

FROM CONFERENCE TO COALITION: THE MAKINGS OF A NATIONAL MUSIC-IN-EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

by
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...MIND STRETCHED TO A NEW IDEA NEVER GOES BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL DIMENSION.

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

The inaugural issue of *The New England Conservatory Journal for Learning Through Music* raised the question “Why Integrate Music across the Elementary School Curriculum?”

The question of integration stemmed from New England Conservatory’s commitment to developing model “authentic, comprehensive, and interdisciplinary” programs in the greater Boston area through its new Research Center for Learning Through Music. At the same time, a large segment of the New England Conservatory community—faculty members, administrators, trustees, and overseers—took a strong role in founding the Conservatory Lab Charter School, a public school conceived as a laboratory for Learning Through Music. For the oldest running conservatory of music in the United States, the commitment to take on the role of training musicians for a new kind of music education in public schools required careful consideration of integrating music into the core curriculum for every child in a public school community.

Questioning “why” music should be integrated into the core curriculum of elementary schools provoked a

series of essays published in the inaugural issue of the *Journal*¹. Commentators outside of the NEC community provided essays regarding the purpose of music-integrated curriculum (Samuel Hope) and the evolution of music in education (Eileen Cline), while Conservatory faculty presented their perspectives on current research (Martin Gardiner), cross-cultural aspects of learning through music (Warren Senders & Lyle Davidson), models for integrations of music with science and math (Jeanne Bamberger), the role of the musical artist-teacher in schools (John Tyson), assessment of student work (Lyle Davidson, Andrea Norton & Shawn Crouch), and short interstitial essays and photo essays on the design and implications of all these perspectives with regard to the development of the learning through music programs in the Boston area (Larry Scripp). Over the past few years this issue has served as a reference for arts educators, parents, administrators, and as a text for professional development workshops and classes focused on the evolving role of music in education.

This new *Journal* issue reflects a national discourse that began with

the question “What makes music work for public education?” the topic of a conference held at New England Conservatory’s Jordan Hall and sponsored by the Spencer Foundation, with additional support from the Surdna Foundation and a federal FIPSE² grant award to New England Conservatory for the development of an innovative Music-in-Education program.

During the conference, representatives (see page iii for conference attendees) from university schools of music, schools of education, community schools of the arts, public school communities, arts organizations, school reform organizations through the arts, researchers and

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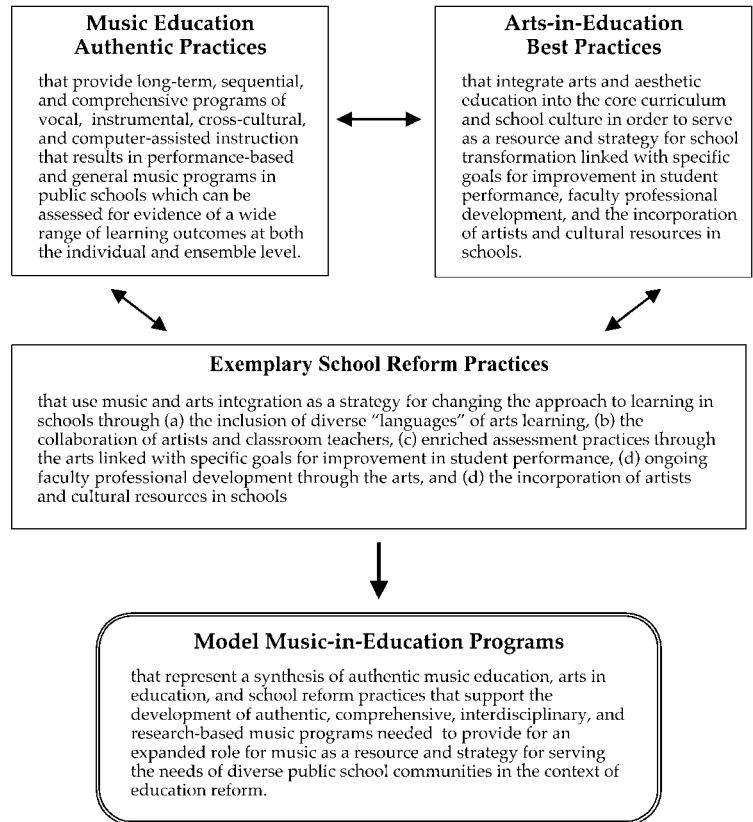
funding organizations gathered together to share their perspectives on innovative program development and research currently serving public education through music.

The unfolding discourse of the conference—spirited and diverse at all times—is captured in this *Journal*. Beginning with a welcome from Daniel Steiner, President of New England Conservatory, and an introduction from Samuel Hope, Executive Director of the National Association of Schools of Music, the rhythm of conversation is captured in the structure of the *Journal*. Thus the topics discussed at the conference presented in this *Journal* are threaded together by comments from participants in panel discussions or “roundtable discussions” following the presentations. Topics presented in the *Journal* are informed by subsequent reflection on the part of the authors, and, in some cases, restructured through subsequent talks. As the topics span evolving aspects of music in education from the perspectives of leaders in higher education, arts in education organizations, or school reform through the arts, the conversations build on one another in an intelligent, deeply engaging manner.

The “What Makes Music Work for Public Education” conference discourse was interesting in its own right, but out of the rich conversation came an extraordinary result: an action plan that led to the official formation of a Music-in-Education National Consortium.

That is, from that point on a consortium of leaders in music education,

The Music-in-Education Synthesis



The Music-in-Education Synthesis provides a conceptual framework for the evolving role of music and musicians in public education—the mission of the Music-in-Education National Consortium funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and federal FIPSE comprehensive grant. This framework argues for expanding the scope of traditional music education practices to include a wider set of arts experiences and artist residencies in schools committed to change through the arts. This framework also is intended to foster new ways of preparing musicians to take on the role of “Artist-Teacher-Scholars,” that is, musicians in education committed to the value of collaboration among artists, classroom teachers, and researchers as a way to support and investigate further the essential role of music in public school communities.

arts organization outreach, and school reform through the arts agreed to take on the work of “synthesizing” the perspectives and authentic practices of their respective institutions by focusing on the evolving field of “Music-in-Education.” The first step in this coalition was to explore a series of “triangula-