding about global music and looks forward to integrating more global music experiences into the classroom. These kinds of experiences provide a nonwestern cultural context that cannot be replicated on in American college and university classrooms. Experiences such as these can help American music educators develop a better global awareness by spending time outside of the classroom with people of a particular culture. Being familiar with nonwestern music within a different culture can help music educators to present global music more effectively in their classrooms.

American colleges and universities are providing service-learning experiences abroad in greater numbers now than were available thirty years ago. In this particular setting, students not only learn about other cultures but also complete community-based projects for citizens in other countries. At a regional university in Oregon, choral ensemble students (which included music education majors) completed a service learning project in Ecuador. Before the trip, choral ensemble students learned traditional choral music from Ecuador. Several selections were studied and performed in local dialects well-familiar to the people of Ecuador. In addition to the service-learning project for village residents outside of Quito, the choral ensemble performed both western and nonwestern music for their audiences. For many of these students, the experience in Ecuador changed their lives. Several students couldn't wait to return to Ecuador. These students returned to their university with a better understanding of another culture. Music departments should create ways to develop more service-learning experiences by following the model established by this institution. These choral students are now planning a similar experience in China. In order to fit into the traditional music education curriculum,



service learning experiences could be scheduled between semesters and during the summer months.

Music educators and music education students alike voluntarily participate in global music workshops at local, state, regional, national, and international venues, such as those sponsored by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) and the International Society for Music Education (ISME). Today, multicultural chairs are elected at the state, region, and national levels within MENC. These people coordinate global music workshops for their region. Reports about current global music developments are also disseminated regularly.

If perspectives in global music are to be cultivated into American music classrooms, music education specialists, music department faculty, study-abroad program coordinators, education department personnel, and music education students must work together to establish global music experiences both here and abroad. National and international music education organizations can sponsor global music events for their members by creating international music centers around the world. At these centers, music educators could learn more about global music in an authentic way. Music merchants can provide more quality global music resources for educators and students alike. College and university students can expand global awareness on their campuses by establishing local chapters of the Global Awareness Society International (GASI). Student chapters of the Collegiate Music Educators National Conference (CMENC) can create subcommittees that might seek to cultivate a better awareness of global music in their department, on their campus, and in the surrounding community. Music textbook publishers should encourage authors to integrate more global music content and related experiences into their textbooks. The more global music experiences that can be accessible to music educators, the more effectively global music will be shared with students, schools, and communities.

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