"I FEEL THEREFORE I AM": SELECTED BRITISH AND CANADIAN
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' CONCEPTIONS
OF MUSIC AND MUSIC EDUCATION

by

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ABSTRACT

The research reported in this text addresses the need to know how high school students interact with and construct meaning from their experiences with music. Taking its cue from the academic discourse and research that has proposed that the meaning of texts arises through reading and is mediated by a myriad of contextual influences, this research explores the individual and educational confluences of musical belief in the worlds of senior high school students in England and British Columbia, Canada. Guided by ethnographic research techniques, the findings of this multi-site case study are largely informed by interviews with 68 senior high school students; 35 in England and 33 in British Columbia, Canada.

Attention to the role music plays in the lives of students in this study has brought to light a multiplicity of interpretations: those that are bounded by the features of adolescence and those that are sensitive to pervasive educational and cultural norms. Music's perceived power to arrest the senses, to communicate a depth of emotion and to transfigure reality appears to characterize these respondents' responses to music, triggering a narrative impulse that acts to synthesize the musical experience and integrate it within their lives. In combination with these adolescents' romantic sensibility, music takes on an allegorical function for them, symbolizing their desires for liberty, honesty, mystery and hope.

The extent to which students' allegorical constructions of music's meaning are permitted to dominate their conceptions of it depends largely on the educational and cultural context in which they develop. Students' passionate attachment to music as a prompt for narrativizing and as a vehicle for self-realization is reinforced by the romantic values of popular culture in both countries, and for the Canadian students, the *human-centric* focus of music education practices in British Columbia. More entrenched artistic traditions in Europe and an educational system that promotes specialization in a field before high school graduation appear to diffuse students' romantic attachments to music. In addition to investing music with a narrative significance, many British students also come to see music as a significant art form and cultural resource.

This study's bi-cultural comparison of adolescent interpretations of music may provoke music educators and scholars to consider how literal (*music-centric*) and rhetorical (*human-centric*) conceptions of music education could be broadened in order that learners' conceptions of music, and ultimately, of themselves, might be simultaneously engaged and challenged.

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.........for my parents, for their wisdom and unheralded example.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A Retuning and Returning to This Place

I cringe, now, at the initial fearlessness with which I embarked on an investigation into music, meaning, schooling and culture. Blinded by the magnanimity of my intentions, I set forth to investigate the ways in which high school music students inherit and/or construct their own identifications with music and to determine how these constructs are negotiated within the wider socio-cultural and historical contexts in which they are situated. My inquiry would entail attention to a host of contextual variables, but I was confident that they could all be managed and accounted for. In order to determine the degree to which students may be enculturated into particularized versions of music, I planned to examine and compare the musical experiences and understandings of students from two different countries, specifically, Canada and Britain. I wished to find out, by interviewing equal numbers of music and non-music students, how schooling affects one's perceptions of music. I was interested in knowing what role gender plays in musical response and I felt I needed to determine the role socio-economic class, students' age and type of musical study plays in how students perceive and value music as well. There would be no mediating myth, ideology or hegemonic practice that I, with my bundle of postmodern theories, would leave uncovered in my quest to determine the origins of musical desires. I would, in the end, be congratulated on the breathtaking ambitiousness of my study and the boldness of my reckonings, the implications of which could be felt wherever issues of music, meaning, schooling and culture alight.

That was before I heard the students' voices. They did not speak to me of yesterday and the persistent patterns of their lives; their father's last visit, their brothers' bouts with music, their friends' experiences on Ecstasy, their own attempts to avoid temptation, to be better people or

better scholars. Nor did they tell me of the oppressiveness of their social conditions; the politics they detested, the discrimination they felt, the cliques they didn't belong to, the resentments they harboured, the teachers they deplored, the subjects they would not take, the codes they needed to follow, the assumptions they had made, the myths they needed to challenge, nor the lies that lurked in their hallways. They—the overwhelming majority of them—spoke to me of wonder, enchantment, fulfillment, joy, of their profound attachment to music and unrivalled respect for musicians, and the gratitude they felt for those people who had led them to music. They told me that "music is a way to reconnect to the source of life," that "music is humankind, symbolic of the variety and unity found in the whole human race," and that "I think in some ways we were created for music, that we are naturally in tune with each other and music makes that manifest." Their words revealed to me that they lived in a world that was finely tuned both to themselves and to immediate others, a world most keenly assessed and appreciated through one's senses, emotions and imagination. For it did not appear to be knowledge that was the source of their sense of hope and wonder and wisdom, rather it seemed it was the ability to imagine—through such agents as music—that enabled them to assemble other more empowering worlds and to transcend what might be cause for cynicism or discontent in this one.

I was uplifted by their responses and I realized that the unexpected similitude of their stories would force me to retrace my steps and return to my original suppositions. It was not the backdrop of their voices that compelled me to listen—the places they had known, the lives they had lived, the stories they had heard—it was the depth of their sentience and wealth of their visions as they stood before me at the moment of inquiry. It is their presence, as they would tell me, to the "moment of feeling when music is passed from player to listener," to the "sense of marvel and miracle that is attached to apprehending and being in the presence of musical sound." Their words are not trite or offhand, nor their feelings clichéd. Their utterances still hold me in

their spell. Even now I feel reluctance at the thought of beginning the expected excavations and deconstructions that would expose the transparency and illusory innocence of their voices and divest them of the dignity of knowing, of being anew in this world. They will be forced to consider this soon enough. So I chose, with this first exploration into the musical worlds of high school students, to linger awhile where our students live. Perhaps I would learn why Canadian sociologists Bibby and Posterski found, through a nationwide study, that Canadian teenagers consider friends and music the two most important facets of their lives (1992), and yet why other studies, such as those conducted by researchers in Britain (Witkin, 1974; Green, 1988) and B.C. (Walker, 1995), suggest that of all the arts in schools, music is in the greatest difficulty. Perhaps I would learn the reasons for one music researcher's conclusions: "We need to be able to grasp the epistemological significance of feeling—its importance as a mode of knowing, as it would appear without it one would lack the motivation, the energy to move in the world at all" (Green, 1988, p. 75). Perhaps foregrounding in this study the importance students' feelings have for their learning might enable all members of the musical community to remember what lies at the heart of this enterprise in which we are engaged: the joy, the wonder, the redemption of being with others in music.

I recall my own uncertain attempts to come to terms with the significance of that which engulfed me as a music educator. My own ponderings on the question 'why music?', being sensitive to the winds of change in policy and public perception, would fluctuate from the defending of music as a cultural resource, as a creative stimulant and outlet, as a vehicle for social solidarity and harmony, as a key to cognitive development, to appreciating its role as a refuge and redeemer of lost souls. Opportunities to reflect would be brief, swept aside by the more urgent demands of teaching a performing art; the rehearsing, performing, fundraising, coaching, organizing, concert planning, assessing. More serious still was the fact that such a

schedule overwhelmed any chance of reflecting with my students; at best, I could only hope their experiences with music were positive and provocative, and that they too were occasionally pondering the deeper implications of their relationship with music. I wanted them to know that exposure to and involvement in the arts is both an inalienable human right and an exquisite privilege. Indeed, it is a way of being that allows us to become more adventurous, bolder and less pedantic in spirit, and I wanted them to understand that there are those who take these risks 'routinely,' as artists. I wanted them to know that music is challenging work—intellectually, physically, emotionally—and that our musical efforts and those of others deserve the highest respect. I hoped that they would learn that all musics have a story to tell and that they deserve an empathic ear. I wanted them to know that music, as one of humankind's more pleasurable and more profound of expressions, reaffirms our entitlement to life and that it is important to have knowledge that you do not use but for inner strength and enrichment. I wanted them to know that music lets us experience the joy of life, the immediacy, the potency of each moment, and to realize how these moments are magnified when shared with others, inspiring a community of peace that may be transported beyond fragmentedness and conflict if just for a brief restorative moment.

And so, at this juncture I now stand, at a place in which I am beholden to pay homage to the special significance music has in the lives of students (evident, as any music educator would attest, in those students' headlong interest in and commitment to every school performing group, the reports from thankful parents who speak of their child's epiphany through music, and the fleeting comments from students that hint at the emotional sustenance and inspiration they find in music) and to redeem former pretenses of knowing why we must teach music. What accounts for music's appeal to students? What makes the experience of music so powerful? (see Endnote 1) How does it connect with people? To what degree are students' responses to music related to

their educational experiences? These questions have vast centrifugal implications; striving to come closer to the conditions of the meaning of music as experienced by our students requires venturing into philosophic speculation on the nature and purpose of music and confronting mysteries that have puzzled Western philosophers for centuries. I remain inspired by the profundity of these questions, and I realize that students' responses have guided me to the ways in which the enormity of their scope may be contained within this, my first formal examination into the meanings of music for adolescents. They have told me it is not the speculation on meanings that concerns them, it is the *felt* meanings, what it is about the nature of music that makes it important to *them*. Considering the surety, depth and diversity of their responses to this question, and my own interests in determining the extent to which our educational practices contribute to these perceptions, I will confine my study to an interrogation of just these two facets in my consideration of music, meaning, schooling and culture. It will mean a reconfiguration of my original research questions from "What is the nature of adolescents' experiences with music and how are those experiences with music mediated by personal, familial, social, educational and cultural factors?" to questions that focus more precisely on the significance of music to adolescents and how their beliefs may be mediated by educational factors. I am now ready to proffer my research questions in their more humbled form.

The Research Questions

The purpose of this project was to establish closer understandings of the ways adolescents construe the significance of music and the value of music education. In order to better understand the interrelations of our practices in music education and students' valuing of music, I chose to examine and compare the roles that music plays in the lives of selected 16-18 year old music students in England and in Canada. The guiding questions for this study were:

1. **What is the significance of music to senior high school music students in British and Canadian schools?**

2. **What is the purpose and value of music education to senior high school music students in British and Canadian schools?**

3. **How do specific cultural practices in music education (British and Canadian) influence students' beliefs concerning the significance of music and the purpose and value of music education?**

Current academic discourse and theories are challenging traditional epistemological and aesthetic beliefs surrounding the production and appreciation of art in Western culture. Philosophers such as Dewey (1934) and Dufrenne (1973) posited that the essence and value of art lies not in the artifacts ('the text') but in the interactive experiential activity through which they are conceived and created. And, arguing that art cannot be separated from the context in which it is created, scholars such as Barthes (1977), Wolff (1983), Norris (1989), Walker (1990) and McLeary (1991), have gone on to claim that music, like all other signifying practices, is a cultural invention, not a universal or metaphysical absolute as once espoused by 19th century philosophers. Researchers have corroborated these views. By immersing themselves in the various musical worlds of educators (Rose, 1990), administrators (Harris, 1991), student teachers (Krueger, 1986), undergraduate music students (Roberts, 1991a), conservatory students (Kingsbury, 1984), and small urban communities (Finnegan, 1989), investigators are beginning to reveal the highly localized nature of music and musical understandings.

The musical world of high school students and the ways they inherit and/or construct their own significant identifications with music, however, remain relatively unexplored by music researchers and educators. This inadequacy contributes in part to the persistence of music educators' alarmingly narrow views and assumptions about both the people and the subject they teach (Witkin, 1974; Roberts, 1991b; Walker, 1994). The processes and learning that mark high school students' journeys through musical worlds need to be more thoroughly investigated and

documented in order to bring to light the powerful dialogics of engaging in music and the specific role music plays in students' lives. Indeed, as Shepherd (1991) tells us, "People in society should be studied as a means of furthering the comprehension of works of art rather than works of art being studied as a means of furthering the comprehension of people in society" (p. 219). Researchers who have begun to explore the significance of music to adolescents (Bibby & Posterski, 1992; Czikszentimihalyi & Larson, 1984; Davies & Herle, 1990; Frakes, 1986; Freed, 1990; Howe & Sloboda, 1991; Odam, 1987; Snowsell, 1995; Witkin, 1974) have not adequately illuminated the reasons that underlie these understandings. Researchers who have uncovered connections between students' preferences, the perception and production of music, and the related cultural contexts (Shrofel & Browne, 1994 and 1989; LeBlanc, 1980; Shehan, 1986; Sloboda, 1988; Walker, 1994, 1989, 1987 and 1985) have not revealed much about how music education practices, in particular, affect adolescents' understandings of music. No previous research has examined how high school students understand and value music, or how educational environments may contribute to particularized understandings of music. The present bi-cultural study, which closely examines two contrasting educational contexts and the types of experiences therein that inform young peoples' relationships with music, will provide some insight into the connection between pedagogical practice and student belief.

Assuming multiplicity in the worlds that human beings construct, this inquiry, like most of those presently emerging from within the field of curriculum, focuses on particular cases, the experienced and the new definitions and possibilities that arise with each coalescence of learner and environment. Being informed by current curriculum concerns has given me the opportunity to forge links to theories that may be able to provide answers and insights. Studies that bring current literary, psychological and psychoanalytical theory—theory that has traditionally governed perceptions about the nature and purpose of art and the nature of human

development—to bear on the interpretation and understanding of high school music students' musical responses, are important to current discussion in music scholarship (but still relatively nominal in number). Drawing from the thought of various philosophers has allowed me to employ theories and techniques from a wide range of disciplines (such as reader response theory) that are highly germane for illuminating to issues and processes in music education.

By gaining deeper and broader insight into the ways music is understood and valued by senior high school students and how their understandings and values may be embedded in beliefs and practices of the educational community of which they are a part, I hope to provoke other inquirers to consider new ways of conceptualizing the significance of music to students and the function and value of music education. As well, knowledge of student conceptions of music, and how these conceptions emerge in the particular environments in which they are embedded, has implications not only for the fields of music, music cognition and music education but for socio-cultural theory and for understanding adolescent development.

Overview of the Dissertation

Entering into a topic as complex as the significance of music is somewhat daunting; the philosophical treatises devoted to the significance of music in Western scholarship are formidable enough even before one considers the anthropological, psychological and educational literature addressing the reasons for human involvement in and devotion to music. I will, however, review and spotlight a number of the theoretical perspectives that have informed my investigation into how music and adolescents intersect. I will begin with a presentation of general philosophical theories, particularly semiotic and aesthetic ones, that have probed the question of the production of meaning in relationship to aesthetic texts. I will then recount and explicate a number of central ideas that have suggested to me what may be unique to the ways

adolescents interpret and attach value to their experiences, and their experiences with music in particular.

A description of the methods of inquiry I have employed will follow the setting of the theoretical framework for the study, elucidating the type of hermeneutic method that has enabled me to recognize the isomorphic quality of some of the students' stories. A discussion of the choice of sites, music education practices, research participants, and the study's delimitations will help to apprise the reader of the ways the study is necessarily contained.

The presentation of findings will be in two parts. The first part displays and discusses the data that portray the conditions of the significance of music for both British and Canadian students, and my particular thesis on the way they construct meaningful interpretations and personal relationships with music. The second part focuses on the students' conceptions of the purpose and value of music education. Due to the distinctiveness of the pedagogical practices in England and Canada, I address the underlying policies and histories that distinguish these two musical worlds before proceeding to describe students' conceptions of the way music education contributes, or should contribute, to their personal valuing of music. Then, owing to the students' divergent views regarding the function of music, and hence, their different expectations of education in music, a chapter devoted to these differences follows, unravelling the reasons for these contrasting perceptions about the 'public' function of music and music education. Finally, I consider music education practices in light of the data uncovered and the thesis regarding the significance of music to high school students that I offer, and discuss the ways I feel they have accommodated (or not) the adolescent imagination.

CHAPTER 2: THE THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

Implicit in the research questions of this study, which I formulated for the purpose of determining how senior high school music students view the significance of music and music education, is the assumption that music is not a self-constituted object that has predetermined meaning, but rather that it evolves and takes on significance in the processes through which it is conceived, produced and experienced. These assumptions, that there may be no absolute value or meanings inherent of phenomena apart from what we ascribe to them and which therefore position the participant at a pivotal point in the meaning and theory-making process of artistic response, have gained wide acceptance in current academic discourse. They reflect the radical turns in 20th century theoretical consciousness that have reconfigured our epistemic landscape. Among these turns has been a gradual deconstruction of such notions as external truth or a perfect, metaphysical reality, a notion which postmodernists have held to be, though not inherently scurrilous, ultimately responsible for authorizing certain conceptualizations of human nature, knowledge and meaning, and, due to its prejudicial stance, for sanctifying acts of arrogance, aggression and inhumanity. Attacking the empirical and logical weakness of arguments that have espoused a universal and absolute truth and a teleological construction of the world that culminated in the serving of human happiness, the poststructural point of view has eschewed the whole field of metaphysics, claiming that neither meaninglessness or meaningfulness can be empirically observed. Hence, only what is within the world can be known and linguistically expressed (see Smith, 1986). The other point of view—following phenomenologist Heidegger—has been skeptical of naming or rationalizing the world's *a priori* structure: "There is no answer in the vast silence, no justification for what is and for the way in

which it is" (Jaspers, cited in Smith, p. 11, 1986). Essentially both theories have cut the dimensions of the world, and our ability to collectively comprehend it, down to a perceptually and intellectually intelligible size. Central to both phenomenological and poststructural arguments is the idea that a self-constituted, immaculately conceived world is of little consequence to human beings; as things are contingent upon and co-created by consciousness or by culture, all experience is necessarily situational and contextualized. These notions have allowed 'meaning' to shift from object to subject, to what we either want it to mean or to what we deem it to mean. The shift has pivoted from either a textual or subjective point of view— philosophical or psychological. A closer examination of both will bring us to the intersection of music and the adolescent and the theoretical epicentre of this inquiry.

Listening to the Text

Researcher Kingsbury, after studying the musical world of students in a North American conservatory, concluded:

> Music is not an a priori phenomenon of the natural world, nor a unitary entity, nor a single bounded domain. It is a cultural system, an inter-contextualized weave of conceptual representations, actions and reactions, ideas and feelings, sounds and meanings, values and structures. (1988, p. 43)

This notion that there is no natural intrinsic basis for music, that everything is created, conditioned and conventionalized by the codes and the systems we construct and inherit is a fundamental shift from former beliefs in the self-sufficient, organically evolving nature of music (a belief particularly espoused by a school of thought known as 'essentialism' that was prominent in the late 19th century). To understand shifts that are occurring today in musical inquiry, one needs to understand the premise of the arguments that led to these conceptual changes. They lie

in the developments of linguistics, semiotics (a field of study specifically concerned with all the factors involved in the production and interpretation of signs), and literary theory in the early part of the 20th century. These shifts have transformed human understanding of the degree to which our worlds are linguistically constituted and encoded. I now turn briefly to consider those arguments, as they provide the rationale for new ways of considering the significance of music.

Largely a project of Saussure (1959), it was proposed and scientifically demonstrated that things did not exist singularly and unto themselves but in the relationship we construct and then perceive between them; in other words, we invent a reality by appointing a governing body of structures that are universal in their application. In his seminal research into signs and language Saussure concluded: "There are only differences without positive terms—there is only an arbitrarily imposed relationship between signifier and signified" (p. 120). While Saussure and his successors undermined the preciousness of metaphysical thought (precious in its privileging of the educated elite) with their assertion that reality was merely the product of the only too familiar human mind, their structural theory too soon came to be seen as limited and prescriptive. Uncovering which linguistic system had been constructed and for what reason became the project of the consequent movement, that of poststructuralism (which arose in France out of the dislocations of society and academic theory in the 1960s). Essentially the poststructuralists' argument was that, given the arbitrariness in the structuring of the relationship of the signifier and signified (i.e., sign/meaning), why was only one system the taken-for-granted one? They argued that reality—the accepted denotations of signifiers—was politically and ideologically driven, and reflected the values of the ruling elite. The poststructuralists flung wide the door to the 'real' ambiguity of text and meaning and invited critical reinterpretation, re-reading, re-writing of the textual constituencies of our lives. Subsequent investigation into the ways texts are coded and manipulated revealed that each act of communication is subject to and dependent on

an array of contextual influences and clues; messages change according to the manner in which they are spoken and the context in which they are employed. There is, a poststructuralist would assert, no 'final word' on the validity and meaning of texts. Indeed, the most one can hope for is an acuity of 'mind' or 'a poetic wisdom', to navigate through the nuances of our conditional forms of discourse.

The destabilizing of a text's meaning and the problematizing of the authority of the text as arbiter of a unitary value and meaning invited consideration of the reader as co-creator, co-determiner of the realities proposed and experienced. The increasing realization that things don't have meaning, people *create* meaning, led literary critics such as Rosenblatt (1935), Iser (1978) and Beach (1993) to re-examine a reader's relationship to the text and to propose that without the interaction and engagement of the reader, texts were essentially meaningless. Rosenblatt formulated these beliefs into a powerful transaction theory of reading—i.e., that the reader/text are aspects of a total situation, each conditioned by and conditioning the other. Her theory has provoked dramatic changes in the way language and language education is viewed. To accommodate the importance of the reader's contribution to the reading act and the 'mnemonic baggage' (set of possible experientially and culturally acquired assumptions, values and particular literary attitudes) that they bring to a text, a method of literary criticism known as reader response theory was widely adopted as a way to guide readers and account for the interpretive processes of reading and writing.

Others have postulated that though a text's meanings may be provisional and contingent on the reader's interpretation, these meanings are not arbitrary, nor do they merely reflect the history of the individual, but are rooted in and circumscribed by the pervasive values, perspectives and discourses of one's culture. The validity and durability of one's idiosyncratic interpretations rely on the endorsement of one's views by one's peers. Literary theorist Fish makes the point that

though readers may give meaning to text, it is the 'interpretive community' which gives texts their stable meanings (1980). To warrant consideration and achieve circulation in one's community, ideas must court pervasive beliefs and be homologous to those previous. The influence of the interpretive community or one's cultural environment on human development is enormous, according to Geertz: "There is no such thing as human nature independent of culture—decontexted individuals do not exist" (1973, p. 49). Geertz, an eminent cultural anthropologist, goes on to say that it is via the marketplace of human thought and interaction that we 'invent our own realities' by using cultural patterns as a framework from which we perceive, conceptualize, value, feel and make meaning of our lives. A society's "civilized thought patterns," their customs, traditions, technology, symbols, beliefs, laws, values, goals, become the signature of its citizens, affecting the way they think, feel, perceive, communicate, create, dream. In other words, according to this theory, each cognitive act is a cultural product, each expression, be it via word, gesture, drawing, or sound, a subscription to the culture's "significant symbols" (p. 45). For the culturalist, reality is a shared collaborative construction that serves as a frame of reference for the creating and negotiating of interpretation and meanings.

A more tempered view would suggest that although meanings have their origins and significance in the culture in which they are created, they are also subject to individual agency, variation and nuance: "Life in culture is an interplay between the versions of the world that people form under its institutional sway and the versions of it that are products of their individual history" (Bruner, 1996, p 14). Nonetheless, both of the above views bring into question the autonomy of the interpretive act.

While perhaps less acknowledged and articulated in the field of music and music education, the influence of the new philosophical positions on conceptualizations of music as another cultural artifact or 'text' has been unquestionably profound. The re-opening of discussion and

negotiation on the meaning of music has stimulated a renewed debate among semioticians about the nature of artistic symbols, raising the question of how they may operate differently from linguistic ones. If the ambiguity of linguistic signifiers is temporarily decommissioned by the endorsement of one meaning over another by interpretive communities, semioticians are less optimistic about the harnessing of agreed-upon meanings to music or other aesthetic texts. In fact, some semioticians argue that due to its existential or non-representational quality, music cannot be said to mean anything at all; it is a self-referencing system and means only itself (see Barthes, 1977; Polanyi, 1962). Others suggest that music can be harnessed to meaning, but which meaning, when, and for whom, is unpredictable:

> Sounds in music are understood to work differently from sounds in language in the sense that they do not invoke or call forth signifieds coterminous with the work of objects, events and linguistically encodable ideas. There is little disagreement on the question of music's non-denotative effectivities. (Shepherd, 1993, p. 177)

The general consensus is that music's ability to operate connotatively is more commonly observed, allowing it to be host to a range of meanings and interpretants:

> Musical symbolism is polysemic because meanings it takes on and emotions it evokes are multiple, varied and confused....it gives rise to a complex and infinite web of interpretants . . . In contradistinction to language, musical discourse does not strive to convey conceptually clear, logically articulate messages. (Nattiez, 1990, p. 37, 127).

Music's resistance to an exegetical, singular reading has led music semiotician Nattiez, like philosopher Langer (1953) before him, to declare the semiological status of discourse about music a tremendous problem, that music remains an 'unconsummated symbol', i.e., a sign without definable or definitive signification (p. 129). Observing that "aesthetic signifiers manifest a high degree of plurality and ambiguity which violate the rules of the code," (1977, p. 141) literary theorist Hawkes has called art symbols "renegade" or "heretical" symbols. Other

theorists have attempted to 'define' what music does signify or communicate, generally concluding that it is precisely this ambiguity and unconventionality that accounts for its allure and power: "A work of art *communicates too much* and therefore *does not communicate at all*....simply existing as a magical spell that is radically impermeable to all semiotic approach" (Eco, 1976, p. 270); "If there is mystery in music, it is precisely because we know that it is meaningful and know its meaning cannot be understood in an explicit way" (Scruton, 1997, p. 138); "Art conveys to us only true meanings—and hides as much as it reveals. The meaning it expresses is an ungraspable meaning" (Merleau-Ponty cited in G.B. Madison, 1981, p. 106).

Others insert a cautionary note with regard to the claimed limitlessness or incomprehensibility of music's meaning. Though music symbols appear to defy a conclusive interpretation and seem to be polysemic in character, it may be just that they defy a definitive transhistorical and transcultural interpretation. Shepherd, a music theorist who has written extensively on the degree to which meanings of music are discursively and socially constituted, argues that "meanings assigned to music are never completely polysemic in practice" (1993, p. 178), but are dependent on social mediation and endorsement. Indeed, a peculiarity of aesthetic texts, according to Eco (1976) and Hawkes (1977), is that "the aesthetic message can be seen as a continuing multi-order system of signification....each ambiguity invites us continuously to dismantle and reassemble what the work of art seems at any point to be saying" (Hawkes, p. 142). Its roles of ambiguity and self-reference give music a malleability that allows it to be continually transformed from one instance to another, to operate differently according to the context in which it finds itself. A good example of this would be the recent rise in popularity of Gregorian Chant in Western societies. What it meant to the people of the tenth century and what it means to people of today is undoubtedly, most observers would argue, quite different. It has taken on a new connotation, which in turn has sedimented, through popular belief, into a new

denotation. Indeed, while the ambiguity of music symbols may elude ultimate codification, it is nonetheless accepted by cultural theorists that we can arrive at provisional meanings, meanings situated in the particular context in which these aesthetic texts are used. It is accepted that most artists work and most listeners hear with preconditioned ears; we are implicated—some would say trapped—in the aesthetic norms and practices of our culture.

It is a task of this study, then, to explore how these theories can inform understandings of the ways adolescents formulate understandings of music and the influences that act on their constructions. What is the applicability of a semiotic method to adolescents' relationship with music, i.e., what is the nature of the link between 'signifier' and 'signified' and what is the process by which they arrive at their interpretations? As resolutely individual as they may seem, to what extent do their voices echo familiar ideological refrains, the ones promulgated by the institutions, the culture, media and mentors that have guided and shaped their hermeneutic landscapes? Is their world conditioned as much by the bodies and subjectivities in which they live, and their realities inflected by intuitive and interlocutionary experiences as much as by the rules of formal thought and cultural expectations? There are many theorists who contend that somatic and affective investments, indeed, may be more powerful determinants of the meanings we ascribe to music; we need to listen to their side of the argument now.

Listening to the Subject

While most poststructural theories have uprooted a belief in the concept of a subject as a prevailing and decisive element in the configuration of reality and the meanings assigned to those realities, other theorists in the fields of psychoanalysis, phenomenological inquiry and aesthetics have not been as ready to concede the subject's autonomy and capacity for agency. Resting on the belief that subjectivity is a reliable centre of human knowledge, that the individual

is not entirely determined by extrinsic forces already at work in the social and cultural context in which he or she develops, theorists from these areas of inquiry ask us to consider the possible fundamental importance of human consciousness in the framing of one's orientation to life. In the phenomenological concept of *intentionality*, for instance, the interrelationship between subject and object is an elemental one; there is an indissoluble unity between the conscious mind and that of which it is conscious, hence, there is no reality or truth apart from what appears to human consciousness or vice versa. The emphasis on the role of the participant in the constitution of reality and experience demands that we consider the ontological axis of knowledge and learning. In the words of Middleton (1990): "We need to theorize more precisely the way in which subjectivities themselves may be regarded as textual in quality, not simply impregnated, invaded, possessed by symbolic systems but themselves a logically maintained and defended nexus of symbolic interaction" (cited in Shepherd, 1991, p. 185). In my view, these theories, particularly Kristeva's theory of the semiotic and Egan's theory of primary understanding, do provide credible accounts of the ways in which subjectivities may be regarded as textual or conceptual in quality. They warrant serious attention as they may tell us as much or more about students' mode of knowing than theories implying that we are no more than a product of our culture.

Kristeva's theory of the *semiotic* proposes that one's identification with the *semiotic* (or pre-linguistic, maternal, mimetic order) prefigures one's immersion in a logocentric world and has profound and lasting implications for one's later imaginative response to life and one's capacity for poetic thought and response (1984). During this time in human development, Kristeva tells us, one's primary reality is the organic, symbiotic relationship with the mother; the physical intimacy, the rhythms, the utterances and the nurturing that define the child's tactile and aural landscape and assure the satisfaction of its needs. The pleasure known in this perfect fusion

with the maternal is short-lived, ruptured by the realization that one is 'other' and by the desire to complete the separation from the mother. In order to facilitate the separation, the mother becomes the undesirable—the abject—the father the imaginary agent of the mother's love that allows the child to negotiate the passage between the maternal body and the mother's desire which is the *Name of the Father*, i.e., the social, linguistic, symbolic, phallic order. In identifying with the imaginary father, the child is in fact hoping to satisfy the mother's desire, thereby effecting a reunion with her. Alas, unaware that it can never be what the mother desires, the child is destined to 'keep talking', to cling to the promises of the *Name of the Father.* Duped by the *Name of the Father* to believe that the annunciation of self will lead to satisfaction of desire, the subject is relegated to life posed somewhere between futility and despair, futility in the impossibility of ever satisfying desire through signification, despair in never being able to return to the imaginary wholeness of the prelinguistic, preoedipal state. In effect, then, Kristeva claims that we gain entry into the *symbolic* order by forfeiting the *semiotic*, i.e., the pleasure, the *jouissance* of our original bodily attachment to the world. We achieve a sense of self-image at the price of an enduring self-alienation. Refusing to believe that all might be a sham—that language may be no more than an empty chain of signifiers, and all symbolic gestures no more than ersatz stand-ins for lost, much more magical worlds—we continue to thirst after meaning, to prop up the importance of the word, of knowledge and to insist on the ultimate predictability of our constructed worlds. Cracks in our armour (our languaged understanding) are immediately sealed (definitions reinforced, new language invented) to assure us of the inviolability of a structure that we have so much riding on. However, it is the very presence of these ultimately ineradicable cracks that psychoanalysts claim are precious to our survival, being that they represent traces of the indomitable unconscious. Refusing to play by the rules of the game, the unconscious exposes the ultimate absence of a unified, predicable meaning in our discourses and textual world and

thereby implodes the myths and the repressive power held by the *Name of the Father* over the subjective being. Seizing upon the ambiguity that lies in the spaces between signifier and signified, it is the unconscious, the *semiotic*, that prevents the parceling of the world into unproblematic packages and allows for a continual reassessment and rejuvenation of our symbolic systems.

Kristeva proposes that the invitations to the dance—the fissures in the symbolic order that allow us access to and expression of our *semiotic* selves—can be found in such gestures as metaphor, pun, poetry and music. Beyond domination and prescription, the "riant spaciousness" of these gestures harken back to the physical *jouissance* of life's original *semiotic* harmony. Reminded of these pleasures, the subject either retreats entirely into the *semiotic* in order to satisfy renewed craving for oneself (which Kristeva suggests would be a narcissistic, ultimately psychotic act) or endeavours to reinsert the importance of materiality, and its *semiotic* identification, into social discourse and public life. The latter is what she advocates, to somehow reinvigorate our lives with *semiotic* drives, something she feels can best be accomplished through the arts. Others agree. Here, Shepherd (1991) speaks of the particular way in which music connects with the *semiotic:*

> Abstract yet concrete patterns, rhythms and textures of music can speak iconically to the internal logic through which the boundaries, structures, rhythms and textures of subjectivities are maintained and reproduced. They point to the need to theorize the way in which music powerfully addresses the global at the same time as the individual—giving us, as Frith (1987) has observed, "a way of managing the relationship between public and private emotional lives" (p. 184-185).

In a study conducted by Bowker (1993) on students' reflections on their aesthetic experiences, one of his research participants alluded to the sense that music allows one to reconnect to an imaginary wholeness and perfect fusion with the world that may have proceeded

our immersion into what this student sees as a falsely predicated world:

> Music is good and healthy and beneficent to the growth of a consciousness in that it can break through a lot of patterns of prejudice and psychological defence and things like that which we build up in our daily lives and so for a moment all that kind of garbage is wiped away as if our pure being was responding to the world purely. (p. 63)

Other contentions that formal thought, logic and knowledge are preceded and indeed sustained by intuitive mythic thought come from other theorists' speculations about the belief and practices of pre-literate cultures and how those ways of seeing the world may have been foundational to the world views of people of subsequent literate generations. If, as Merleau-Ponty has suggested, "there is no possibility of thinking formally if formal relations were not first presented to us crystallized in some particular thing" (1962, p. 181), then, for the people of these cultures, it was the word, the metaphor, the myth, the song, the ritual that swept the world up into a tangible and comprehensible form. The world was responded to, made sense of and shaped in a way that could be understood according to the structures, logic and images of the mind, and for the non-literate, non-technical mind that meant poetically, mythically, metaphorically. For instance, according to Tomlinson (1993), typical of the Renaissance world view was the belief that analogical relationships and homologies could be established between nature and culture, e.g., between word and referent, music and world, as life and symbolized life were not sharply divided but were united and inextricably intertwined in a perfectly undifferentiated fusion. In the magic of Renaissance cosmology, earthly minutiae—form, elements and matter—were animated by a world soul and connected by a cosmic similitude. So it was with music. Music was not merely physical sound, but was inhabited by the 'breath of the cosmos' itself; it was a means to sound the cryptic messages of a perfectly tuned universe. A century later, in his thesis about the development of human thought and culture (*The New*

Science, 1725), Vico argued that it is this type of mythic or tropological thinking that forms the basis of abstract thought.

Recently, Egan (1988) has asked us to consider these conjectures anew, and how the tropological consciousness which imbued thought and worlds of pre-literate cultures and enriched the gradual accession to abstract thought may still have resonance with how human understanding develops today in a literate, post-industrial world. In contradistinction to Piaget's cognitive theory, which asserts a supersedence to abstract thought (1964), Egan proposes in his theory of human development that imagination and subjectivity play an integral role throughout human development, a legacy of the child's and early adolescent's 'mythic' and 'romantic' perspectives. Asserting that human beings, due to certain propensities and by virtue of our membership in society, experience and recapitulate general characteristics or dispositions of our cultural history from childhood to adulthood, Egan theorizes that the layers of understanding accrued in life (which he terms Mythic, Romantic, Philosophic and Ironic) are essentially a cumulative sequence of refinements to one's original imaginative mythic-poetic orientation to life. Egan proposes that the child first comes to know the world as a participant in an oral culture, employing some of the forms, expressions and understandings typical of oral cultures in general. From autobiographies, observations and conversations with children, and documented reports on peoples in oral cultures, Egan gives us a sense that a world that is 'confined' to what one can hear or otherwise sense is perceived and conceptualized in a radically different way than a world mediated by literacy. The "sensed" world is perhaps more immediate and inclusive; ringed by auditory and other sensual stimuli, one is not disassociated from the world but very much embedded in it. Attuned to the dynamic dimensions of one's visual and aural environment, one responds and makes sense of one's world in a highly sense-oriented and participatory way, through gesture, images, sound and movement. Important as a means to communicate and

preserve the values and customs of that culture, a rich repertoire of oral or somatic expressions have evolved in oral cultures. The more vivid and dramatic the embodiments of these expressions—as in dance, art, music, poetry, story—the more likely they are to stimulate the imagination and emotions, and hence, be remembered. Mnemonic devices (which Egan terms "bonnes-a-pénser") such as rhythm, rhyme, cliché, rhetoric, redundance, metaphor and figurative language, mimesis, choral/communal speech, movement, and concrete classifying systems such as binarism ensure that messages transmitted via songs and stories made an immediate and lasting impression. Egan asks us to consider how communication in a child's world is similarly inflected, where the word collaborates with story, stanza, rhythm, rhyme, melody, gesture, dance and images to form a multi-media expression reflective of one's multi-textured environment. In a child's world, rhapsode and respondent are engaged in the creation and reproduction of a poetic world, evident in their love of chants and songs, in their captivation with the rhythmic ritual of storytelling and their recurrent themes, their delight in off-putting image-rich metaphors or puns and in their total absorption with the rich experiential moment. Aesthetic forms serve utilitarian needs, humanistic contextualizations serve pragmatic thinking, and subjective intensity and imaginative play is part of everyday discourse in a child's world.

This foundation laid, Egan suggests that these communicative strategies may be vital to an adolescent's lifeworld as well; are adolescents not also part of a richly textured, highly stylized and ritualized world? Does their environment not require a distinct set of rules and codes in order to 'play the game', i.e., an attunedness to the oral world, a facility with oral expression and language laced with the right cliché, redundancy and imagery, a belief in a concrete connection between sign and referent, in logic that polarizes and sometimes stereotypes—it is either/or, this or that—in actions and gestures that are mimetic, in music that is reassuredly patterned and in interests that are conditioned by a commitment to their own narrative? It is not, Egan submits,

only in a child's world that rhapsode and respondent are engaged in the creation and reproduction of a poetic world. Indeed, others, point out that the lingering desire to embed oneself in a richly figurative and dynamic world pervades an adolescent's life:

> Most young people's lives are not involved in the arts and yet are actually full of expressions, signs and symbols through which individuals and groups seek to establish their presence, identity and meaning.... Symbolic activity—reflection and expression—are in all young people's lives all of the time. (Willis cited in Giroux & Simon, 1989, p. 131-132)

Kristeva's and Egan's insistence on subject as signifier, and their intimation of a pre-formal, prelinguistic orientation to life (an orientation that gives an imaginative impulse to life) offer particularly strong support for conceptualizing subjectivity in different ways and understanding its epistemological significance. They not only bring our attention to the subjective needs and lives of our students, but they may help us discern to what degree adolescents' participation in music and their resulting perceptions of it are derived and motivated by strong internal drives— drives, as noted by music researcher Witkin (1974), that "insist upon oneself" and that attempt to "recover the world of feeling" (p. 2). (see Endnote 2)

While the theories I have chosen to adopt as interpretive lenses for this examination of the ways in which students view the significance of music represent different viewpoints in an ongoing argument regarding the 'nature' of human perception and cognition, they share an antipathy towards metaphysical thought and conceptions of reality that are pre-emptive and reductive. Instead, they offer conceptual schemes that are open to participatory, reflective processes and that invite the construction of a variety of subjectively and communally authored meanings. They help us to realize that we are inherently situated, perspectival participants in a shared and always shifting world; hence, it is perceptual truth that shapes and will shape the immediate and most keenly felt limits of our knowledge and understanding. They remind us that

we need to bring our symbol systems, our theories and our inquiries to the place where we live, to realize that the rifts between conception and practice, practice and understanding, understanding and Being, are sites for multiple reconfigurations of the subject/text relationship. If musical forms are continually transmuted by social forms (Kingsbury, 1988), we must remember too that subjectivities are continually being transformed by musical forms. We need to understand the interrelationship of these forms with students' interpretations, and how young people construe and reconstrue the significance of music in their lives.

While investigators in other fields of education (e.g., language education) have begun to explore ways in which the processes of textuality and subjectivity interact in the experience of reading to produce individually situated meanings, there has been little effort in music education research to examine how students construct meaning from their musical experiences. Educators need to know more about the nature of adolescent experience in music, especially how adolescents derive meaning from their interactions with music and how these meanings are situated in the broader educational context. How do their interpretations relate to prevailing theories about the ways in which music offers itself to interpretation, and the significance of those meanings to people's lives? How do their interpretations relate to contemporary theory regarding human development and cognition and the ways in which psychologists regard the significance of music to adolescents? These are my essential philosophical, psychological and pedagogical questions, and ones on which I hope, via the voices on the following pages, to shed some preliminary light.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF INQUIRY

The Theoretical Underpinnings

Modifying my original research questions to read "what is of significance about music to senior high school students?" has placed my work clearly within the purview of phenomenological theory and methods of inquiry. As a philosophical method that attempts to describe the objective world as it appears to the subject, phenomenology has much to offer a researcher who wishes to explicate the relationship between the world depicted in music and the subject's conception of the importance of that world. Using an approach first articulated by Edmund Husserl (1913), I am attempting to better understand the 'constructs' or frames of everyday consciousness—what Husserl terms the *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld)—through which adolescents apprehend and interpret as a meaningful part of their lives. I adopt the phenomenological presumption that self/world are coterminous, and that to better understand either, one must examine them in their interactive configuration. Husserl used this practice of 'bracketing' consciousness and the object it apprehends (which he termed *phenomenological reduction*) as a way to access and reveal what he held to be the essences or intentions of consciousness. Rather than taking the position that something, at bottom, can be revealed to us (as Husserl would claim), I would suggest that what I am seeking are patterns that emerge in the context of musical experiences and how they may structure a self-world relationship that is revealing of the adolescent perspective. The one presupposes there is an immanence to human existence and experience, the other a contextual consistency. So, while the esotericism of the phenomenological paradigm is not entirely embraced, nor translatable to a multi-site case study in schools, its sympathy with the subjective is highly germane to the methodological underpinnings of this study.

If Husserl's phenomenological theories offer philosophical support for a study whose goal is *verstehen* (to understand the embedded meanings of an individual's world), then the practice of *hermeneutics* (a way of interpreting these meanings) offers methodological support. Characteristic of hermeneutic inquiry is the focus and foregrounding of the experiential patterns of the actors involved—on what is present, possible and intentional to the actor's imagination in the act of interpretation—not what might be the codes of social and cultural discourse that have conditioned the actor's response. Hermeneutic history is the history of the present; it is interested not in the biographical and historical contents of one's world, but in the transformative process that occurs when the self, in interaction with a text, allows a reconstitution of the contents of one's world (see Nuyen, 1994). As well, hermeneuticists are acutely aware of the many issues that surround the reading and narrating of the interpreted world, including those of the authority of empiricism ('ethno'), and the authority of language/representation ('graphy'), the latter of particular concern to an interpretive study on musical beliefs. For researchers in this post-Derridian world, the idea that there may be no reality beyond our perceptions and conceptualizations of it compels us to question whether it is indeed possible to truly 'be there' or truly understand (see Britzman, 1995). Rather than resign themselves to this poststructural position that there is no possibility of transcending one's perspectival truth to locate another's, hermeneuticists urge us to consider ways in which we can productively and positively work within the limits and possibilities of our textual and intertextual worlds. They ask us, for example, to consider Gadamer's notion of *fused horizons* (1990); that understanding is possible and will ultimately take place when the horizons (the perspectives resulting from our necessary situatedness in the world) of both self and other, researcher and subject, are allowed to inform and enlarge the other. To attain this fusion of horizons, another scholar, Tomlinson (1993), speaks of the power of a *dialogical hermeneutics*, a method of inquiry that encourages and tries to

balance the relationship between "indigenous" discourse and "researcher" discourse in order to "sustain a sense of otherness in the face of meaning" (p.23). Integral to this method is accepting that there are no determinate meanings or final understandings, that "hermeneutic understanding always places itself in question, in a conversation that never ends, in a dialogue in which no word is the last word and every word gives rise to a new question" (Nuyen, 1994, p.35). But in contrast to the postmodernist's view of the "insublatable other" (see Tyler, 1985), for a hermeneuticist to say that the process of understanding continues is not to say that nothing has been understood. Text, art, self and historical events are objects of hermeneutic inquiry precisely because understanding is never exhausted; they do not disappear behind any single act of understanding but continually return to stand before us, inviting our reconsideration. It is by confronting such events continually that we come to understand them anew. Hermeneuticists remind us that the necessity, the willingness to understand and to be understood, is embodied by our faith in discourse and our capacity to sustain and to empower human life.

Accessing the experience of music through meta-interpretive means is also given support by hermeneutic method. Arguing that experience is brought into being conceptually and validated by discourse, then an examination of musical experience as conveyed through verbal and written discourse is not only enlightening, it is indeed essential to the meaning-making process in music. Researcher Tyler (1985) reminds us that "people do not speak their experience; rather, without forms of speaking they could not claim to have an experience" (p.90). Reflection on musical experience is made more vital when one considers assumptions that music did not require interpretation, that it was capable of speaking about itself without the mediation of a metalanguage, were those that underwrote its innocence—as if it were exempt from political, social, historical and material forces—for centuries.

Hermeneutics has allowed me to shift focus from text to subject, from a multi-layered

archeological history and analysis of the various cultural, historical and biographical meanings that underlie our conceptions of music to a restitution of the voices that have inherited it. It has also allowed me to accept the possibility of hearing both similar and dissimilar stories, stories split by ambivalence, stories that consolidate students' views and stories that contravene. Tomlinson, in describing the conditions of *dialogical hermeneutics,* distinguishes between two types of hermeneutic inquiry; the "allophilic," which concerns itself with differences, and the "homophilic," which is more observant of similarities (1993). The two viewpoints are represented in my study, accounting for, despite the huge divide between the educational practices in Britain and those in Canada, the remarkable relatedness of some of the students' beliefs and desires in terms of their imaginative conceptions of music.

The Research Approach and Design

The approach co-extensive to the type of phenomenological inquiry I am proposing for this study is found within the qualitative research paradigm. The qualitative research paradigm has its roots in cultural anthropology and American sociology (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), though its adoption by educational researchers has been relatively recent (Borg & Gall, 1989). The intent of qualitative research is to understand a particular social phenomenon by immersing oneself in the context within which it occurs, and, through interaction with participants, seeking to understand it from their perspective, thereby coming to understand the meanings they assign to actions, events and feelings. To explore students' conceptions of the significance of music as it may be conditioned by the educational environment in which it develops, I used a multi-site case study design and employed a variety of ethnographic research techniques. My intent was to assemble a comprehensive picture of historical and educational variables that contribute to or otherwise influence the students' understanding of the significance of music. In case studies, the researcher

typically explores a single entity or phenomenon ("the case") bounded by time and activity (a program, event, process, institution, or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time (Merriam, 1988). Ethnographic research techniques emerged from the field of anthropology, primarily from the contributions of Malinowski, Park and Boas (Jacob, 1987). The intent of ethnographic research is to obtain a holistic picture of the subject of study with emphasis on portraying the everyday experiences of individuals by observing and interviewing them (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990). More implicitly, through this process, the ethnographer "seeks to learn from people, to be taught from them" (Spradley, 1979, p.4).

This study involved students at six high schools: three in southwest England and three in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. (see Endnote 3) I obtained information about each educational setting by examining pertinent historical texts, narratives and archival material and collecting of artifacts, documents and records that helped me to gain insight into the particular ethos of the school cultures, school music cultures, and student cultures involved. Information on students' experiences and understandings of music, and further information about the cultures that impinged on these experiences, was obtained through a variety of means. These included the following:

1. Interviews with British and Canadian music students.

2. Interviews with British and Canadian non-music students.

3. Listener response sessions (in which students were invited to respond to music played).

4. A written survey (which focused on biographical issues) and encouragement of the use of music journals by participants.

5. Observation of music classes or rehearsals in which the participants were involved.

6. Attendance of concerts and school assemblies.

7. Observations of school activities.

8. Interviews with music educators at participating schools.

9. Interviews with administrators at participating schools.

10. Interviews with parents or music program supporters.

11. Informal conversations with relevant informants in the community.

Site and Participant Selections

The selection of research sites, participants and the fine-tuning of the study's events and processes evolved out of reflections on pilot testing undertaken between May-September, 1995. During that time, I conducted nine sets of pilot interviews; three with elementary school children, three with high school students, one with a music teacher, and two with prospective teachers. Participants were a mixture of males and females. All were residing in the Lower Mainland area of B.C., were from a variety of ethnocultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and all were involved in a variety of different musical endeavors (including composition, choral and band classes at school, private violin lessons, playing in community orchestras and singing in rock 'n roll bands). From the information gleaned in these interviews, and support attained from the literature, I was able to determine which factors I wanted to control, or limit, for the purposes of this study. I considered the following:

1. Developmental age. It was clear that older students were more comfortable and adept at reflecting on experiences. Younger students were constrained (and they were often noticeably frustrated) by their lack of linguistic facility. Certain theorists who suggest that adolescence is a time of 'epistemological crisis'—an age when issues of interpretation come to the fore (e.g., Egan, 1979; Gilligan, 1988)—convinced me of the particular suitability of this research study, with its emphasis on reflective processes, to adolescents.

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2. Experiences with music. Students who were involved in music in a multi-dimensional way, both inside and outside of school (that is, they were enrolled in music classes at school and took private instruction on an instrument), were more eager to share and more able to articulate insights gained from this obviously important sphere of their life. The literature on critical thinking (e.g., McPeck, 1990; Wright, 1992), which suggests that critical thinking requires a thorough knowledge of the field in question, offers a possible explanation as to why these students may have been more capable of independent reflective thought.

In order to reach a better understanding of the facets of students' lives that led to their involvement in music, and the types of understandings that evolve through this involvement, I felt it would be necessary to listen to the stories of students who are enrolled in music classes and students who are not. I thought this comparative dimension might yield important insights into why students elect or do not elect to take music classes and how these choices affect their lives and educational development. On-going public skepticism about the value of the arts in education and research that reports decreasing enrollment in music at the high school level (Walker, 1995) suggested that ascertaining student perceptions and understandings of the arts are particularly critical areas of inquiry at the present time.

3. Socio-economic class. This factor was very closely linked to the preceding factor. Those with multi-dimensional involvement in music tended to be from middle to upper-middle class backgrounds. Previous research (e.g., Sergeant, 1971) points to the interrelationship of involvement in music and higher socio-economic status. In order to access respondents to whom music mattered, and who were part of flourishing school music departments, I was led to schools serving communities from higher socio-economic groups in both Britain and B.C.

4. Gender. Responses during pilot testing revealed interesting similarities and differences within and across gender. Gender is a factor of interest in this study mostly as a way to check for

consistency of student belief and response across genders. While research studies in England (e.g., Green, 1993) have recently begun to reveal alarming discrepancies in teacher assumptions about gender and music learning, these were not apparent in the context of this study, and differences in responses that were noted in interviews may be more dependent on deeper cultural conditioning than on classroom assumptions, an inquiry into which was not undertaken in this study.

5. Culture. During pilot testing, responses from students attending schools in Vancouver were quite similar. One could then infer with equal legitimacy that music is culturally defined, or that music has a specific intrinsic significance for adolescents, without being able to judge the degree of validity of either statement. Studying the responses of students from two different countries throws this question into sharper relief. Ethnographer Spradley (1980) has highlighted the advantage afforded by cross-cultural research: "Cross-cultural descriptive statements help place a cultural scene in a broader picture of human cultures...by means of contrast, you have conveyed an important dimension of the culture" (p. 32).

While I strove to ensure that the research sites in Canada and Britain were comparable in terms of socio-economic status, strength of music departments, balance of genders, age of students, length and types of curricular and extra-curricular musical experiences they would have had, I was unable to ensure precise correspondence between school sites in Britain and Canada. Schools with an obvious strength in music in Canada tend to be determined by the calibre and commitment of its teaching staff, and by the tradition of excellence the music programs have accrued, while in Britain, schools that have a music focus tend to be either cathedral schools, or specialist music schools, both of which are privately endowed and funded and require entrance exams and auditions of each of its applicants. While all students interviewed for this study may have shared a devotion to music, their differing motivations for being involved in music (a much

larger percentage of students attending the 'private' schools in England were aspiring to become professional musicians) had a distinct influence on students' views. This will be quite apparant in my report of findings and ensuing discussions.

I also conducted pilot listener response sessions with groups of high school students in schools in the Lower Mainland of B.C. and with university music students and pre-service teachers at the University of British Columbia. Using a variety of listening response formats, I discovered that my adaptation of listening response questions used by Shrofel & Browne (1994a, 1989b) provided the most striking information about ways in which different listeners experience music, particularly in terms of whether or not they have had musical training. A list and categorization of typical listener responses, which grew out of Schrofel and Browne's pilot testing with adolescent listeners can be found in Table 2 in the Appendices.

As a result of my own objectives and the responses I received during pilot interviews, I concluded that the most suitable participants for the study would be senior high school students, both male and female. In order that the factor of musical training would be as significant as possible, I targeted and contrasted students taking music classes with students receiving similar training in another country. Given that I would be more likely to find those high school students with multi-dimensional involvement in music in schools having strong music programs and in middle to upper-middle class catchment areas, I chose sites in Britain and Canada on this basis (and, more fundamentally, on the basis of shared language and music). The greater likelihood that students in these schools have developed their musical interests within either a British or Canadian environment was also to have been a factor in my selection of these sites, but due to the recent influx of new immigrants to the area of B.C. targeted in this study, this was not entirely possible. In the end, having students in the study who could comment, perhaps more objectively, on their experiences and impressions of music in schools in two or more countries

added an enriching element to the study.

To gain entry to the settings and permission to work with the participants, preliminary contact was made with the music directors at each site to gauge and secure their support for the study. The proposed study was then submitted for review to the university ethical review committee and the school board concerned, and permission was subsequently obtained to conduct research in targeted B.C. schools. Permission to conduct research at schools in Britain was obtained through correspondence with the schools' music teachers and headmasters. Letters sent to principals and music teachers requesting permission to conduct research, and letters of consent distributed to parents and students are included in the appendices (Appendix B).

The Researcher's Role

The role of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument in qualitative research necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study. I am cognizant of the perspectives that I bring to this study, and, knowing that "there is no vantage point outside" (Said, 1989, p.216), I realize that they will have an ineluctable influence on the data collected and interpreted. But, as Gadamer reminds us, our stance—our "mnemonic baggage"—is an essential composite part of the hermeneutic process: "Interpretation is a process in which our preconceptions and prejudices evolve in reciprocal interaction with the data and text we consider... Without prejudices, we cannot even begin to approach the data; without data we cannot begin to alter our preconceptions" (1990, p. 236). My prejudices are the legacy of my participation in the traditions of music and music education—it is because of them that I am able to approach and comprehend the many manifestations of musical understanding. It is that which allows me to join together with those interpreted in what Gadamer has called an *effective historical consciousness*, "the ever-moving sense of the historical situatedness and connections

of ourselves and our data that creates meaning" (Tomlinson, 1993, p. 21). It is that which motivated me to undertake the study as well, given that its genesis lay in the questions that arose in my own practice as a high school music educator from 1980-1994. Subsequent immersion in the related research and debate among scholars in education convinced me that the questions I had about student experiences and understandings of music were important ones, yet revealed that they had seldom been addressed by the research community. I brought to the research setting, then, this 'unconsummated' desire to understand how involvement in music affects young people and how it affects not just their valuing of music, but their understanding of themselves and their world. I realized that my ambitions and hopes would need to be tempered with a high degree of scepticism and reflexivity, for in acknowledging the particularity of the realities we encounter in research, all researchers must recognize the contingencies of their own. Indeed, I recognized that I came not from a place of knowledge or authority, but from one of belief and practised perception.

I believe, nonetheless, that my knowledge and experience of the contexts in which students learn and my particular interest and sensitivity to their 'stories', assisted me in working with the participants in this study. Since my experiences of teaching music have been limited to Canadian high schools, I made every effort to achieve comparable understandings of the British students' musical worlds and to adopt the roles that were necessary to elicit equal co-operation and trust at each site. Also, I realized that my 'practised perception' and intuitive understandings of my own culture afforded me far greater ingress into the worlds of Canadian school music students (not that that was entirely to their advantage!). I felt that the best role to adopt was one that was as unobtrusive as possible, but I assumed a more active, reciprocal role (e.g., sharing expertise, research, cultural knowledge, repertoire) when appropriate.

Data Collection Procedures

1. Research Participants

The 68 student participants for this study were volunteers, either pre-selected by their music teachers in advance of the study, or drawn into the process through encouragement by friends. Students were included on the basis of the following criteria: they were between the ages of 16-18 and they demonstrated a willingness to share reflections on experiences with music (whether they were currently enrolled in music classes in school or not). The sample also had a desired equal distribution of girls and boys. Before commencing the study, I ensured that the informants clearly understood the objectives of the research, the procedures involved, and how their rights and anonymity would be protected. Given the time of research—at the commencement or end of the final term of their secondary schooling—the degree to which the students and their teachers welcomed me, and attempted to honour my requests, was most generous. The range of their involvement varied from casual participation (e.g., informal conversations, discussions, or music listening sessions) to a more significant involvement, characterized by their willingness to devote the time necessary for a private interview and to submit written reflections.

2. Data Collection Strategies

Consistent with techniques commonly employed in qualitative research, I utilized three types of data collection procedures in this study: observations, interviews and document analysis. By using multiple data collection procedures, one is able to account for the three fundamental aspects of human experience (cultural behaviour, knowledge and artifacts), and thereby assemble a convergent understanding of the phenomenon studied (Spradley, 1980). On-site research (primarily interviews and observations) took place between April-June 1996 (April 25-May 19 in England and May 20-June 18 in Canada), and background research of relevant documents continued until January, 1999. While a more extended period may have increased the study's

validity, I believe, because of the nature and specificity of the research problem, that a short and concentrated span of time spent with a cross-section of participants utilizing carefully prepared instruments for data analysis was equally effective in gathering rich and inclusive information. Also, due to the propinquity of student responses, my topic became "saturated" by the multiple participants and situations within this time period, so a more prolonged period of time in the field would not necessarily have been more productive. A schedule of research at each setting was determined in consultation with music teachers, administration and students involved. In general, my days on site were spent in a gathering of information, informal conversations, interviews, and class observations.

The following is a more detailed description of the instruments that were used, and the data collection and recording procedures that were followed:

i) Interviews, Response Sessions

1. One or two semi-structured interviews were held with each student. The total number of interviews were as follows:

   i) 25 interviews with British music students (12 female, 13 male).

   ii) 10 interviews with British 'non-music' students (6 female, 4 male).

   iii) 23 interviews with Canadian music students (11 female, 12 male).

   iv) 10 interviews with Canadian 'non-music' students (8 female, 2 male).

   The purpose of the first interview with each student allowed me to ascertain general attitudes towards music, the second to follow up from general school classroom and community observations and to ask participants to consider these in light of their initial reflections on music. Over time, I discovered that one extended interview with each participant allowed me to cover the content of both these interviews. To be consistent with an interview guide approach (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p. 406), I selected

topics for the interviews in advance (see Appendices 5-8), but I varied the sequence and wording of the questions. I took care to ensure that questions were not leading or dichotomous responses (Yes/No), but phrased them so that participants had the opportunity to respond in a variety of ways.

2. One listener-response session was held with a small group of representatives from each participant group (six sessions in total; three in Britain and three in Canada). In these sessions, two pieces of music were played; "Parce Mihi Domine" written by de Morales and performed by an early music vocal quartet (The Hilliard Ensemble) with jazz saxophonist Jan Gabarek, and "Renaissance Man" written and performed by the Australian rock group, Midnight Oil. I chose these two pieces because, though they represented two very different genres of music, they are both somewhat stylistically unconventional (the "classical" piece fusing Renaissance and jazz styles, the rock 'n roll piece featuring through-composed, evocative, lyrics). As the unorthodoxy of these pieces challenged the listener, I felt they had the potential to elicit rich discussion amongst students for my subsequent analysis. They would also expose the "fitness" or musical literacy of the listeners; the substance and depth of the students' evaluations would depend on their familiarity with the conventions of Renaissance music, and the implications of the label, 'Renaissance Man'.

    Protocol for these response sessions evolved from reader response theory, using questions and categories of response developed by researchers Shrofel & Browne. See Tables 1 and 2 for the delineation of how the listener response protocol was developed and utilized in the study.

3. One semi-structured interview was held with each of the students' school music teachers (eight in total; four in Britain and four in Canada). The purpose of these interviews was

to ascertain the instructors' views and what bearing they might have on their students' perspectives. Questions selected for this interview are displayed in Appendix B.

4. One semi-structured interview was held with the chief administrator of each of the schools (five in total; three in Britain and two in Canada). As administrators' values can have a decisive influence on a school setting, ascertaining their views on music would further aid my understanding of the participants' educational environments. Questions selected for this interview are displayed in Appendix B.

5. Informal conversations were held with key informants in the community (e.g.,other teachers, administrators, school counsellors, parents). I interviewed three informants in total; two in Britain and one in Canada. Ascertaining community views would complement my understanding of the environment in which students' beliefs and attitudes develop. Types of information sought in these conversations are given in Appendix B.

Interviews were conducted with students and teachers in private rooms next to music facilities, at times that were convenient for them (lunch hours, after school, study periods). Selected participants (two at each school) served as "checks" throughout the research process, verifying my transcriptions of their interviews and my incipient understandings of other musical worlds. Information from all interviews was recorded through note-taking. One hundred hours of interviews were logged, yielding 350 pages of transcriptions.

ii) Observations

I conducted observations of situations and events that would allow me to compare the interviewees' perceptions and beliefs with their behaviours and that would most likely have a direct or indirect effect on their attitudes towards music. These included

the following:

1. School music classes or rehearsals (14 in total; 7 in Britain and 7 in Canada).

2. Concerts, recitals, assemblies (11 in total; 7 in Britain and 4 in Canada).

3. School environs (e.g., hallways, breezeways, grounds, cafeteria, student lounges, staff meetings). These observations were conducted during lunch times, transition times between classes and at the commencement and closure of the school day.

iii) Document Analysis

1. Examination of pertinent historical texts, narratives and archival material and collection of artifacts and records served to reveal much about the particular ethos of each school's culture (e.g., historical accounts of the schools, school syllabi, calendars, mission statements, newsletters, announcements, photographs, newspaper briefs, yearbooks), each school's musical culture (music curriculum documents, music program syllabi, exams, mandate and accomplishments of parent advisory boards, concert fliers and programs, posters, awards, trophies, photographs, videos, recordings) and the student cultures involved (magazines, newspapers, student publications, stories, compositions).

2. Collection and analysis of pre-existing reflective writings gave me further insight into students' lives. Five students shared stories or compositions they had written, recordings they had made or books and recordings they wished to recommend to me.

3. Surveys given to all participants yielded biographical information and their perspectives on general life issues. Twenty-four of the British participants and 23 of the Canadian participants completed and submitted the survey. See Appendix B for survey.

4. Review of reflective diaries kept by students. Along with written surveys, I gave 'diaries' (booklets with blank lined paper) to each participant and instructed all of them to use them to record: 1) feelings regarding the research process, further ideas relevant

to interview questions, 2) daily encounters with music, and thoughts associated with these, 3) responses to music listened to during the four week on-site research period, and/or 4) general reflections about their lives. Due to time constraints, and perhaps because they had less interest in writing responses than in sharing them in conversation, only five students kept and submitted their reflective diaries to me. The covering page of the reflective diary is in Appendix B.

Information from these documents helped me ascertain the history and underlying educational policy and philosophy of each institution, and the type of public relations that was important to each school in the study. Information from the surveys and other student submitted documents was used to supplement information obtained from interviews with other research participants.

Throughout the research, I kept a field notebook with me at all times to document the development of the research, to store relevant correspondence, and to chronicle my own experiences and perceptions. A field log, or calendar served to keep my respondents informed of my daily interview schedule while I was on-site. The general schedule followed during the field study is outlined in Table 3.

Data Analysis

While my own experiences as a music educator, conversations with other music educators, and familiarity with current scholarly debate and related research in education armed me with a fairly clear understanding of what the issues and foreshadowed problems were in this type of inquiry, even the kinds of "answers" my research might uncover, I remained committed to a qualitative researchers' ethic throughout the study, building my ideas "from the ground up" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Recognizing that my construction of reality, or that of theorists or other

researchers, might not be the same as that of the participants in my study, I took precautions to ensure that my own perspective would not influence or eclipse theirs but would be temporarily suspended in order that the genuine voices of the participants could be heard and reported. Listening carefully to the views of my participants, and to the ways in which they framed their concerns, served to determine for me the most applicable and useful analytical tools and the most encompassing theoretical vantage point.

Considering the original intent of the study—to locate and compare the personal and cultural meanings of music to youth in two different environments—I generated preliminary categories of analysis prior to my entry into the field in order to ensure that my fieldwork objectives in each setting were clear, and to focus and balance the data collection process. Advance establishment of these categories, however, did not foreclose the possibility that the categories might be deleted, replaced, or expanded upon in the process. These categories, with their key elements or domains, are shown in Tables 4 and 5 (Appendix A). Interviews, observations or documents that revealed properties of each of these categories were indexed and coded accordingly. Throughout all stages of the study, I was engaged in reflecting upon the data collected and in deciding on the procedures I would use to evaluate and compare data more formally. Drawing out salient aspects of the data related to the above categories allowed me to trace reoccurring topics, consider how those responses might correspond to other categories and determine how those categories could again be subsumed under larger patterns. While I had to wait until data suggested appropriate theoretical paradigms, I chronicled major ideas as they surfaced (as suggested by Merriam, 1988), and I compared them to relevant theories.

Reporting of Findings

This is a naturalistic study. Therefore, the results—a construction of adolescents'

experiences in music and the meanings that they attach to them—have been presented in

descriptive, narrative form. All students involved in this study contribute to the collage of voices

that you will hear on the following pages and the anonymity of participants has been respected

with origins of quotes from participants being identified simply as B=British student and

C=Canadian student. The large number of participants for this study precludes characterization

and identification of each contributor. Instead, my use of a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of

the school settings and school music cultures in which students' relationships with music are

formed, serves to illuminate the individual qualities of the research sites and the subjects for

the reader.

Discussion of the findings has been separated into two sections; the first part addresses

student conceptions of the significance of music, the second deals with the conceptions of the

purpose and value of music education as it is practised in these two respective environments. A

third section connects these findings; ways educational practices may impact students'

conceptions of the importance of music and, conversely, ways students conceptions of the

importance of music can inform the practice of music education has been considered. Important

links to theoretical and historical perspectives which may help to illuminate the data have been

made throughout the discussion, serving as a basis for more thorough understandings of the

adolescents' interaction with music as played out within their educational settings.

CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH SITES

Research Sites in Britain

Introduction: The Educational Setting in Britain

Public education in Britain, with the exception of some privately run and operated schools, is regulated by a national governing body known as the Department for Education. While there are tremendous regional and local variations, some fundamentals of the system are nationally recognized. As of 1996, all children between the ages of 6 and 16 are required by law to attend school, with many students taking another two years of school to complete an optional program known as *A level.* Children between the ages of 6 and 11 attend primary school, and those between the ages of 12 and 16, secondary school. While students formerly underwent tests at age 11 to determine which type of schooling at the secondary level would best suit their aptitude and abilities (academic or technical), these tests are no longer required, and the majority of students now attend comprehensive secondary schools which offer both vocational and academic programs to all students. Schooling is divided into years or 'forms', beginning with year one, or lower first form at approximately age 6, and concluding with year eleven, or upper fifth form at approximately age 16. Then, after successfully completing the *General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)*, students may choose to stay in school for another two years to continue advanced or *A level* training in courses of their choice. *A level* courses are typically academic in focus and intense in nature, prohibiting students from enrolling in any more than three courses in these final two years of secondary education.

Privately governed and operated schools, known as "public" schools, remain a feature of education in England. Operating ostensibly outside of the national system, these privately funded

public schools nonetheless adhere to basic structural organization and curricular requirements adopted by state-run schools. They serve a small percentage of the student population—about 7%—and largely maintain the traditions and mandates of schooling for the aristocracy—i.e. "to develop leaders for service in public life" (Colchester, 1985, p. 78). Given their selected clientele (those who subscribe to the exclusivity of their mandate and those who can afford the fees), many feel that the division of public/private education in Britain serves to reinforce strongly entrenched class divisions and, hence, continues to be a fundamental weakness of national schooling. (Husén & Postlethwaite, 1994)

Recently instituted changes affecting educational administration and practices in Britain include the adoption of a revised National Curriculum in 1995, along with a more comprehensive grade-wide exam schedule. The new curriculum is organized on the basis of four key stages and programmes of study, and "attainment targets" delineate subjects, content and expected standards of pupil performance at each stage. The exams administered by *OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education)* to determine student achievement at the end of each stage are commonly used as barometers of student progress and, in part, school or teacher effectiveness. The current practice of publicly posting each school's exam results has precipitated a new climate of corporate competitiveness between schools in England, a climate many feel is misplaced in an educational environment and predicated on a flawed basis of measurement (one more likely to reveal students' socio-economic status than their academic abilities).

Music in the National Curriculum is organized into four key stages, with all students required to take music classes for the first three stages (up to age 14). Classes at the latter stage are taken by interested students as part of their *GCSE* program, and beyond that, by students who wish to take them as part of their *A level* program. Recommendations by investigators into arts education in Britain (known as the "Arts in Schools Project", completed under the auspices of

the National Curriculum Council in 1989), have brought a new emphasis on practical music-making, composition, a broadening of content beyond the Western classical tradition to include all aspects of world music, plus the incorporation of information technology in composition processes. Music appreciation remains an integral part of students' programs, ensuring that the curriculum is equally weighted between listening, composing and performing music. Targeted outcomes for each key stage are clearly identified in the National Curriculum Guide, and, though they reflect changing conceptions of the arts, expectations remain that students will be able to work within a variety of musical structures, styles, conventions and techniques. Targeted outcomes for *A level* music are particularly demanding, and they dissuade students who are not serious and reasonably secure about their potential for success in music. For the *A level* exam, students are expected to demonstrate a high level of competency and musicianship in all areas of music: solo and ensemble performance, aural perception, composition, music history and criticism. To achieve this standard of musicianship, students receive concentrated small-group instruction (five hours per week) in music theory, history, composition, and private tutoring on their chosen instrument. Many schools fund private lessons and provide students' instruments. Students participate in school bands, orchestras and/or choirs purely on an extra-curricular non-credited basis, making these groups dependent on the number of students from the general student body who volunteer to take part in them.

Description of the British Sites

> The stories entombed in the Norman/Gothic cathedral before us defy indifference and I detect a slowing of the students' footsteps as they near the cathedral doors. Fanned cloisters—reputedly the most beautiful in the world—usher us into the world once home to a chapter of Benedictine monks, and before this, to the friars of an Anglo-Saxon abbey, past their former herb gardens, study carrels and lavatorium built into niches along the cloister walls. Upon entering the cathedral nave, the heavy, plain arches and colossal pillars announce the Normans' lingering

presence and we hear their voices as we pass the chapter house where a major document in Britain's history was signed. As we travel eastward along the length of the nave, we leave behind the stolid world of the Normans to enter into the exultant world of the Gothic imagination—impossibly high vaulted ceilings, slender arches, pillars and buttresses, all aspiring to the light pouring in high above us from the clerestory's stained glass windows. As glorious as the entry into the Lady Chapel is, we know it is the scaled down or 'reformed' version, that which survived the purges of the Puritans and Cromwellians in the 16th and 17th centuries. Traces of the later Victorians remain on the windows; blunt and angular figures of Medieval art are exchanged for the precocity of pre-Raphaelite romanticism, every saint sporting a willowy beard, every virgin a cherubic face..... We look behind them, to the Bell of St. Peter, the school precincts, and town, to Jerusalem and the rising sun.

(I am grateful to Mike, a British student, for taking me on a guided tour of this cathedral, in which he and many of his peers had received their early musical training).

All three sites in Britain are situated in the heart of England's prosperous west country, an area rich in history, inhabited since 9000 B.C.E. and fought over until 1000 C.E.—by the Celts, Britons and Romans, Saxons and Normans—finally appropriated, in the eighteenth century, by a merchant and management class that had prospered from lucrative land and industrial ownership in the resource rich Midlands and northern England. The legacy of this settlement pattern is woven into the landscape; the diocese of the first Archbishop of England embraces sites of the early prehistoric camps, the still intact remains of Roman baths and temples, the legendary world of King Arthur, the legacy of the Norman conquest and the Cromwellian revolution.

Two of the sites are historical cathedral schools, their classrooms housed in the canonical buildings that lie snugly within the cathedral precincts. Beginning as chorister schools, both had grown by the fifteenth century into liberal arts or grammar schools to train cathedral and regional clergy as well as the sons of the local gentry (Colchester, 1985; Whiting, 1990). From a roster of 20 boys at their inception and curricula devoted to the liberal arts (which during the Medieval period consisted of the classical trivium—rhetoric, logic and grammar, and the quadrivium—

astronomy, geometry, arithmetic and music), these once parochial schools have expanded to boast rosters of 700-800 girls and boys, programs that include a regular lecture series with visiting scholars, debating and philosophy quorums, annual festivals, curricula that adhere to the National Curriculum scheme, and standards commensurate with top-rated schools in Britain (with graduates often securing entry into the more prestigious post-secondary institutions, such as Cambridge and Oxford). While the broadening of school goals and raising of standards of achievement have helped to raise the status and profile of these schools, it is clear that the heart of both these schools is found in the inescapable ties to the past; the lessons taken in the oldest classrooms in Europe, the weekly school-wide assemblies in the naves and quires of the glorious cathedrals, the rugby games played on what was once the Bishop's private parkland, the rehearsals in the old theological college library, the transits to classes through the stonemason's paddock along the oldest street in Europe and via the main road which borders the cathedral precincts (and within which a refugee could once have taken sanctuary from secular law).

The third site of the study is a public or comprehensive school. Situated in a village of pre-classical gables, mullions, refurbished Georgian facades and Victorian frontages (tributes to the flourishing and lucrative cloth trade of the eighteenth and nineteenth century), the school's compound of modern storied buildings—situated on a steep hill overlooking the village and Avon River, atop a former Roman encampment and next to a Benedictine monastery—is clearly a twentieth century addendum to the community. Students arrive in the morning on foot and by city bus, the younger ones in haphazard uniform, the "fifth formers" in jeans, and coteries of students linger between classes in concrete causeways or migrate to areas where they can be with friends during spare blocks; library, lounge, music wing, home economic labs, cafeteria or mechanic shops. Numerous signs make it clear that we have entered a world that is markedly different from the other two examined, that is, the world of public, or state, schooling: casually

dressed staff wait alongside students in cafeteria line-ups, the areas beside office and counselling offices are dense with student traffic, notices outside the office announce an upcoming 'Battle of the Bands' and student-initiated benefits (a benefit fashion show for Romanian orphans and a dance for a local hospice), and a sign on the door next to the school office inform us that the name "headmaster" has been replaced with the less imperial title of "headteacher".

As a state school, St. Regis is governed by a local education authority and a board of governors that includes a representative of the local education authority and an elected parent representative. A budget of £2,500,000 provides for between £1,400-1,500 per student (considerably less than what their private school counterparts receive, either in the form of fees or through scholarship). School policy is both nationally and locally determined; regulations regarding curricula, exams, calendar are within the purview of the government while the school sets procedures and manages school and student affairs. While allegiance to a common governing body does give public schools a certain amount of similitude, the introduction of exams by *OFSTED* has highlighted the disparity between schools in terms of academic achievement of its students, and, due to the loosening of catchment area restrictions, has promoted a competitiveness akin to that associated with private schools. St. Regis students' high exam scores have resulted in greater demand for places in that school and, hence, more government funding. St. Regis, favourably situated, with a high proportion of students coming from higher socio-economic home environments, is faring well in the new market-driven era in British schools. The sixth form is particularly oversubscribed, attracting students who wish to transfer from other schools in the area in order to enrol in St. Regis's post-16 education program. The overwhelmingly positive ratings by parents concerning their children's satisfaction with the school, students' academic progress, the types and appropriateness of attitudes and values taught, the range of subjects taught (some of the offerings are Religious Studies, Environmental Science,

Psychology and General Studies, the latter addressing broad political, moral, ethical issues in modern culture), the help and guidance available and the openness of the community, are further evidence that St. Regis is a well positioned and effective educational institution.

Research Sites in Canada

Introduction: The Educational Setting in Canada

In Canada, education falls under the jurisdiction of each provincial government. In British Columbia (hereafter, "B.C."), an administrative body known as the Ministry of Education regulates school policy and practice and has done so since the inauguration of the first public school in B.C. in 1865. (see Endnote 4) All children aged 6-16 are required by law to attend school at a cost to the government and taxpayer of $6,526.00 (1999 figures) per year (private schooling accounts for only 5.6% of the province's K-12 student enrollment). Most students remain in school until ages 17 or 18 to earn a full high school diploma at the end of grade 12. Schools offer comprehensive programs, allowing high school students to develop interests, aptitudes, and skills in an increasingly broadening array of academic and technical areas: sciences, mathematics, the arts, technology, business, construction, forest management, history, culture, and the hospitality industry. For students who find the academic expectations of standard curriculum too rigid or demanding, alternate schools allow other means of meeting graduation requirements (for example, self-paced learning).

A number of investigations into B.C.'s education system over the past century have been made to ensure that school policy and practice are in step with social and technological changes in Canadian society. Notable among them have been the Putnam and Weir Survey in 1925, the Chant Commission in 1960 and the Sullivan Commission in 1988. The results of the latter were published in a report (with recommendations for change) known as *The Year 2000: A Framework*

Document, which laid the foundation for major revisions to B.C. curricula in the early 1990's. New curricula and assessment strategies, which began to be implemented in schools in 1994, represented a response to the perceived need to broaden and diversify the types of knowledge, skills and attitudes that would serve the individual in an increasingly global society. Providing opportunities to foster learners' intellectual development remains a central goal of the new curriculum framework, while the learners' human, social and career development remains the responsibility of family and community. In practice, this has meant an increase in the number of locally developed courses that allow students to explore alternative perspectives and skills (for example, women's studies, comparative civilizations, First Nations cultures, languages, film and media courses, jazz composition, photography) and opportunities that allow students to prepare for and explore the world of work (for example, career development and work experience). It has also meant a re-introduction of province-wide exams in all academic courses at the end of a student's grade 12 year, in order to encourage and enhance student achievement.

Reconfigured goals within the new curriculum documents also aim to broaden and deepen students' understandings of the nature and purpose of music in society, promoting the learner's awareness and understanding of the craft of music, the context in which it has been made, and the thoughts, feelings and images that can be expressed through it. However, other than recommending a mandatory arts course at grade 11 (Fine Arts 11), high school music programs in B.C. have retained their traditional roster of performance-based courses. Time-tabled courses in music at the grade 11 and 12 level are typically Choir 11/12, Band 11/12, and, depending on demand, Orchestra or Strings 11/12, Jazz Band, Jazz Choir and Composition 11/12. With the exception of Composition, the focus in these classes is to develop students' vocal or instrumental skills and to prepare them for school and public performances. Band and orchestra students typically must rent or buy their own instruments (excepting larger instruments, such as tuba or

double bass), and if they wish to take private lessons on an instrument, arrange for them on their own. B.C. high school music courses are accredited but as of yet not subject to provincial examination, hence the content of the courses and the way they are conducted and assessed varies widely across the province, dependent more on the individual teacher than on ministry recommended standards. Students who hope to explore music as a career are expected to supplement their school music training with private lessons on their instrument, and, if preparing for entrance to a university music program, with music theory and history. These types of courses are often offered at local music academies or can be done through correspondence with The Royal Conservatory of Toronto.

Description of The Canadian Sites

All three B.C. sites are well-established high schools clustered in an older and relatively affluent area of a large metropolitan city in that province. All three schools were built between 1912 and 1928 during a prosperous economic development period on the West Coast, their affluent catchment areas today a tribute to the success of the city's early settlers, pioneers, entrepreneurs and logging and land barons. Surrounded by neighbourhoods of garreted homes, maple-lined avenues and manicured gardens, each school enrols approximately 1,000 students between the ages of 13 and 18 from the families of the resident professional and business classes. While many of the students are descendants of the first wave of British immigrants in the early twentieth century, a good proportion (up to 50% in one school) are new Canadians; children of recent immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan. In addition to serving their surrounding catchment area, these schools attract students from across the city who want to participate in their prestigious academic, arts or sports programs.

Academic achievement in these schools is high; in fact, the whole metropolitan district is

known for its high standard of achievement. In this school district's annual report (1995), we learn that grade 12 students in this district earn higher average exam scores in 12 of 14 subjects, compared to other grade 12 students in the province, and 75% of graduates enrol in post-secondary institutions (many of them earning scholarships to a number of large, eastern universities). Another recent (1998) study, conducted by a local business institute, rated the schools that participated in this study highly; on the basis of its performance on grade 12 provincial exams, two were tied for first as best of 260 public high schools in B.C. (Fraser Institute, cited in *The Vancouver Province,* 1999, p. 18). The three distinguished and thriving music programs featured in this study operate in this setting.

CHAPTER 5: AN INQUIRY INTO STUDENTS' CONCEPTIONS
OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSIC

I think therefore I am is a statement of an intellectual who underrates toothaches.
I feel therefore I am is a truth much more universally valid. (Kundera, 1991, p. 200)

Introduction to Participants

Conscious of my alienness and sensing that my presence may have been disquieting to

some (depending on whether the students viewed me as a brief diversion or a questionable

intrusion), I strove to make my incursions into the students' worlds discreet and undisruptive.

After I was introduced to the students and they were told the purpose of my presence in their

school, I retreated to the background, learning to inhabit places that offered unedited views of

student life: hallways, walkways, stairwells, libraries, cafeterias, parking lots and turnarounds,

auditoriums, balconies, gymnasiums, practice rooms, student lounges, school foyers, soccer field

stands and cathedral greens. Devoid of many of the constraints and expectations of the

classroom, these were disarming and liberating places. Sensing students' ease in these areas of

the school, I would often meet them in a quiet corner of the school library or the student lounge,

drifting outside, on occasion, to a spot graced by the warmth of the new spring sun. Our

conversations were intense and all-absorbing; students' obliviousness to calls from friends and

the flow of traffic around them was indicative of their engagement in the research process.

Resistant, even hesitant, attitudes were rare, as were evasive or terse responses to questions

posed. Rather, students appeared to appreciate having an opportunity to ruminate over the effects

music has had on their lives, and they responded positively, thoughtfully and generously to all of

my inquiries. While students may have profited from having a chance to unfurl their views on

music—many commented on how much they enjoyed being involved in a research process that

allowed them the latitude to express their views and concerns (one student went so far as to rate

the interview as one of the musical highlights of his life)—it was clear that it was I who was far richer for the experience, gaining a tremendously heightened respect and appreciation for the complexity and singularity of the people who fill high school classrooms. Among the Canadian students are the disenfranchised. Like Sharine, transplanted from Hong Kong to Canada via London, a music drop-out, manoeuvring towards a career in psychology or sociology (perhaps, to help people reclaim their lives from the torpidity and insincerity of late twentieth century North American society). And Tom, a disciple of Ian Anderson (lead singer and flautist of the veteran rock group, Jethro Tull), who is privately so connected to music and convinced of its nourishing and healing properties that he sleeps with his flute under his bed, yet is publicly tormented with constant feelings of ineptitude about his own playing in band class. And Jessalyn, a passionate advocate of her school choir, who, by parent edict, will not be able to continue her choral involvement next year. She chokes back tears as she recollects her years immersed in choir and her ongoing battles with her parents to defend her devotion to it. And Jeremy, a native of Montreal, comfortable in Japanese, Chinese, French and English languages, who is often contracted by administrators to design software programs for the school. A self-taught musician, he tells me that his ability to detect microhertz deviations in pitch make school band concerts an ordeal. In another Canadian school in the study is Karen, an aspiring drummer, trumpet player and composer who is claimed by every school ensemble and is a key figure in the rock band she has formed. Her talent and versatility spill into every realm of music and art; she has just finished writing a love song for harp and pan-flute, and is about to publish one of her children's stories. A peer of Karen's is Aaron, more comfortable in the world of science fiction, Schöenberg and Arvö Part than in a world that supports rock musicians' "mindless quest for money."

Among the British students are Trent, whose single-minded devotion to life as an organ scholar is motivated as much by a desire for acceptance and approval as by a love of music, and

Abby, a flautist, among her ambitions a wish to pursue a life that is constantly creative and among her pet peeves the pedantry and conformity that the institutionalizing of music breeds. With them is Claire, on her way to becoming a concert violinist, who speaks candidly about the way she feels having to earn one's livelihood through playing and performing is anathema to the artistic spirit, and Rebecca, violist, singer, composer, the den mother of her school's music program en route to a career in classics (but for now smitten with music). Also Mike, who attributes his survival as a student to rigours and rewards of chorister training, and who shares with me the gratitude he still feels for the community of musicians that nurtured and inspired him, and Nigel, a clarinetist who considers his relationship with music to be a masochistic one, with his perceived inability to master it and to achieve recognition through it a constant source of torment and frustration to him. I am privileged also to meet Amos, a Canadian doing his final high school year in Britain who hopes to pursue a career as a recital artist in Britain where "it is easier to be musical", and Neil, son of a music teacher, who talks to me across the stack of keyboards, multi-track recorder, eight-track mixing board, computer screens and speakers in his home study, proudly displaying recordings he has made and edited of school choirs and performers (a service he has temporarily suspended due to his current dispute with the head of music at his school).

Their stories reveal the extraordinary depth of their relationship with music, the sacrifices they have made to honour and nurture it, the tensions it has fuelled, the thinking it has provoked, the growth it has induced. Their accounts are candid and without pretense; I am honoured to have been allowed ingress into their worlds, humbled by the weight of bearing witness to the worlds that have been opened and the testimonies entrusted to me. I feel beholden to honour that trust and offer their testimonies about the meaning of music to them with the hope that they will stir our complacent conceptions of the students that we teach, and enjoin us to act upon these new understandings.

The thoughts on the following pages ensue almost exclusively from individual interviews or conversations with students (written surveys and diaries, though useful in gathering biographical data on students and their thoughts on a variety of social issues, yielded information that was, in the end, less pertinent to the revised focus of the study). By "contextualizing" my conversations with them—ensuring that I somehow connected to the class previous or the rehearsal impending—I was able to guide students through a series of questions that built on their observable connections to music, i.e., their lives in music education; their music classes, the repertoire, their background in music and their aspirations for the future. Then I challenged them to reflect on the impact of those experiences; what made these experiences meaningful to them and sustained their interest in them as performers or listeners. From the stream of thought that ensued, I began to hear certain patterns emerge, patterns that suggested numerable reasons for music's significance. Most intriguing was that similar patterns were emerging with both British and Canadian students (though, due to the greater proportion of time that I was able to listen to the Canadian students, I have included more of the Canadian students' views). I present the "sorted" version of their words here, beginning with their thoughts about the nature of music and its capacity for meaning. Once terms for interpretation have been established, I will present what I perceive to be the significant "layers" of meaning of music to adolescents interviewed (i.e., music's felt connection to the material, the emotional and the spiritual). I will then unpack the second layer more completely as it appears to me to be the most meaningful, evoking links to students' personal and allegorical narratives.

'Reading' Music

In reflecting on the nature of music, many students felt one of its significant and most provocative qualities was that it offered them a certain freedom of interpretation:

Music is open to any interpretation; you don't need translators. (C)

With art you can go, "says who?" because it gives freedom to individuals to think, feel, act how they want; it's a rebellious thing. Music is left up to the individual. The individual can say, "This is what the song means." (C)

With speech, it's "I'm in your face and telling you." With art, it's "I'm in your face, and I'm expressing how I'm feeling." One is imposing your point of view on somebody, the other is more interactive and like a dialogue; it allows your involvement, interpretation. So much of art is the audience. (C)

In music, you hope people will understand you. It's easier to manipulate people with words than with sounds. There must be something else with a greater direct force—some kind of propaganda—to make music represent anything in particular. (C)

I don't like the way everyone does the commentating for us. It should be up to us to interpret the groups and their music. (B)

I like R.E.M. because their lyrics are vague and enigmatic. It permits the writer's, the performer's and the listener's interpretation. All these dimensions coming together is like trigonometry. (C)

If one was to apply the terminology of semiotics (such as that of Nattiez, 1990) to students' interpretive remarks, one could say that, to these students, music is an ambiguous sign, resisting reducibility to a knowable, univocal translation. Expressed most simply by one student: "Music is a mystery." Sound and meaning (*signifier* and *signified* [Saussure 1959]) are perceived to be, at best, obliquely related, inviting a multiplicity of response and interpretation. More precise, clearer accountings of how music operated as a polysemic sign were given when students were probed to explore what distinguishes music from language as a text. Those who were posed this question were inclined to view language as a more restricted form of communication, where words are typically confined to one common, readily comprehensible meaning or connotation. Their effectiveness as communicative tools is due to their perceived unequivocality of meaning, that is, words convey more precisely what they are intended to convey:

With language, it's more, "that word means this." We know what emotions are to be attributed to each word, a sad poem virtually tells you to be sad. (C)

Language is much more restrictive, as words have only one connotation. Writing is a more easily accessible mode of communication. It is more forceful and can be shocking more quickly. (B)

With books you might argue over their meaning, but people can come to a basic agreement. They are less likely to do so with music as it is so open to interpretation. (C)

When you read poetry, you interpret the words; when you listen to music you don't have to interpret it, you have an instant feeling, immediate response to it. (B)

Words you have to understand, music you don't. I guess it's because everyone understands emotions. (C) (see Endnote 5)

Compared to language, then, many students felt that music's ambiguity of meaning makes it an unreliable messenger of meaning: "In music, you hope people will understand you". Hardly a handicap, however, it is precisely this non-denotative quality of music that students consider its greatest strength and appeal. While words are felt to be confined to one meaning or denotation, music is thought to have a more metaphorical quality, capable of simultaneously expressing and concealing the most profound of messages: "Music lets you get away with being poetic. It allows you to deal with an issue at a distance—you don't have to talk about it face to face." Here is a language that can endorse sentiment because of its very ability to elude it. Thwarting a final reading of the meanings evoked, the musicians' cards remain in hand, the play can continue and, hopefully, never reach a conclusive ending. It is as if music honours a need *not* to know, to reach for the realm of possibility and conjecture rather than settle for definitive certainties. When one student suggests that, "Music leads you not to answers but to more questions. It is a means to an end, not really an end.....an infinite end?", he is alluding to the capacity of music to incite wonder and possibility.

Subsequent exploration of what music, then, did mean, had some students countering the problem of the signification of music head-on, and attempting to link it to a definable signifier. Others resisted the notion that music was indeed predicable or questioned whether efforts to determine music's meaning were essential to the musical experience:

> Music moves you without even really having to understand it. There is no right or wrong, it's just a way of expressing feelings. (B)

> Music moves you no matter what. Sure when you appreciate it more, it may have a greater effect but it is not fundamental to know the program. (B)

> A lot of music you don't have to listen to, just hear it. (C)

> Music can affect you without you being conscious of it; you don't have to understand it. (B)

> For those who don't understand music, what do they enjoy? Perhaps the rhythm because it suggests security, energy; it's ongoing, forever, infinite. People enjoy mimicking the patterns, the sounds. It gives them instant gratification (and one reason why karaoke is so popular). (C)

I was intrigued by the recurrent refrain in these students' responses; "You don't have to understand music to enjoy it or to appreciate it." I found such statements mildly off-putting at first, for were they not devaluing the discipline of the artform and disparaging the people that work with it by suggesting that thinking is superfluous to the appreciation of music? I soon began to realize, though, that the students were in fact grappling with how to express what they clearly felt was the primary appeal of music: its emotional content. Obviating cognitive involvement was just the most humble way to pay tribute to that which they felt to be of prior importance: an emotional connection to music. When they said, "You don't have to understand music," they were actually saying, "you *can't* understand music," because music was merely emotion in disguise, and how can one possibly interpret the language of feeling? Such a language does not yield itself easily to critical analysis. But if understanding can mean "gaining an

empathy with, showing harmony in opinion or feeling, becoming sympathetically aware of"

(Pearsall, 1996), is this not precisely what one does when one responds to the expressive import

of a piece of music, as these students appeared to do? Is not understanding a musician's work a

matter, in part, of entering into sympathy with the expressive impetus behind a work and

responding in kind? As stated most trenchantly by the student who said, "Words you have to

understand, but music you don't because everyone understands emotions," a mindfulness of the

importance of this dimension of music, as subsequent testimony will bear out, must be brought

into discussions about the meaning of music to adolescents.

While most students tended to view music as a relatively unproblematic universal,

characterized by its capacity to be quaquaversal in meaning, hence accessible to all in some

capacity, an occasional addendum to the response, "you don't have to understand music to enjoy it,"

was the qualifier "but it helps." For those students who did tend to view music in a more pluralistic

way, different forms and musical cultures were considered to be deserving of different interpretive

stances. Certain forms of music, because of their seriousness or embeddedness in an unfamiliar

context or code, benefited from more effort and education on behalf of the player and listener:

> Classical music has much more subtlety to its expression. You don't understand it
> if you don't have experience in it. (B)

> Classical music is an elite music. It has its own exegesis so you have to find out
> about its background. (B)

> Classical music you have to go out of your way to learn. Pop music is much more
> accessible. (B)

> Serious music often requires a deeper understanding and interpretation, and
> people are so stressed today they can't take the time to learn how to enjoy it; it's
> too much of a chore. (C)

> Whenever we play classical music you really have to stop and think about the
> music that we are playing in order to interpret it. (C)

Even if one had more familiarity with the expressive genesis of a work, that alone was enough to make the listening or playing experience of less familiar forms of music more meaningful, as attested to by these students:

> When our band did a modern piece called "Dante's Inferno", most of the students didn't get into it because they weren't aware of the picture they were creating or the quality of what they were playing. We didn't know how this theme of hell was central to Medieval mentality. To us, we don't get up every morning and think first off "I'm going to go to hell"—it doesn't have a lot of meaning to us now. But if we understood that it did have meaning to Dante, that big literary life themes were significant to people then, I think it would have made a lot of difference to our playing. (C)

> I really want to get Nigel Kennedy's version of "The Four Seasons". He tried to bring out Vivaldi's own feelings about the seasons—apparently he had a lot of allergies and summer was hell to him, so he portrayed the violent side of summer. Fall, on the other hand, was somehow hallucinogenic to him. (C)

For some, then, the construction of music's meaning was not entirely left up to the individual listener, but was also given definition by composer, performer and context. These students saw the relationship of composer, performer and listener to be, as one student put it, "a symbiotic or 'trigonometrical' one"; while not necessary to know the composer's intent and performer's interpretation, included with one's own, it could enrich the listening experience. Or simply increase one's listening options: "I'll try to interpret music their way, and then I'll interpret it my way."

Just as some students felt an unfamiliar era of music profited from some preparatory study, so would a certain amount of pre-knowledge aid explorations with the musical traditions of other cultures. In one school, where students were studying music of South-East Asia, many felt that if North Americans and Europeans weren't given some guidance into the expressive intent, cultural context and function of, say, Balinese gamelan music, then the experience would be virtually bereft of meaning: "I feel it is offensive (to Balinese people) to play the gamelan if you don't

know it. Playing it, without knowledge of its cultural meaning, is fun for the first hour, then it gets boring and repetitive, like banging on pots and pans."

Allusion to the cultural specificity of music was, on the whole, comparatively rare, however. While present in these remarks: "Music has different meanings—we create the environment that determines what music means"; "Music is always related to a culture of some sort, whether it be a black culture, drug culture...."; "It helps to define the type of person you are," further exploration of how more familiar forms of music, such as pop music may be cultural constructions too, and consideration of how the messages and meanings of pop music may be circumscribed by the media culture that generates and consumes it, was absent from student interpolations (perhaps understandable, given the difficulty of objectifying the commonplace). If certain art and world musics required a particular type of preparation to enjoy fully, it was assumed that most people "understood" pop music, either because you could intuit the composer's intention (because it was embedded in a familiar enough language) or because it offered a wide field for interpretation. Few considered that this music, due to cultural conditioning, may not have the scope of meaning that one wanted to believe (The only claims that the aperture between the sound and symbol in pop music may not be as open as popularly believed were made by two British students who asserted that rock and roll was all about "male drive" and who claimed "there has to be a rawness to it." They felt that current attempts to wed it with sentimentality—as was the case with the "Save the World" lyrics common to the 70s and 80s—were antithetical to the nature and function of rock and roll).

Student responses, which largely support the idea that music is a transmutable symbol, capable of assuming many roles and meanings, and hence too unruly for semiotic analysis, find resonance in the thinking of most semioticians and music theorists today. Recall the positions of Shepherd (1993) and Nattiez (1990), cited previously. They concur that music, as a non-

representational artform does not, cannot, convey encodable ideas and hence eludes a semiotic analysis. Other theorists and composers have implied through their comments that a semiotic approach to music may not just be difficult, but is actually inappropriate or irrelevant. For example, Debussy spoke of how the unmediated response remains primary to the experiencing of music: "Music should procure for us immediate pleasure and either impose or insulate itself on us without our having to make any effort to understand it" (cited in Cook, p. 165). Copland, too, described what he felt to be the vitally important pre-reflective experiencing of music:

> We all listen on an elemental plane of musical consciousness—we respond to music from a primal and almost brutish level—dumbly, as it were, for on that level we are firmly grounded—and all the analytical, historical, textual material on or about the music heard, interesting though it may be, cannot, and I venture to say, should not alter that fundamental relationship. (1961, p. 13-14)

Like the students who stressed that one does not have to understand music to enjoy it, these theorists urge us to reconsider what is important to the listening experience, perhaps by repositioning our views on what the understanding of music really entails. Scruton, by pointing out that since music is not representational (even when it is labelled "program music" or bears a title which may guide the reading, such as "La Mer" by Debussy), makes the claim, "If there is anything that you have to hear in music, in order to hear with understanding, then it is the expression" (1997, p. 131). The intuiting of this expressive meaning of music is no trivial accomplishment; it is tantamount, Scruton believes, to experiencing music as an aesthetic symbol and attaching value to music. More radically still, Barthes (1977) asserted that one must recant any attempts to lay claim to what music means. Instead, he asserted, we should recognize that one of music's most pleasurable aspects may be that it defies complete understanding, that even our most rigorous examinations will fail to uncover all. Barthes termed the apparently ambiguous nature of music its *jouissance*, or the playfulness that it induces by its spurning of certainty and

finitude. Beguiled by its inscrutability, we keep searching for the answer, the meaning, the truth, and we remain happily enveloped in the experience, grateful that for the time being, the game may go unconsummated and our quest unresolved. Music, as a signifier, outplays meaning and the desire for meaning and compels us to dwell in unnamed spaces.

For these theorists and students, then, the interpretation of music is vague and largely undefined, involving signifiers acting primarily as connotative symbols. While some students are aware that the meaning of a particular form of music can be circumscribed by a composer's intentions, conventional exegeses, or normative ways of responding, most focus more on music's availability to individual constructions of meaning. Indeed, the common response that one doesn't have to understand music to enjoy it (i.e., you don't have to understand music's *intended* meaning) reflects their belief that possible denoted meanings of music are relatively insignificant to the individual meaning-making process. More important to them are the ambiguity and the intriguing spaces of indeterminacy between what is performed and what is heard in music, the qualities that allow them the freedom to add their own voice to the making of the text. Recall the importance of this dimension to the transaction that takes place between readers and texts, according to proponents of reader response theory. Listen to how Iser's views on the value of an 'element of indeterminacy' in literary texts lends support to students' views about the importance of this quality in musical texts:

> It is the element of indeterminacy that evoke the text to "communication" with the reader, in the sense that they induce him to participate both in the production and the comprehension of this work's intention. (1978, p. 61)

> Texts with minimal indeterminacy tend to be tedious, for it is only when the reader is given the chance to participate actively that he will regard the text, whose intention he himself has helped to compose, as real. We generally tend to regard things that we have made ourselves as real. (1989, p. 28)

Like the "writerly text" (argued by Barthes [1970] to be a text with no foreclosed meaning), the ambiguity and indeterminacy of some music resists an easy decoding and initiates a "performance of meaning" (Bruner, 1986, p. 25) among its participants. The question that awaits to be answered now is, how do adolescents fill the spaces of indeterminacy in their listening to (i.e., their 'reading' of) music? What are their "performances of meaning" with a musical text; what are the subjective and critical processes involved in the poetics of listening and making music? Given music's particular ineffectiveness as a conveyor of information or communicative tool, what do they consider its function to be? What particular mode of knowing and being in this world does music offer? I return to those conversations with students that helped me to construct a closer understanding of how these adolescents make music meaningful.

The Student Aesthetic: What Makes Music Meaningful?

Prepared for a plethora of perspectives and responses, I was surprised at the remarkable consistency in British and Canadian students' responses to questions surrounding the significance of music, or what makes music meaningful. Common to their thinking was a belief that music's meaning lies in 1) its materiality (its power to arrest the senses), 2) its emotionality (its effectiveness as a medium for the expression of emotion), and 3) its spiritual evocativeness (its power to deepen and transfigure one's understanding of life). Underlying all responses was the perception that music's value and power lay in its ability to offer up a new reality, one which is far more physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually engaging and affirming. The palpability and visceral appeal of the textures, timbres and ambience of music's sounds, the fact that these sounds largely serve expressive purposes and are dependent on communities of people for their production gives music an intensity unmatched by other media, and imbues it with a force that is both immediately compelling and profoundly enduring. A further explication of each of these

qualities, in light of theories that support the students' views, follows.

1. Meaning in Music: Its Materiality

The following comments testify to students' belief in the power of music to awaken and

fasten our attention:

> The arts, including music, are a more effective way to get something across
> because they use a lot of different senses. When you watch and listen to it, more
> of my [sic] senses are being used; I'm absorbed in it with my whole being, my
> whole body. (C)

> Music pulls something really deep in your soul; it has a natural link with the
> senses. (B)

> Music is a more intense way of living. It requires more concentration, thus erasing
> your mind of other things. (C)

> When someone is speaking, you don't listen to it entirely, but when it [sic] is
> sung, you have to be there, focused throughout. (C)

> Music is a lot easier than speech, not just at the head level where things have a
> tendency to go in one ear and out the other. Music automatically makes things go
> deeper. For instance, Jethro Tull's "The Christmas Song" gets a message across so
> much stronger than if we were just to listen to someone tell us about the 'so-
> called' Christmas story. (C)

> Music leaves a real impression, you think it out more than speech. Speech doesn't
> capture you, it has a different mood. Music vibrates molecules and atoms into
> patterns; it connects things. (C)

> Music creates a story faster, and you feel closer to the people making it. (B)

> Why go to Miss Saigon when you can read a history text about the Vietnam War?
> It's a catharsis, it requires an intense focusing of mind and emotions. Music helps
> you contemplate more and get in touch with yourself. (C)

To these students, because of the felt multi-dimensionality of the expression and experience

involved in it, music is seen to possess a vibrancy that compels attention and provokes response.

The perceived ability of music, as a medium, to "make things go deeper," "to create a story

faster," "to arrest one's senses," "to absorb one's whole being and body," "to create a real impression," "to focus mind and emotion," that is, the notion that music possesses an inordinate intensity, has been the subject of much conjecture in the fields of aesthetics and human development. Neitzsche felt that the role of the senses in the artistic experience was so important that he saw aesthetics as nothing but applied physiology (1956). Dufrenne, in *Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience,* felt that a perception of the aesthetic object's rootedness in its 'abundant sensuousness'—its 'being-in-itself' (the quality that gives its defining form and appearance)—is the first stage in the aesthetic experiencing of art (1973). Mukarovsky (1977), in struggling to define what accounted for the universal and timeless appeal of certain aesthetic objects and artifacts, proposed that it was art's materiality or its 'sensorily perceptible substratum' that remained stable and evocative over time and across cultures. It was perhaps Barthes (1977) who theorized most completely music's sensory appeal (what he termed the 'aesthetic of pleasure'), suggesting that it is our own materiality that allows us to respond to the tactile/palpable depth and dimensionality of art. He held that the most compelling aspect of the artistic act was what he called 'the erotic,' which to him was the very point where the voice encounters language, where colour departs from nature, where an image colludes with sound, that is, the point where *significance* defies description, its very voluptuousness making its meaning obtuse and impertinent. Recall Kristeva, to whom these points are the fissures in the *symbolic order* that give us glimpses into the pleasure of our original bodily attachment to the world, as embodied through a fusion with the maternal, or *semiotic* (1984). Our longing to re-identify with the *semiotic* world, when one enjoyed unity with the imaginary wholeness of the preoedipal state, gives special status and import to expressions such as music. Merleau-Ponty as well felt that the body was a primary interpretive catalyst of one's world: "The spatiality of the perceived world is a reply to the body's dimensions" (1962, p. 370). He asserted the primacy of art in legitimizing

and making synchronous one's connection to the world by providing us with a field of symbols for contact with the world. Like Kristeva, he felt that the gestural sense of poetic language was indicative of a deep correlation between word and thing, subject and world, that relationships were not arbitrarily conventional or rhetorical but inextricably linked and co-defining. More deeply, Shepherd sees the sensuous palpability of the artform as an embodiment of a deeper subjective reality in which we are all implicated: "It is the timbre, the texture, the grain and the tactile quality of sound that speaks to the core of existence. It speaks to the central nexus of experience that ultimately constitutes us all as individuals" (1991, p. 172).

Perhaps most illuminative of why these adolescents find music a particular potent stimuli is the thesis concerning human development put forth by Egan (1988), and described in chapter two of this document. Egan proposes that one's orientation to the world is profoundly influenced by a mytho-poetic, primary understanding of things that one develops in childhood, an understanding that is profoundly attuned to the dynamic dimensions of one's oral/aural and sensory environment. He suggests that the types of understandings, expressions and forms that children use in order to participate effectively and negotiate in the culture and cosmos in which they live still exert a profound influence on the way adolescents engage with and make sense of their world. Researcher Willis agrees:

> The young need to be seen as already, in some sense, artists of their own lives; they are already engaged in imaginative, expressive and decorative activities.....decoration of bedrooms; personal styles and choice of clothes; selective and active use of music, TV, magazines; the rituals of romance and subcultural styles as well as general styles and attitudes developed in friendship groups and leisure; the widespread informal and local interest in music making and dance. (cited in Giroux & Simon, 1989, p. 132)

Indeed, music's role in the maintenance of one's connection to a primary understanding of the world is vital to the adolescent. It is the medium that imbues life with a certain wonder, awe

and magic, that gives an imaginative impulse to life, and that enlivens, enriches and enlarges it. In describing the types of music the students in this study enjoyed the most, those works that immediately arrested the listener with their spaciousness of sound, dynamic timbres and textures (e.g., Mahler, Holst, Tchaikovsky) were commonly reported to be the most impactful. Indeed, unless they are furnished with the sound, images, and movement that can evoke worlds beyond the given and the ordinary, messages are destined to go unheard—to 'go in one ear and out the other'—for these adolescent listeners. It seems that without the leavening influence of music and the imaginative impulse that music provides, life would go unpossessed for many of them. As one student claimed, "Without music, everything would be just blocks and squares; there would be no room for circles. We'd walk around in a monotonic, monochromatic world and wouldn't have much expression in our voices and our minds would be dull and bored," and another: "Without music, there would be a great absence, silence, void. Nothingness."

2. Meaning in Music: Its Emotionality

Beyond the ability to seize the senses and transport the imagination, what appears to be central to the power and memorability of music is its ability to engage the participant emotionally. As one student cautioned: "At first, any art is sensual, but just because it's beautiful doesn't mean it's right. Like after any seduction there is a wake-up period; there must be something more substantial after it for it to mean something." There was much evidence that it was those experiences that were both physically and *emotionally* involving that students found to be the most substantive. Far from being evanescent, these experiences penetrated the consciousness and lingered long in the lives of the listeners. For some, they were life changing; for most, music simply revealed the actual salience of human emotion and desire to the human experience and pointed up how critical it is that emotion and desire be expressed and nourished:

Music allows us a connection to emotion (something Math can't do). It is challenging to the soul and emotions. (C)

The purpose of music is to display emotions, to tell someone how you're feeling, to reveal yourself in some way. Art shows more emotion; music makes you feel what you're feeling. (C)

Music is a way of expressing feeling. There is no right or wrong. (B)

With music, you don't have to be mad to write it or listen to it, but to think about the emotion. (C)

Music is a personification of an emotional interchange between people. (B)

Music is a way of unlocking expressiveness. (B)

Music is all about emotion (but the English fail to see it that way). (B)

Music is an outlet of expression for performers. (B)

Music is tribal, emotionally involving, and has religious significance. It is a form of self-expression and release for the listener as well. You can romanticize via music. (B)

Music is an expression of self, an expression of a huge range of emotions to a depth that you couldn't put into words. (B)

Music makes you feel certain ways, and I don't mind being manipulated like that. (C)

Music evokes emotions, images, and stimulates the imagination. (B)

Music and emotion are in an unconscious relationship. (B)

Music is the moment of feeling when the sound is passed from player to listener. (C)

Music is the most direct way to communicate from and to the heart. (C)

When you're feeling strong emotions, song seems to be the best medium. (B)

Music is for the purpose of having one reflect on what one is feeling. It amplifies emotion in the listener and writer as well. (B)

The purpose of music is to record how people feel at each time in history for other generations to know. (C)

Music doesn't exist just for itself or because of itself. It exists because of us, because of emotions the writer is having and trying to connect with other people. (C)

Music allows you to get more into your emotions and teaches you how to express them. (C)

Writers and composers seem to have ESP. They seem to be expressing what you are feeling. Writers do that too, but with music you don't have to do any thinking; it's more about expression. (C)

Art causes us to look at ourselves, to look at what's happening and you discover that you're not alone when you create; emotions you portray are similar to what everyone portrays. (C)

I love Tchaikovsky. He had such anguish in his life and you can feel that. You feel connected to artists via their emotions. (C)

Music is a symbol for attitude, for the way you feel. (C)

A defining feature of music, to these students, is its expressive intent and its emotional force; the degree to which this emotional force connects with its listeners is the consummative measure of its value. When respondents were asked to complete the statement, "music is _____" or invent another name for music, the most common response was "emotion" or "expression." The question, "What makes a person musical?" was answered magnanimously: "Everyone is capable of being musical because everyone has emotions." The most common cited reason for liking certain musics was that it moved them; if it didn't, then what was the point of it? If music's genesis is self-expression, its culmination is the visceral connection made with its listeners to share in the same emotion. Music that they felt did not communicate with an audience was simply dismissed or treated with disdain ("it doesn't matter how profound the lyrics or the message is if it isn't emotionally connecting with the listener in terms of the sound").

When pressed to elucidate what might be unique about the type of expressivity music

permitted, a frequent response was that music provided a platform for the expression of powerfully felt but seldom expressed emotion. While some, particularly the British students, felt that music gave both player and listener a way to vent feelings (e.g., "music is an outlet of expression for the performer, just as a violent game of tennis is"), more common was the opinion that music provided an important opportunity for musicians and listeners to acknowledge strong emotions and reflect on similar conditions and feelings, if not exact predicaments and emotions (e.g. "You don't have to be mad to write it or listen to it, but to think about the emotion"). An outpouring of spontaneous personal self-expression does not guarantee connection with an audience, and this was the ultimate test of a musical endeavour. Implicit in student remarks such as "Music is the most direct way to communicate to and from the heart," is that the veracity of a musical work could be judged by its ability to connect with an audience. To do this, the act of writing or playing music needed to exceed personal self-expression. The student who said, "With speech, I'm in your face and I'm telling you, with music I'm expressing how I'm feeling" was seeking to make this point. In this view, without the interpretive space which is opened through the transmutative process of the creative act and which invites the audience to participate in that process, self-expression would be nothing more than another form of self-assertion. Furthermore, it is not just the listener who is changed by the experience. One student noted that the potential cathartic effect of music, for both artist and listener, is as much the result of artist and participating listener being able to *imagine* a profound depth of emotion as it was the experiencing of it themselves.

Students' passionate belief in the emotional core of music and its power—by virtue of our shared humanity—to affect and resonate with us all, has strong affinity with the aesthetic beliefs promulgated by philosophers and composers working within the German Romantic tradition in the late 19th century. Conjectures about music at that time centered around its superior ability to

express meanings "too precise for words" (Mendelssohn cited in Walker, p. 137), and to "present at one and the same time the intensity and expression of feeling" precisely because it was "the embodiment and intelligible essence of feeling" (Liszt cited in Walker, 1990, p. 137). Claims that it is the manifestation of an "Idea" or "Absolute Spirit" (Hegel, cited in Fubini, 1990), the manifestation or "objectification of the will" (Schopenhauer, 1818) , of "pure movement" and "the great driving forces in reality" (Schelling, 1809 cited in Fubini, 1990), are characteristic declarations of the Romanticists' view of music. To understand this level of expressivity in music, however, one had to relinquish personal subjectivity in order to become attuned to a deeper subjective reality that unites us all and is at the heart of artistic expression. Much like the students asserted, for the Romanticist, art could not directly represent emotions but could symbolize the form of feeling and its dynamic properties, and appreciation of this quality of music was best achieved through the intelligence of the imagination, not through pure emotional receptivity. Also in keeping with their Romantic antecedents, the notion of music's link with the transcendent, the idea that it could lift us from our materiality to reveal a self and reality that is absolute, changeless and universal, is salient to the students' aesthetic; what many called "its spiritual nature."

3. Meaning in Music: Its Spirituality

Many students commented that, due to the apparent alchemical forces at work in the creation and production of a musical work, music has the power not only to awaken but to transform, and the worlds evoked are often of a greater luminosity than what one is accustomed to in the everyday sense.

> There is a sense of miracle and marvel to music. Music goes beyond what people
> do and say in an everyday sense. There is a feeling of amazement attached to
> apprehending and being in the presence of musical sound. (C)

When music goes off, your old mood returns. Musical tone gets you into a different state, like a romantic plane of consciousness. (C)

Music gives life an extra-terrestriality. We don't like being earthbound and music makes us feel bigger, out in the cosmos. It has a spiritual nature. (C)

The notion that the intentional processes of the creative act had the power both to illuminate and to transform life (an idea shared by many of the students in this study), has been the subject of much musing and philosophical conjecture. Liszt wrote that music is the greatest art form because of its power to draw us into "regions which alone it can penetrate, where in the ringing ether, the heart expands and shares in the immaterial, incorporeal, spiritual life" (cited in Walker, 1990, p. 137). Eighty years later, in North America, Dewey was echoing the Romantic sentiment in his claim that the true aesthetic experience was a transcendental one.

> A work of art elicits and accentuates this quality of being a whole and of belonging to the larger, all-inclusive whole which is the universe in which we live. This fact, I think, is the explanation of that feeling of exquisite intelligibility and clarity we have in the presence of an object that is experienced with aesthetic intensity. It explains also the religious feeling that accompanies intense aesthetic perception. We are, as it were, introduced into a world beyond this world which is nevertheless the deeper reality of the world in which we live in our ordinary experiences. (1934, p. 54)

In order that art have the illuminative power to uplift and transform, subsequent theorists have spoken of the importance of "the tyranny of form" or "aesthetic differentiation". Marcuse made this point in 1977.

> Art is committed to that perception of the world which alienates individuals from their functional existence and performance in society—it is committed to an emancipation of sensibility, imagination, and reason in all spheres of subjectivity and objectivity. The aesthetic transformation becomes a vehicle of recognition and indictment. But this achievement presupposes a degree of autonomy which withdraws art from the mystifying power of the given and frees it for the expression of its own truth. Inasmuch as man and nature are constituted by an unfree society, their repressed and distorted potentialities can be represented only in an estranging form. The world of art is that of another 'reality principle', of

estrangement, and only as estrangement does art fulfill a cognitive function; it communicates truths not communicable in any other language; it contradicts. (p. 13)

We can see how Marcuse's portrait of art as a voice of resistance against the normal and the banal is consistent with the perceptions described by the students in this study, though they would likely be much more reluctant to embrace Marcuse's view that it is the alienating force in art which emancipates. For them, the dissidence is staged at the heart of one's life, not for the purposes of relinquishing reality—like the world-weary metaphysicists—but for the purpose of drawing oneself deeper into what Marcuse had called "a world more real than reality itself." (1977, p. 15) The statement made by one student, "Art isn't about pretending, it's about being," encapsulates a fervent belief in art's embeddedness in the concrete and corporeal strata of lived experience. Like Grumet's belief that "the ruminant does not need to give up the world in order to think about it" (1988, p. 132), for many students, the lives of the situationally lived are no longer seen as an impediment to experiencing art, but indeed is a means to understanding it. Students spoke of encounters with art as heightening, expanding or deepening consciousness. One student mentioned that her involvement in music "made her question more", another spoke of being nurtured, of "returning home" when he listened to music. Concerning the latter, one might speculate that art has awakened in him a presentiment of what Dufrenne (1973) referred to as the *a priori* or virtual structures of reality, those that belong to the pre-objective, primordial realm of being, or what McCann (1993) refers to as the "phenomenology of origins" where parameters of time-world-body-feeling are integrated in one larger being. The type of consciousness is aligned with the phenomenological theory of *intentionality*, where the boundaries between knower and known, subject and object are exchanged for a more fluid understanding of things. It is this consciousness that allows the same student to move dialectically from "we are created for music" to "music exists because of us." These statements

are not contradictory but complementary, bridging knower-known, subject/object through a presumption that nothing precedes another, nothing is independent of another, each co-determines the other. It is an embracing and humble stance.

Students' intensely subjective points of view essentially demarcate the parameters and the heart of their aesthetic. Views that are more formalist in nature, i.e., that the ideas a composer expresses are mainly and primarily of a musical nature and that the sounds of music mean only themselves, breach those parameters. While many students feel the meaning of music may inhere in part in the symbolic or metaphorical form, they feel the significance of this aspect of music is realized through emotional and imaginative receptivity rather than through an attitude of 'disinterested' or intellectual appreciation. To them, this latter stance fails to help the player and listener establish a relationship with music and is hence of little value. Intellectualism is associated with sterility, disconnection, alienation, even a desertion of one's response-ability as a human being, hence it is considered relatively unsuitable for understanding what makes music meaningful. Listen to the range of positions these music students have voiced on this issue, beginning with comments that assert their decidedly subjective point of view:

> A lot of music you don't have to listen to, just hear it. (C)

> When you listen to music, you don't have to interpret it. You have an immediate response, an instant feeling. (B)

> Music can affect you without your being conscious of it; you just absorb it. You can't do much about our responses to music, they're more unconscious. (B)

> Music moves you without you even really having to understand it. (B)

> Lyrics in music do not concern me. (B)

> I don't like the abstract, intellectual part of the subject. I think analysis causes music to lose its former magic. (B)

I don't like it when music learning gets too technical, like what is necessary to learn to play an instrument. (C)

Music education's goals are too narrow-minded. Music is meant to be enjoyed. So much of what they teach you, like history, is boring. (C)

Given that these were responses given by students who had spent a better part of a lifetime studying music as an academic discipline, it was somewhat surprising that their education seemed to have no bearing on how they were listening and responding to music. Why were they advocates of this position, one which seemed to be championing a 'reasonless' response to music? Were they 'trying on' the anti-intellectualism that was currently *de rigueur* in popular culture? Were they weary of the tedium of their schooling and trying to recapture what were the incipient joys of music making, ones that had led to their pursuit of music in the first place? Were they saying what they thought I wanted to hear, or, given our time constraints and their end-of-the-year enervation, was it just the easiest answer to formulate? Fortunately, opportunities to engage the students in live listening response sessions were available to me during the process of the research, and they proved to be extremely helpful in answering these questions. The processes and priorities at work when students educated in music listen to a piece of music for the first time warrants closer reporting and examination.

The Poetics of Listening

Six brief (20-30 minutes each) listener response sessions with small groups of student respondents (two to nine students) were conducted in Britain and Canada. In total, I collected responses from 20 listener response session participants in England and 22 in Canada. During these sessions, I had respondents listen to two contrasting pieces of music; one a jazz styling of a medieval motet (Christobal de Morales's "Parce Mihi Domine") sung by the Hilliard ensemble with saxophonist Jan Gabarek, and the other a piece entitled "Renaissance Man" written and

played by the Australian rock band, Midnight Oil. Before playing these pieces to the students, I asked them to listen to the pieces of music and write down what they were hearing, thinking, and feeling. After listening to each work in its entirety, I asked students to share their impressions of it in a small group, with one person in each group recording each student's responses. After reporting on these to the entire group, we worked to see whether students' responses could be classified into Shrofel and Browne's proposed Categories of Listening Responses (1994b) (see Table 2). While there were differences between groups of students and between schools, British students' responses clustered more often around descriptions of sound, what musicians were doing and their evaluations of that sound; comments about the emotional quality and effect aroused in the listener, including the evocation of particular images or associations, were rare. Many of the Canadian students, on the other hand, did offer comments on how the music affected them, and the images or associations it evoked. Their evaluation of the music and musicians centered on their personal critical and emotional response to the music with comparatively few responses (none in some groups) concerning the possible historical or cultural purposes of the music.

At first glance, one might infer that these results indicate significant cultural differences in the way British and Canadian students listen to music. The British might seem to have maintained a 'disinterested' posture, subjugating personal feelings in order to focus on the textual, objective aspect of the experience, while Canadian students listened for the subjective effect of the experience, motivated by personal rather than musical interest. Data for this study alone would indicate this as a plausible difference, worthy of further inquiry (perhaps features of each cultural and educational system may have contributed to the students' apparently differing ways of filtering information). However, the particular sequence of events and the outcome of one listening response session prompted me to consider other reasons for British and Canadian

students' differing listening styles.

This particular listening session, held over a lunch hour at one of the participating Canadian schools with six participants who were all part of the school music program, was characterized by a higher level of attention and enthusiasm than the other five listening response sessions. After the students listened to the Hilliard Ensemble and Jan Gaborak's treatment of "Parce Mihi Domine", a lively discussion ensued, with individual comments centering on the images, associations and feelings evoked by the piece of music. Their comments were eloquently descriptive and imaginative.

> I feel like there is something so much bigger than me. The sax interrupts it a bit; it's too urgent but when it lapses, I can feel myself falling into a safe, protected serenity. Music is so powerful...it can bring me down to earth and into myself in a moment, or it allows me to escape to heaven (or to Italy, which is the same thing). I wish I could play the sax like that. It's really grabbing.

> There is an alto sax and a men's chorus. The sax is doing an alternate rhythm and melody with dominant voices in harmonic chords. Sad sounding. Huge dynamics, sort of like crying, wailing, pleading, a lot of movement. It seems to be angry at times as well. The vibrato gives the impression of crying in the sax. The full chord underneath gives the piece a full sound. The choir's movement reminds me of monks.

> A cathedral, sunset, candles, Kenny G, the end, tears. It makes me feel like I'm watching the end of a movie, or like I'm leaving a place and going to a new one.

> Peaceful, relaxing, beautiful, kind of melancholy. Very pretty vocal harmony. Sax is very loud. Quiet, calm vocal harmonies are punctuated by tasteful, if not somewhat loud, sax phrases. It could be another instrument, I'm not sure. "Crossing the bar", facing death courageously....

> Reminds me of people singing, screaming on a hill in the fog. Sort of happy at first, with people 'speaking' out in melody. Speaks of possibility/hope. Increasing tensions. I see hunters from the 1600's coming home from a battle and the wives are the crying voice of the sax. A feather blowing in the wind.

> I feel that this piece is quite contemporary. However, it makes use of very early harmonic modes and instrumentation, excluding the soprano saxophone. This

piece is very tranquil but employs a very dramatic sax line that is juxtaposed against the calm vocal core. I feel this piece is very cinema-like.

Together the students at this listening session presented an image where an inner calm is beset by an inexorable agitation, such as facing death courageously, leaving home and starting anew or the return of heroic hunters. Surprised that all students, with only one exception, reported on what they perceived to be the affective disposition of the music, I asked them to listen to the music again, this time concentrating on its lyrics and structural aspects. They complied.

The sax articulation starts with more tonguing and moves to a lighter sound...the sax line moves along with the vocal line, as if it were carried, then it steps out. The tone is beautiful. The dynamics of the choir changed very little.

The chorus starts simple [sic] and then the voices diverge into more parts. The sax starts by following the phrases that the chorus do. It sounds as if it is in Latin. The dynamics stay pretty constant in the vocal part, yet there are definite phrases. There are huge dynamic ranges in the sax line.

Sounds like a church choir. It seems like an attempt to blend choir with saxophone where at different points one of the two will become dominant and then fade away.

There are swelling vocal chords, chorale style. The sax darts in, then fades and slows. There are very large dynamic contrasts towards the end of the piece.

There is a slow, soft harmony between the singers and the sax, and increasing volume and complexity of melody until the sax starts to take over. Singers also become more intense as the piece grows.

As mentioned before, this piece employs an early music harmonic style. There is very little use of appoggiaturas or any other non-chord notes in the vocal line. Every extended phrase ends without tertial harmony.

When asked why they had needed prompting to shift their attention to the musical and lyrical aspect of the work, one student impatiently informed me that, "No one listens to music initially with that in mind!" What he was implying was that, even for the musically minded, the aesthetic totality of a work, and the listener's apprehension of this totality is of prior significance to what

the composer and performers were doing to create this effect.

Other researchers have reported similar listening tendencies among their subjects. Cook (1990), in his studies, found that "people who can follow a piece in technical terms do not choose to exercise this knowledge unless they have some particular reason for doing so or are specifically asked" (p. 3). I found this to be borne out in the ways in which students attended to and made meaning from their listening experiences; when undirected, students would listen for the overall affect of the music. When they were more familiar with a piece of music, or were directed specifically to focus on some aspect of what they heard, students would shift their attention to various aspects of the creation, production and performance of a work. For example, in listening to a work for the first time ("Renaissance Man" by Midnight Oil), and finding themselves frustrated by their inability to get 'inside' the sound (i.e., garner a sense of the sound in its entirety), students' responses toward the work were overwhelmingly negative. They reported that it was a "difficult work to access," perhaps because its harsh wall of *fortissimo* sound, repetitive pumping bass and drum parts and *sprechstimme* vocal parts prevented the neophyte listener from taking any more than a superficial interest in what the band was doing and attempting to say. Even when asked to take note of how unusual the lyrics are for a rock song and to consider how Midnight Oil might be trying to portray the relevance of a Renaissance man to modern society, the students' interest in the work was not appreciably changed. The complexity of the lyrics were given a nod, but, in the words of one student: "It doesn't really matter how profound the lyrics or message is. If it isn't emotionally connecting with the listener in terms of the sound, then what's the point?"

Once the students had connected with the affective content of a piece of music, and felt in total, then they could be persuaded to shift their attention to the specifics of the production of the work. This was certainly the case when I played the recording of "Officium" (The Hilliard Ensemble recording); both Canadian and British students who had had previous exposure to this

recording addressed most of their comments to various aspects of the creation, production and performance of the jazz-embroidered Medieval motet. Working from this perspective, students seemed to enjoy having the opportunity to put their musical training and experience to work to evaluate the quality and success of the performance. Tone, balance, intonation, stylistic interpretation; all of these aspects were critically appraised. Interestingly, those students who had had the most exposure to the work were the most critical, focusing their attack on the artists' attempt to fuse Renaissance and jazz styles:

> They should have used a reed trumpet rather than a saxophone. That would have been more appropriate to the vocal style. (B)

> The saxophone's vibrato didn't match the singers' pure tone. (B)

> The saxophone, with all its association with 'common' music, debases the Medieval motet with which it is paired. (B)

> The sax sounds cheesy; Kenny G'ish. (C)

Under closer scrutiny and with greater intellectual distance, the perceived deficiencies in the work's musical integrity, chiefly, its questionability of style, clearly dampened the students' enthusiasm for the sound. Suspicions that the arrangers were trolling for effect by capitalizing on the popular appeal of recently released recordings of Gregorian chant and other commercially successful fusion attempts like that of Zamfir with the London Symphony, led these experienced listeners more apt to express a reserved cynicism, rather than a spontaneous enthusiasm. Comments like, "sounds like a car advertisement," "the sax romanticizes the choir," "gives you a feeling of eternity, but perhaps too blatantly," suggest that students intuited in these artists' work what Cook (1990) describes as "false art" (i.e., art aimed ultimately at producing certain states of mind in certain persons using a repertory of clichés). In terms of the Renaissance number, likely it was the New Age ambience to the sound—the floating Kenny G-like soprano sax sound and

the over-pronounced dynamic surges—that jarred students' musical sensibilities. A greater subtlety of expression, one which would give listeners the liberty of exercising their imaginations and deciding what they would hear and how they would hear it (and whose meaning is not exhausted by the second listening) was clearly, to these students, vital to the sustaining of one's relationship with a musical work. The more clichéd the sounds and techniques, the more blatant the content, the less hospitable a musical effort is to the "freedom of the imagination" (Schumann, cited in Cook, p. 15) and the sooner it will be 'caught out' by the discriminating listener.

It appears, then, that the emotional depth and sincerity of a work was the most significant element to the adolescent listeners I interviewed. Musical critiques (i.e., a reasoned responses) will be enlisted by students to account for why they did or, more commonly, did not connect to a performance at hand. What seems apparent is that it is not cultural influences that govern their patterns and priorities in response, but rather their degree of familiarity with a musical work and their degree of experience and education in music. The sense of propriety or expectation about what a work should be like, derived from one's education and experience with a certain type of music, does not diminish one's desire or disable one's ability to emotionally connect with a work; it just defers it and makes it more difficult to realize. The goal itself, to be absorbed completely and effortlessly by the music, remains unchanged.

Students' concern with the affective content of a work and not necessarily with the intricacies of compositional craft and performance technique involved, is typical of most listeners, according to Cook (1990) and Scruton (1997). Cook labels this type of listening, where one listens for purposes of direct aesthetic gratification, *musical listening,* in contrast to *musicological listening,* where one listens for the establishment of facts or the formulation of theories. *Musical listening* is characterized by a concern for the whole, where the imagination acts to synthesize sequences of musical events into a single heightened perception. The

experience one creates is a metaphorical and illusory one (indeed, what Sartre termed 'an illusion of immanence' to describe the feeling of wholeness one derives from an aesthetic experience [1972, p. 100-101]), but is far more important than whether what one hears is 'real' in a factual or material sense. Also, a sense of complicity with the work, that one effects a closure between oneself and the music when one participates in its invention—almost as if "you become the music while the music lasts" (T.S. Eliot cited in Cook, p. 153)— characterizes the imaginative aesthetic perception of music. Sulzer, in the 18th century, stated it well:

> In aesthetic perception, the object must be comprehended as an entity. Our attention must not be drawn to the individual details so that these become the object of our contemplation. Anyone who analyzes an object, contemplating and consequently examining each of its separate parts to discover how it is constructed, does so completely dispassionately; if we are to feel, our efforts should be directed not towards the contemplation or analysis of the object but towards the effect that it has on us. (cited in Scruton, 1997, p. 153)

Cook suggests that the latter type of perception described by Sulzer, (i.e., *musical listening),* dominates the way in which most listeners respond to music, quite unlike the way theoreticians and analysts think about it. Rather than having a concern for music as a discrete perceptual object best understood through a careful, methodical analysis of its component parts, listeners conceive of music more as an embraceable, relational entity, understood through immediate affective identification with it as a whole. Says Scruton: "Understanding lies in the dance, not in the description" (1997, p. 357). In one study that Cook conducted with experienced listeners, for instance, subjects completely failed to notice the unusual palindromic structure of the music involved and expressed their experience entirely in psychological terms (how the music made them feel) with virtually no reference to what was producing this effect. Sloboda, similarly comments on how, after hearing a work, it is possible that only its *felt* qualities will be remembered.

> You cannot recall a single theme yet will remember affective content conveyed, feelings it aroused, something best articulated through use of metaphor or metonymy, e.g., 'it had the feeling of a long heroic struggle triumphantly resolved' suggesting that it is the sense of satisfaction engendered through the absorption in a piece of music that is the real object of the listening process—not any musicological representation of what was played. (cited in Cook, p. 160).

Cook proposes that *musicological listening* is, by contrast, defensive listening, descending from the original biological function of human hearing which was to act as a survival mechanism, enabling people to 'parse' the acoustic environment effortlessly (i.e. to separate out the different sounds that are heard in order to determine one's survival prospects, types of dangers, or the proximity of food, water or danger). The act of parsing would be a dispassionate, defensive, calculating one, with the aim being to assure control over the seemingly sonic anarchy of one's environment. It would allow one to step out of the flow of the experience as it separated, hierarchized, and built up a static and free-standing representation of what was formerly in fact part of an intricate, complex web of life. The musicological consciousness performs a similar function in music; it steps out of the ongoing experience of the musical flow to construct and reflect upon the theoretical and compositional structures of the musical event. Where *musical listening* is aural, immediate, imaginative and 'illiterate' (given the irrelevance of theory and grammar to one's enjoyment of music), *musicological listening* is primarily visual, literate and intellectual in nature. Considering what might be gained by a more literal understanding of what is going on in the music, other theorists—including Clifton (1983)—see *musicological listening* as largely irrelevant, "Musical grammar and syntax amount to no more than wax in his ear—the listener responds to neither the sound waves, nor does he perceive sounds, he just listens to the music." (cited in Cook, 1990, p. 154). Indeed, Clifton suggests that *musicological listening* may foreclose the possibility of ever truly hearing the music; "What makes sound remain merely sound is the absence of any bodily complicity with it." Cook, adding to this, argues that one's skill as a music critic is more often a liability than a blessing, with critical reflection frequently

masking rather than illuminating the meaning of a work:

> To listen to music too hard—to hear it in terms of its component sounds and to co-ordinate these with some production-oriented scheme of representation is to risk not hearing it as music at all (and conversely, to hear music aesthetically may be to hear hardly anything in production-oriented terms). (1990, p. 159)

Musical listening, on the other hand, need not be seen as a naive, unschooled stance, but as one that ultimately affords the greatest amount of satisfaction from the experience: "In the moments of profoundest involvement the enjoyment of music is felt as a kind of effortless awareness—an intuitive act which involves no discursive or reflexive process" (Cook, 1990, p. 160-161). This echoes a sentiment affirmed by students: "You don't have to understand music to enjoy it. The musical pleasure is the emotional effect of the music." Cook goes so far as to suggest that the meaning, as a mediated critical representation of what one hears, is ultimately irrelevant: "What the listener is concerned with is not the meaning but its effect, and this is something that requires no mediation and indeed brooks none" (p. 173). The foregoing comments from students would indicate that the obvious conclusion to Cook's statement would be 'the effect *is* the meaning of music.'

Narrative Desires

Before pronouncing student thinking about music regrettably anti-intellectual and hence of no real epistemological significance to educators, we need to be reminded of philosopher William James' statement that "no education avails for the intelligence that doesn't stir in it some subjective passion, and...on the other hand almost anything that does so act is educative" (1913, p. 302), and Rosenblatt's view that "the really important things in the education of youth cannot be taught in the formal didactic manner—they are things which are experienced, absorbed, accepted and incorporated into the personality through emotional and aesthetic experiences" (1935, p. 36).

Witkin, after studying adolescent experiences in the arts in British schools twenty-five years ago, affirmed the epistemological significance of the emotional and aesthetic experience and argued that: "We must establish a way of conceptualizing subjectivity—as it is through an *intelligence of feeling* that an individual is able to relate personally and meaningfully to the world in which he moves" (1974, p. 54). It seems that if one were to speculate on the particularity of the students' views, it is that their valuing of the subjective power of music seems to be, to a large degree, personally motivated by learning which is not just affecting what they *know* but *who they are.* Music is not just a medium for exploring and expressing emotions, it is a medium to explore *their* emotions; music is not just a means for discovering what it means to be human, it is a means to discovering *themselves.* The notion that 'we connect with music because music allows us to connect with ourselves' seems to underlie much of what students are saying here:

Music is all about self-development. (C)

Music allows you to learn something about yourself. (B)

The purpose of music is to better understand ourselves and artists' selves, and our place in the universe. (B)

Being in choir is a form of self-education, discovery. You learn about yourself, how to deal with a group effectively, rather than facts and figures. In choir, you look beyond music to the limits of who you are. The only other subject I find even close in relevance is social studies. Sure, science is all around you; that doesn't mean you are thinking about it everyday. I want to be educated about the things that will be occupying my thoughts. (C)

The purpose of music is to explore yourself, to experiment with emotions. Music makes one's emotions make sense, and also evokes new emotions. (B)

You become a better person; I was more self-centered before. I think music helps you become a more whole person. (C)

Researchers investigating adolescent cognition may be able to shed light on the deeply subjective bent to student thinking about music that appears to eclipse all other types of thinking

in importance. According to Lapsley (1991), knowledge and experience, to be of value and memorability to the adolescent, must somehow build upon one's sense of self. Lapsley raises questions about Piaget's cognitive theory, specifically, the degree to which adolescents are actually engaged in the abstract, theoretical and reflective thought characteristic of formal operations. In conducting his own research with adolescents, Lapsley found, contrary to Piaget's theory about the supercession of formal operations at the age of twelve, that his subjects were typically more concerned with thinking about the self than thinking about thoughts, i.e., that they may be engaged in concrete operational thinking (thinking that pivots from one's sense of self and historicity) far more than we realize.

Given that most of the students in this study had demonstrated an impressive capacity for critical and philosophical reflection and all were members of schools with high academic standards leads one to infer that it is not that these students were incapable of formal operational thinking, it was just more likely that they choose not to engage this type of thinking when intensely involved in an activity that they find emotionally rewarding and connecting. Indeed, other theorists have suggested that what they may be employing in these cases is a cognition framed by one's need to *narrativize* reality, or personalize one's world. Brian Sutton-Smith refers to the human predilection for seeking out that which allows us to connect with and make sense of our experience in a feelingful way as our *narrative mind* (1988). Assertions by other scholars working in the field of education and literary theory give support to Sutton-Smith's proposition. Arguing for the significance of emotions in helping human beings make meaning of their experiences and the world around them, Egan (1988) expands on Sutton-Smith's ideas in proposing that the mind is not a 'logical concern' (i.e., a disembodied calculating organ concerned with working out abstract concepts) but rather a 'narrative concern' (i.e., a much more complex, mechanism, integrating the cognitive and the affective, serving to make intelligible and

meaningful the disparate events of one's life). It does this through placing our lives in some sort of narrative structure, giving it a coherence and meaningfulness it would otherwise lack and enabling us to conceptualize, contextualize and incorporate in a personal framework seemingly impersonal knowledge, information and events. Says Bruner (1996): "Storymaking, or narrative, is the mode of thinking and feeling that helps children (indeed, people, generally) to create a version of the world in which, psychologically, they can envisage a place for themselves" (p. 39). And to Hardy (1968), this way of thinking is omnipresent: "We dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and live by narrative" (p. 5). This ubiquity of narrative thought and the need to continually define and re-define ourselves in relation to our world and each other, is taken up most recently by Sumara (1996) who suggests that narrative thinking serves as a hermeneutic conditioner in one's life, allowing each act of interpretation to be a form of self-interpretation. Sumara, in *Private Readings in Public: Schooling the Literary Imagination*, reminds us that what is interesting about our interactions with literary texts, for instance, is not what the text reveals to us but what reading them reveals about us. It is not just the text that is transformed in the process of experiencing it, the reader, implicated in the process of unravelling the text, may likewise be part of a similar transformative process. Other scholars have presented a similar argument: "When we interpret the artwork, we interpret ourselves, and as the work comes into interpretation, so we come to be also" (Gadamer, 1990, p. 97-98). The notion that meaning is personally inflected, that what we find meaningful tells us as much about ourselves as it does the subject under examination, and may be key to not just the aesthetic experience, but human existence in general, is endorsed by many contemporary theorists. Heidegger felt that opportunities to engage with texts that permitted some sort of self-interpretation or re-invention were critical to the formation of the self and the construction of a place for ourselves in the

worlds we will encounter (1990). More radically, Derrida (1992) goes on to assert, as the self emerges in tandem with the unfolding text, without these opportunities to engage in the world and its texts, the self would simply not exist at all. Our search for meaning is perhaps, more precisely, a search for ourselves. In constructing meaning, we construct ourselves.

Commitment to our stories makes us ever mindful of how we locate ourselves in relation to the world and how each experience can inform and enhance our personal meaning. Narrative construals of reality lead us to look for that which will fit 'our story', hence we tend to accept not necessarily that which stands up to methods of science and rational thought —i.e., the verifiable— but that which stands up to the criteria of a good story (does it inspire, uplift, particularize our views?), that which has cultural currency (is it homologous to predominant beliefs?), and that which has the potential to grow and expand. Our own stories interact and intermingle, interlace with those of others, allowing us to create a world of embraceable dimensions. They give us, Sumara continues, a reference point, a sense of stability, without which we risk neuroses or psychosis such as 'borderline syndrome' (a lack of a coherent, unified core self which is essentially a reflection of either an insufficient or inappropriate story about oneself). Stories, rituals, songs, possessions, homes, Sumara contends, serve as important collecting places, boundaries, markers and signifying systems that help us to locate our sense of self.

In my closer examination of how music may figure in the construction of student narratives, it appeared to serve a key catalytic role. For some, music's role in the construction of one's narrative is critical: "Without music, life wouldn't make any sense". For others, it acts as a synthesizing, stabilizing force and as a collecting, storing place:

> Music brings back memories; I love that feeling. It kind of binds your life together. (C)

> Music helps to unlock memories that have been perfectly preserved. It provides definite references, compass points. If I didn't have music in my life, I think there would just be feedback in my head. (C)

A Canadian teacher underlined the importance of music as an 'aural album' to students:

> Why is music so important? It is supplying so many memories for the students. Like the George and Ira Gershwin song, "The memories of all I had—no, no they can't take that away from me," memories make us who we are.

Music's perceived ability to act as a narrativizing agent is most compellingly felt, according to the majority of student response, when one is involved in the making of music. Here, given the opportunity to express oneself, one is able to imagine and assert a reality that is truly one's own:

> I think people who don't express themselves never really get to know themselves. They remain under somebody's shadow and don't become their own person. (B)

> Music brings out, is dependent on a person's spirit. Without music, we would become trapped within ourselves, our potential remaining unfulfilled. (B)

> Speaking doesn't show yourself; it can't communicate your emotions as well. Singing is a way to put yourself out there, to show people who you are. (C).

The students' frequent reference to making music as a source of empowerment and self-esteem similarly implies how the making and performing of music permits an exposition and preservation of a perceived 'peerless' version of oneself, of one's story. It gives one license and satisfies one's desire to discover and declare oneself, an expansive feeling which undoubtedly is behind the greater enthusiasm, the 'spark' for life that many students claim distinguishes music students from others in their school. A power not to be underestimated, according to Scruton: "As the musical experience is a mirror of the listener's emotional and metaphorical capacities— of his or her inner life, a better understanding of the psychological benefits of self-knowledge gained through music should be one of the top priorities of psychological science" (1997, p. 421).

The Intersubjective Narrative

Students often alluded to the fact that the increased sense of self-worth and personal value felt through one's involvement in music is amplified in knowing that one is making a contribution to a 'cause' and a community of people (both a team of performers and an audience). Sumara explains that, far from being solitary endeavours, the construction of one's narrative is quintessentially dependent on one's relation with others. Without this interaction and experiences that arise from this 'relational' participation in the world, one's sense of self would arguably be non-existent (1996). In fact, a narrative consciousness arises from what Sumara calls *intersubjective desire*, the need, for purposes of constructing and understanding one's own mind, to understand how the world is represented in other minds (i.e., how their beliefs, intentions, desires, conflicts and emotions either coincide or depart from one's own). We know through relationships, through identification and through engagement with the human world. Egan endorses this view: "Our knowledge of ourselves is constructed by our imaginative sympathy with others" (1990, p. 2). Intersubjective desire is implicit to the narrative mind, and hence, an essential component to the way adolescents perceive and value music. It is a connective agent, a way to get in touch with oneself through an understanding of others (or conversely, as explained by one student: "Music is about getting in touch with the soul and thereby the soul of others"). The belief that life gives rise to similarly felt emotions and that music serves as a perfect vehicle for the expression, celebration and commemoration of our shared humanity is central to these students' responses:

> Music is such a big part of history and culture. It's an integral part of everyone. (B)

> Music is something everyone can identify with; it links people and countries. (C)

> Music helps us to realize there are common bonds between people, that it is a universal language and can bring people together. (C)

You can learn from the emotions of other people; art lets you live your emotions vicariously. (C)

A musical person is someone who gets a feeling from music. Everyone gets a feeling from music because, after all, it is written by another person. (B)

Students from Canada who were hosting members of a community band from Freiburg, Germany, all commented on how much closer they had become to their German guests—despite linguistic differences—because they shared a love for music. Had they not had music in common, they doubted that the relationship would have grown so strong. They spoke of how they felt that "people are so isolated from each other" and how music, by giving them a way to communicate and to reach out to people, "brings people together". The act of making music together, "to do something wonderful together", "to know all the different personalities involved and yet create something together, like a family", intensifies feelings of solidarity amongst students, and inspires a reverence for not just music (the collective product) but for the talent, tenacity and contribution of the people involved in making it.

In other classes, you're not working together to make something; progress is what you do on your own. In band, you have to help out each other to progress, you can't strive just for your own gain. (C)

You learn the value of people, that what they do counts. You can't, for example, make a chord by yourself. (C)

There's something special about working towards a common goal, doing something so beautiful that makes everyone seem special. (B)

Singing for an audience that really appreciates the music is so much more rewarding than winning an award. It's just such an empty feeling to win an award. (C)

Music is dependent on the coalition of minds and spirit for its very existence. Being part of a collective enterprise such as music making, as well as affirming one's self-worth, fulfills the desire to connect with, participate and to contribute in a human endeavour. Knowing that contact

with music is a deeply pleasurable, even transformative experience, the reaching of one's

listeners consummates the musical experience.

"I love the look on people's faces—the responses—that's the best reward."

"One of the most memorable experiences I have had in music was playing for nuns in an abbey in Europe. They requested "Sabre Dance" and were dancing. It was wonderful to see them all so happy, and so seemingly out of character."

One particular Canadian teacher who had observed and marveled for twenty years at how choir

students could be counted on to show up unfailingly for early morning rehearsals, attributed it to

students' passionate desire to connect with others. He explained it this way:

Kids in adolescence are in a critical period in their lives emotionally, therefore, forming emotional attachments are so important for them. They need an anchor, a focus, and they find it in music. You don't find kids lining up at my French door at 6:30 a.m., asking whether I could open it; music means more to them. Yes, I agree, they probably wouldn't be at the music door either at 6:30 if it meant to practise their instrument. They enjoy the dynamics of working with other people, of being a part of something, of helping to make something happen, making a contribution. I guess any artform has the potential to do this, but music more so as it is an experience that can be shared by more than one person. (see Endnote 6)

Another Canadian teacher suggests that the arts may not only be a way to realize one's

intersubjective desires, they may indeed stimulate them. He stated that because of the spirit of

openness, wonder and gratitude that it engenders, one's respect for people is proportionate to the

number of aesthetically moving and satisfying experiences one has had in the process of making

music with others.

I think music learning helps kids realize that they have to be accepting of kids that don't fit in in other situations. If they are going to sound good, they can't isolate them, they need to help them. Alienating them would harm the group.

Given that music is dependent on a harmony of effort and appreciation of the individuals

that are contributing to this effort, students speak of how one's sense of commitment and

responsibility and capacity for perseverance grows, and, more pragmatically, how one's

interpersonal skills are continually challenged and forced to develop. "You learn how to be part of a group and the responsibilities entailed." Others simply liked the social opportunities that music provided, to feel accepted and be affirmed by a like-minded group of people: "Being in music is like taking out a membership in a club; you always have someone to say 'hi' to in the halls." Due to students' heightened awareness of others and need for affirmation by them, often, when reflecting on and recounting most memorable moments with music, students would cite times when music triggered memories rich with relational significance, e.g., the schools' final orchestra concert (because it conjured up so much nostalgia for the year past), the dances, the concerts, the people, the annual Christmas carol service, a certain hymn (because it was a grandparent's favourite), a favourite song of their mother's heard on the radio when she was in the hospital, a friend's recital. It was those experiences that illuminate their interrelatedness in the world with others that enter and become lodged in the narrative consciousness, or subjective reality, of the young musician. Indeed, as Egan reminds us, "It is through shared emotions and intentions that much of the world's knowledge can be made meaningful" (1990, p. 216). The adolescent world, dense with desires, intentions, beliefs, conflicts, relations that infuse and inscribe the texts we bequeath to them, are first and foremost a relational world. The narrative that emerges from this thicket of voices is not a tribute to an ostensible narcissism; that is only its beginning. They are a tribute to the adolescents' acute sense of interpersonal responsibility and understanding.

Romantic Narratives, Allegorical Constructions

Looking still more closely at the types of narrativizing common to adolescent subjects in this study, other themes take on significance in the momentary fictions inspired and generated by music with which they were engaged. In addition, and perhaps implicit to a concern for self and

others, their narratives were commonly concerned and constructed around issues which signified, in their view, qualities of an ideal world; among them, liberty, integrity, mystery and hope. Owing to perspectives that are distinctly romantic in character, music becomes the voice and vessel for their discontentedness with the pettiness of modern life and their longings for a more heroic reality. Music does not directly create and nurture these images, rather, because of its ambiguity and power, it allows the imaginative construction of these qualities. Metonymically, perhaps even iconically, for these adolescents, music *is* liberty, integrity, mystery and hope. Each value needs to be considered separately in light of student comments.

Liberty.......

Music gives freedom to the individual to think feel and act how they want. It's a rebellious thing. (B)

I've never wanted to do what I was told. I like to be given some freedom of choice and expression and music gives me that. (C)

I have always consciously wanted to be different. (C)

There is more independent thinking allowed in music. Music has certain rules and a certain grammar but less amount of restraint, and more universal than language. (B)

The sense that music, as an abstract art form, is open for interpretation and association and given meaning by the individual listener is highly appealing to the libertarian impulses of the adolescent. Due to the feeling that music is a connotative experience that is given meaning by the individual participant and recipient, students spoke often of the sense of freedom and self-determination perceived and enjoyed when involved with music. As well, in a more literal sense, no longer a means to transmit the beliefs, values, histories and customs of one's oral culture, music, in its reconstituted form, is perceived to represent a culture of resistance and revolution.

Integrity.......

> In today's society, people have a fear of expressing themselves openly, sincerely. We need to respect artists who have the courage to express themselves in genuine and individual ways. (C)

> Music commands respect, unlike Hollywood. (C)

> Capitalism, greed, the drive to make money and achieve prestige and status militates against artistic development. (B)

> I don't like this era; where's the feeling, the simplicity? A lot of pop music today seems artificial, like just a mindless quest for money. It doesn't seem like it's coming from the heart, like they're really believing in what they're doing. (C)

> I just hate music videos, watching them performing on stage. I think they're pathetic, especially heavy metal bands. People idolize these bands and want to read so much into them. I don't see that depth there, not like I see in Yeats, for example. (B)

> Rock and roll is all about male drive; sentimentality goes counter to it. (B)

> Here at this school people play to show how good they are rather than to give enjoyment to an audience. (B)

> People here at this school have nothing to say. They try to portray an emotion and it seems a caricature of it, as if trying it out for the first time. (B)

If music represents freedom and resistance, it is freedom from deceit, hypocrisy, fraudulence, artifice, self-consciousness, pretension, sentimentality, greed, i.e., all forms of affectation common to life in modern society. As is clear from foregoing comments, music demands a certain guilelessness, courage and sincerity of heart to truly live. It brooks no pretense, nor impostors.

Mystery.....

The sense that music's meaning may never be determined nor disclosed, that one is trafficking in and privy to, symbols which can be connected only obliquely to its human source,

only enhances its status as an agent of freedom and resistance. Not only does music promote independence of thought and action, it provides the means, or more accurately, the shelter and the concealment to do so. Hidden behind the mask and mystery of music, one can feel free to explore and to become oneself, without having to risk the costs of self-disclosure. Nor is 'finding the answer' the expected outcome of one's involvement in music, for what vitalizes the musical experience is not what we learn from the experience but what we have been stimulated, enabled and empowered to imagine. Cracking the code of music would rob it of its rich interiority and strip it of its alchemical properties and expressive role. One engages in music not to disclose or discuss but to explore and discover, not to discern, but to speculate. There is method to music's mystery, however. Perhaps, like the First Nations people of the Pacific Northwest who believe that one preserves the power of something (such as an ancestor's song) by maintaining its secrecy, students recognize that there is power in the unknown and the enigmatic. This is a prevalent notion among students, and it came up several times during this study. Here are just a few of the representative comments celebrating the mystery of music:

> You can't always describe how you feel. When you use metaphors, symbols, you can be more intimate and cryptic at the same time. You don't have to talk about it face to face; you're dealing with the issue at a distance. (C)

> I don't like writing narratives or songs in the first person or about relationships. I like songs that are more open to interpretation, that could mean anything you want. (B)

> Some subjects are about logic, others about wonder. (C)

It may be interesting to note that this way of seeing and valuing music—that it allows one to communicate somewhat incognito—was not a view that was evenly distributed among students in this study, rather, it was a view exclusive to male respondents. Similar findings by Freed, in "An Exploratory Study of the Meaning of Music to Adolescents" (1990), led her to surmise,

along with other music therapists, that because song lyrics provide the distance that enables the individual listener to feel safe expressing his own inner turmoil (i.e., those feelings rarely spoken about directly), music provides young males with a socially acceptable way to express their emotion (1990). As one of the girls in my study simply stated: "Music lets guys live their emotions vicariously". Freed goes on to suggest, due to her male respondents' confessed closer ties with their mothers, that music may "represent a link to a man's own more nurturant and related side that is embodied in their primary connection to their mothers. Listening to music may trigger a deeper connection to the adolescent boy's emotionality, in the process drawing upon his primordial relationship with his mother" (p. 153). While I did not, like Freed, explore students' family situations and relationships, and hence cannot draw the same connections between boys' relationships with music and their identifications with their mothers, my study does share similar findings about music's role as a 'safe' (that is, socially sanctioned) emotional outlet for male adolescents.

Hope.....

The sense of optimism stimulated by music, if because it represents and nourishes such heroic ideals as liberty, integrity and mystery to these students, was spoken of repeatedly by students in this study. This suggested that, for them, a critical signification of music is hope (or its redemptive value). Many students I spoke to felt that the world presented by artists is a more desirable world, or at least one that disrupts habitual ways of thinking and operating and provokes us to consider different perspectives and possibilities—not as things are, but as they might be:

> Music seems to open one up to more possibilities, to new ideas about how people think. (C)

You begin to accept different things, to become open to more possibilities. (B)

You question more. I think the ability to compose is a form of questioning. (B)

Though there are bad things in life, there is still music and one can take comfort in that. (C)

Music, especially musicals, are always about fairytale situations. (C)

One purpose of art is that it is able to portray an ideal world. (C)

So much of music and art is for the betterment of people and the world. Artists are our quiet revolutionaries. (C)

Music being an artform, we look to the writers who have interrogated what seems to be art's ability to disclose new horizons for its participants. Bruner (1986) suggests that the ability of art to 'subjunctivize reality'—to place us in an 'as if' state, where possibilities are considered over certainties and where one's faith in this life is continually stoked—is one of its most cherished, prized functions. Calling it "an instrument of freedom, lightness and imagination," Bruner suggests that art "renders the world less fixed, less banal and more susceptible to recreation, invoking one's imagination and one's faith that sense can be made and remade of this life" (p. 159). Our own meaning-making devices, specifically, any form of narrative, Bruner contends, tends to construe a subjunctive reality, allowing us to live in an otherwise imperfect world and giving us the power to imagine a potential society. And to furthermore experience, what author Salman Rushdie contends, may be our entitlement to life:

> Why do we care about singers? Wherein lies the power of songs? Maybe it
> derives from the sheer strangeness of there being singing in the world. The note,
> the scale, the chord; melodies, harmonies, arrangements; symphonies, ragas,
> Chinese operas, jazz, the blues—that such things should exist, that we should
> have discovered the magical intervals and distances that yield the poor cluster of
> notes, all within the span of a human hand, from which we can build our
> cathedrals of sound, is as alchemical a mystery as mathematics, or wine, or love.
> Maybe the birds taught us. Maybe not. Maybe we are just creatures in search of
> exaltation. We don't have much of it. Our lives are not what we deserve; they are,
> let us agree, in many painful ways, deficient. Song turns them into something

else. Song shows us a world that is worthy of our yearning, it shows us our selves as they might be, if we are worthy of the world. (1999, p. 19-20)

Egan suggests that this power of music to, despite all, uplift and affirm might be the most important justification for the arts in the school curriculum:

> The arts are at the heart of the education enterprise. In engaging in artistic marking, we step outside the utilities of our physical needs, and come to understand a little, why in the face of all the pettiness of daily life, horror, stupidity, bloody wars, mindless destructiveness, small-mindedness, and inevitable death, people have gone on and on making things of beauty, and trying to express something that is the best they can locate within themselves. (1990, p. 242-243)

To these adolescents, it is clear that music, filtered through their interpretive lenses, points the way iconically or figuratively to a visionary reality. The four desires embodied by music—liberty, integrity, mystery, hope—mirrors the sometimes complementary, sometimes contradictory desires of the adolescent: the desire to be themselves, the desire to be whomever they want, the desire to be better than who they are. They wish, like the shearsman's audience in Wallace Stevens poem *The Blue Guitar,* to hear "a tune beyond us, yet ourselves, a tune upon the blue guitar of things exactly as they are" (in Forben, 1999, p. 111). It is a dialectical position that is more fully addressed by Egan, who, in *Romantic Understanding* (1990), offers an explication for the types of worlds favoured by the adolescent imagination, and by Freed (1990), who, in her study of adolescents' relationship with music, reflects on the role music plays in the fashioning of this world. Acknowledging the adolescents' ambivalent relationship with inherited reality, both Egan and Freed present arguments for the way adolescents satisfy their need to both personalize and romanticize the world in which they dwell by narrativizing reality. Considering the relevance of these theses to understandings emerging in this study, a more thorough investigation of these scholars' ideas follows, beginning with Egan's proposal that a *romantic understanding* of the world—an understanding posed on the cusp of the quotidian and the

fantastic—strongly conditions the way in which young adolescents make sense of the world and their experiences.

Egan's theory of human development, presented and summarized in chapter two, suggests that the mythic-poetic layer that is developed during childhood grows into a 'romantic understanding' of the world, an understanding reminiscent of the Romantic poets' constant longing to define their place in the world or to transcend it. Thinking and behaviour in this stage (which Egan suggests is between the ages of 11 and 15) is characterized by an emphasis on individualism, revolt against convention, and delight in the exotic and the heroic. While students in this study were largely between the ages of 16-18, it was clear that narrativizing that is romantic in character was still a predominant way of making sense of their world and their experiences for many of these adolescents (and certainly true to Egan's hypothesis that vestiges of romantic understanding will linger in one's consciousness after age 15). Life through a romantic's eyes is vividly present and provocative to the senses, emotions and imagination, impelling them to explore and challenge the parameters of human existence and truth. Fascination is divided between exploring and understanding the limits of reality and the limits of the imagination, serving to satisfy the romantic ambivalence—and, Egan points out, the adolescent desire—to resist the given world while at the same time find a place in it. Features and figures of the world that are imagined to embody some wonderful transcendent or mythical quality (such as heroism, courage, excellence, compassion) commonly attract the romantic imagination, and by romantically or affectively associating with these qualities—i.e., placing them within a personalized human context (a narrative) with aims, intentions, causes, conflicts, ends, and human emotions—the romantic learns to truly appreciate and understand the significance of each human endeavour. Suddenly the knowledge takes on a presence and vitality it never had as an abstract or generalized concept. One can see how music as an embodiment of

such heroic qualities as those identified in my study (liberty, integrity, mystery, hope), and intimating all that is the highest, greatest and best in humankind's estate, would trigger romantic associations and personal narrativizing.

Further evidence that music may play a significant role in the romantic imaginations of adolescents can be found in Freed's work. Freed found that music was capable, for adolescents in her study, of representing "heroic qualities" or "existential themes," and hence, due to its romantic connotations, was considered a highly significant source of hope, inspiration and solace to the adolescents interviewed. Freed postulated that her subjects' romantic association with those qualities in music may be a natural progression from their fascination with fairytales as children. Pivoting from the work of Bettelheim (see *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales,* 1977), Freed suggests that, just as fairy tales are a developmentally appropriate way to help children to make sense and meaning of the rich complexities of life in language, terms and contexts that can be readily understood by a child's mind, so do music and music lyrics serve to convey the issues and dilemmas of life (good and evil, hope and anger, love and hate) in a way that is congruent with how the adolescent's mind has already developed and is developing. Both fairy tales and music 'heroize' the conditions and struggles of life, helping children and youth, through imaginative identification, to deal with their own fears, doubts, anxieties and purposes and consider the emotional realities that they share with others. Functioning at times almost like parables, the fairytale and song offer insight and guidance in dealing with critical emotional issues, supporting the individual's current stage of development while gently pushing him/her toward taking new development steps. Freed suggests that, given that her subjects' favourite songs were those which reflected the adolescent's increased awareness and concern for relating to and taking care of others, songs provide messages encouraging separation from one's family of origin while supporting a new interpersonal

orientation. While Freed focused exclusively on lyrics of popular songs to come to these conclusions, my research suggests that more generally, it is certain prefigured sounds and particular contextual experiencing of those sounds that generate metaphoric and sentimental associations and assist students in the developing of meaningful understandings of their individual and social circumstances. Musics which are perceived to allow the participant a dimension of freedom and originality in its construction, be it as practitioner or listener, are construed to embody the much respected qualities of honesty, courage, liberty, enigmaticism. While knowledge of the context of a composition, in terms of composer's life and social conditions in which they were writing and perhaps resisting, may enhance the perceived heroism of the music (e.g. "it's not just Chopin's music I like, it is also knowing he was such an honourable person"), as often it is the content alone; its unpredictability (e.g., "I love Debussy. When I listen to his music, I often think, 'Is that legal what he is doing?'"), its sensuousness of tone, its ambiguity of meaning and intent that inspires heroic interpolations.

Given that music is perceived to be symbolic of particularly profound beliefs and forces in life—e.g., the struggle to define and protect one's individual voice—one might say that music functions as an *allegory* for these students. In its literary or pictorial form, the allegory (such as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* or the myth of *Orpheus & Eurydice*) is a mode of expression which imaginatively and symbolically depicts common trials and lessons of life, such as, in the case of the myth of *Orpheus and Eurydice,* a lesson of betrayal, redemption and salvation (Cuddon, 1998). In its musical form, or rather, as a way of hearing and thinking about music, the listener takes on the author's role and manipulates the musical text so that it signifies an array of meanings, not the least one of which is somehow depictive of a profound truth about life. If it is the romance of the fairytale that enchants children's imagination and enables them to make sense and meaning of the basic polarities in life and imagine a better one, it is both the romance and

ambivalence of the allegory, as 'told' by certain forms of musical discourse that engages the adolescent's desire and imagination and enables a coming to terms with the more complex truths of life and human relations. The ideas that coalesce in the experiencing of music—honesty, integrity, courage, mystery and liberty—are spun into a tale that is somehow expressive of the adolescents' personal fable or thesis. Enigmatic lyrics, ambiguous messages, innovative texts, honourable ideals and passionate delivery personify and make tangible the ideas of honesty, integrity, courage, mystery, liberty. Unscripted, open to negotiation, music accords them the spaces for the writing and realization of their own desires (their needs for autonomy, honesty, romance) which both shape and are shaped by their encounters and explorations with music. The story that emerges features integrity, liberty, mystery, courage as central characters in a struggle to find a place free from life in a dispassionate, corrupt and duplicitous world and from a world from which they feel increasingly alienated. More reflective, more philosophical, the allegorical construction reflects the adolescents' increasing sense of awareness of the politics and the predictability of human affairs and the sense of loss and longing for the lucidity and luminosity of mythical, once fairytale worlds.

Let us briefly retrace our steps here. Firstly, after establishing that, to adolescents, the allure of music as a 'text' is the perceived ambiguity of its signifiers and the 'freedom of the imagination' they invite (even when students are aware of music's debt to cultural conventions surrounding the production of meaning—more common again, with musics of other, more distant, eras and cultures—the feeling remained that there was still a space for individual realization of music's meaning), I went on to explore how the fissures between text and meaning become sites of significance for adolescent participants. What appeared prevalent is that music, first, is a powerful sensate experience, commanding attention and response by all listeners and

participants. The parallels between student response and theoretical surmises about the significance of this quality of music are extensive in the literature. I considered Mukarovsky's contention that this 'sensorily perceptible substratum' of aesthetic objects is that which may be considered music's universally-perceived quality, Barthes' contention that the inclusivity and immediacy of music's timbre may bespeak its most important pleasurable aesthetic qualities and overwhelm all other meanings, and Egan's thesis that the strength of this elemental, unmediated response to music may relate to the significance of sound in one's primary understanding of the world (an understanding fashioned in the oral environment of childhood or infancy) as all informative to students' responses to music. The belief that this sentient experience is for the purpose of expressing, exploring and communicating emotions further intensifies the significance of the musical experience for the adolescents interviewed. The necessity of decoding music's meaning, via intellectual or conventional means, is rendered superfluous by the sense that what music conveys emotionally overwhelms all other qualities of the experience in significance. The intuiting of the emotional core is believed tantamount to an interpretive response to music.

I then compared these students' beliefs to traditional and current writings in aesthetics which assert that of primary importance to the aesthetic experience is the *effect* or impression of the music, particularly upon first encounters with a particular piece of music. Many theorists agree that the effect is something which is felt or intuited by imagination rather than intellectually determined. More specifically, Cook (1990) terms the tendency to listen to music for its total sentient and expressive import *musical listening,* a type of listening much more commonly employed than *musicological listening* which is attending to the musical structure and compositional techniques employed. Cook's suggestion that *musical listening* is essentially an act of the imagination—a matter of synthesizing disparate impressions into a cohesive,

imaginary whole—is useful in understanding the narrative impulse that I propose accounts for the way in which many adolescent listeners perceive and integrate musical experiences into their lives. Important as a way to identify, express, and imagine themselves and thereby others, music, through its perceived ability to embody quintessential human needs and desires, is given a special role in the lives of its listeners and participants. The nature of adolescent desire; the longing for freedom, escape from the quotidian and a desire to connect to a 'reality more real than reality itself', gives the adolescent narrative—as Egan (1990) has suggested in his theory of human development—a distinctly romantic quality. Connecting with Freed's preliminary explorations into the meaning of music to adolescents (1990), who suggested that music has the same function for the adolescent as the fairy-tale for the child, I suggest that in its more deeply romantic form, music takes on an allegorical function for the adolescent, symbolizing their desires for liberty, integrity, mystery and hope.

I have presented my interpretations of students' imaginative understandings of music with reference to their possible psychological underpinnings, and to aesthetic theories that have speculated on the significant ways in which we respond to music. All these theories have offered global explanations for the sentient, emotional, expressive and spiritual significance music serves in peoples' lives, and hence have given important validation for my emerging thesis regarding the significance of music to high school music students' interpretive response to music. Absent thus far from the discussion has been a critique of student response in relationship to possible educational or cultural influences. This is an essential dimension of an investigation into student responses to music, and one which will be incorporated into the discussion following an examination of the distinctive educational and cultural settings that may give claim to these and other meanings of music for their adolescent clientele.

CHAPTER 6: MUSIC EDUCATION PRACTICES IN BRITAIN AND CANADA

Music Education Practices in Britain

1. Music at Bridgemoor Cathedral School

7:30 A.M.; the practice rooms in 'Mullin's House'—headquarters for the keyboard and string departments—resound with furious pianistic flourishes. Debussy and Rachmoninoff are the soundscape for this morning's practice supervisor as he circulates to help younger students tune instruments, stay on task, and practise efficiently. Bulletin boards brim with concert fliers, master-class notices and program notes. Another notice is being mounted by a London symphony violinist who has just arrived from London that morning to begin a day of lessons with her Bridgemoor students. A 'Queen of the Night' suddenly emerges from one room, the notoriously difficult passage sustained in full flight as the 12 year old singer bounds down the stairs to make morning assembly at the cathedral, narrowly missing recently delivered bottles of milk that sit at the doorway. The route to the cathedral traverses a narrow cobble-stoned street flanked by a fleet of stone cottages that have been home to the choristers for centuries and today house many of the American choristers who are here 'for the experience.' Just short of the cathedral, music students duck into the old Theological College—now the main music building—for a special meeting called by the head of the music department. They crowd into the main hall, a beautiful, dark timbered room, its high vaulted ceiling ribbed with carvings and crests of former church founders and officials. The music staff get readily to the point; too many students taking too cavalier an attitude towards the work of others, that is, to that of their peers (school accompanists who need a minimum of two weeks notice to prepare for a recital) and clerical assistants (librarians have only 134/156 copies of an orchestral piece returned), and also to the attending of concerts, school assemblies and master classes. Students are reminded of the importance these events have to their own development as players, and the embarrassment suffered by the department when there is an inexplicably small turnout of students to these events. Hence, a full turn-out is expected at the youth orchestra's concert tonight, only if they are to learn how to "sort out a triangle from a tambourine." Seconds later, with pews appropriated and hymn books raised, students join the school and student organist in singing "The Day the Lord Givest". Student voices are little match for the cathedral pipe organ and its operator (a keen student apprentice) and the head of music, who attempts to fan student enthusiasm and volume by singing and conducting vigorously while walking up and down the aisles, is powerless against the limitless depths and power of 64 stops. Announcements about cricket scores, a "Save the Children" fundraising campaign, the perils of drug use and weekend concert successes are followed by a Saint-Säens cello concerto competently handled by an eleven-year-old student. A

thunderous re-entry of the organ signals the end of the assembly and accompanies the schools' exit and dispersal to class. On our way, the vibrant brass sounds of Bernstein's "West Side Story" that issue from the windows of the theological college overhead and rebound against the walls of the north transept of the cathedral buoy our step.

Music is a defining aspect of school life at Bridgemoor. In addition to its ancient chorister tradition, it is one of the four schools in Britain that have been designated "specialist music schools." The whole notion of specialist music schools gained support in response to firstly, the 1944 Education Act (The Balfour Act) which had stated that "it was the responsibility of local authorities to afford for all pupils opportunities for education offering such varieties of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of their different ages, abilities and aptitudes, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their needs" (cited in Colchester, 1985, p. 136), and then from the 1982 Public Schools Commission (conducted by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) which had called for the establishment of one or two academies that would provide professional training of gifted young instrumentalists. Spurred by these recommendations, as well as a desire to capitalize on some aspect of the school which might stem its flagging enrollment and enhance its reputation, Bridgemoor welcomed the first successful candidates into its officially government sanctioned and funded specialist music program in 1970 (Colchester, 1985). The school rapidly gained recognition as a symphony orchestra school with high professional standards (its students performing at prestigious London concert halls, sharing concert stages with such renowned artists as Yehudi Menuhin, and winning regularly at national festivals) and was soon attracting internationally-known instructors and outstanding music candidates. The extent of the music department today is formidable; a staff of 10 full-time instructors complemented by 40 sessionals teach within the four departments— strings, academic, keyboard, and wind, brass and percussion. Their duties include the teaching of private students, the instruction of academic classes and the coaching of one of the many

performing ensembles at Bridgemoor. At the time of this study, there were 32 performing groups at Bridgemoor; six choirs, three orchestras and 23 chamber ensembles, ranging from Baroque ensembles with period instruments to jazz combos, rock bands, and gamelan ensembles.

Classes are conducted in the three small floors of the music building or in its satellite cottages. The cramped, snug quarters belie the breadth and variety of instruction and equipment therein; in its hollowed out attic spaces, stairwell landings and basement cloak rooms, one can find a full percussion studio, two class piano studios, a full complement of Orff instruments, a gamelan, a complete set of African and steel drums. Here students are put through the rigours of *A level* classes; a familiarity and facility with common techniques and forms of Western concert music, through to a rudimentary awareness of other forms of Western (folk, pop, jazz) and non-western music, are required for the *A level* exam, as is a high level of aural, compositional and theoretical skill and knowledge.

While students are obliged to acquire a certain analytical and aural facility with music, it is clear that their work as performers is a far more consuming concern. The pressure involved in meeting both solo recital and ensemble obligations causes students to spend much of their time in practice and rehearsal. No less than 200 concerts a year are given by Bridgemoor students; two full-time secretaries are required to manage concert schedules and revenues. In one weekend, I witnessed four public performances given by Bridgemoor students, including a community concert featuring the school choir, held to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the sponsorship of Chernobyl victims by local citizens; a concert of Purcell's "Dioclesian" at a neighbouring minster performed by a school choir accompanied by their own peers on natural horn, trumpet and continuo, plus the London Baroque Soloists (a professional ensemble) on the string parts; a solo voice recital with guest clarinetist performing Wolf, Schubert and Broadway tunes to a packed house in school's concert hall; and the senior youth and wind orchestra sharing

a concert in the town hall on the final evening of that weekend. The high degree of professionalism I observed in rehearsals translated into high quality performances, particularly amongst instrumentalists. Work by violin, piano, clarinet and continuo players was inordinately well controlled and sensitive for students at such young ages; it was clear that they were all passionately devoted to perfecting their art. In contrast, the choir performed only competently, and their finesse was not of the same class as the instrumentalists. Considering that the choir is voluntary and singing is considered a secondary pursuit, the insecurity and the lack of colour and nuance that characterized the soloists' performances was not altogether surprising.

2. Music at Kingsgate Cathedral School

> "Three 4-part chords will be played three times. The bottom part is given on the manuscript. Add the upper parts." Not a sound is heard in the classroom as students arrange and rearrange notes on the given paper. They listen intently to each repetition, working to configure the precise inversion of the dominant seventh chords. Most are relieved, upon hearing the 'answers', that their efforts to capture the harmonic progressions correctly were successful. The instructor then asks for a vocal rendering of results; we split into three groups and listen to a perfectly voiced copy of the dictated sounds. More dictated harmonic progressions follow, concluding with interval recognition and practice. Students glibly negotiate intervals upon the direction of the teacher to sing up a P4, down a minor 6th, up a major 3rd. Occasional outbursts of frustration—"Resolve it, please!", "I have a mental block; I could punch something", reveal the highly-strung register of the students' involvement. It is intense, keen, competitive. I remember sharing some of these feelings as a student in private conservatory lessons, but it was not until I enrolled in university theory classes that I experienced equivalent challenges. I silently praised the skillfulness before me.

Kingsgate is not, apart from having choristers in training, a specially designated music school. In fact, on first appearances, I was left with the impression that Kingsgate is anything but a music school. A sadly neglected tiny module of space, hardly clear of the major school thoroughfare, houses a warren of two small classrooms and five practice rooms. Instruments are piled up for repair, vintage pianos have missing keys, ivory, pedals, hammers and strings, one

classroom is strewn with unfiled music, paint curls from the walls and yellowed notices drape from the bulletin boards. My initial impression of the goings-on there is no less grim; students run through compositions on four string guitars and record them on tiny one-track desktop tape recorders, stern-faced itinerants rove the practice room quarters, dispassionate remarks about students' composition efforts emanate from the *A level* classroom. Upon entering, I felt I must be in the wrong place but I soon found out that despite the evident lack of care and funding, a lively music program was flourishing there. What was lacking in financial backing, the students and their instructors were making up for in sheer spirit, and the school, in its patronage of the music programs. Two music staff (one full-time academic choral instructor and a part-time assistant academic instructor) and a group of about ten part-time itinerant staff (who assisted in private and ensemble coaching) left little wanting in types of courses, lessons and ensembles for the students at Kingsgate. Sessions in *GCSE* and *A level* courses, including coaching on a chosen instrument for the practical component in these courses' exams comprise the curricular content of students training. Opportunities to play in the jazz band, orchestra or string quartets, and sing in the school choir, madrigal choir or musicals are available to students as extracurricular activities. The ensembles attract large numbers of students; ranks swell to 200 for special events such as the Promenade Concert at the end of the year. Enrollment in *GCSE* and *A level* courses is pronouncedly smaller; an *A level* class I observed had five participants. Given that academic courses require a far more serious commitment, it is perhaps not surprising that a disparity in numbers exists between core and auxiliary programs in music.

Expectations of students' work in music are high at Kingsgate, and students often achieve results that are deserving of merit and national recognition. Student compositions are often showcased by school ensembles, and one student's work recently won a place in the finals of the BBC television Carol-of-the-Year Composition. Performance of unabridged versions of works

such as Bach's "Brandenberg Concertos", Mozart's "Requiem", Handel's oratorios, Richard Strauss's orchestral works (works usually reserved for professionals) are standard fare for the school orchestra and choirs. Certainly the fact that almost all players, and some singers, receive private tuition contributes to making the performances of these works possible, and efficiency in the use of rehearsal time makes it unnecessary for these ensembles to meet more than one-half hour each week for rehearsal. Students' attention in these rehearsals is focused, their effort is maximized. Anything less is treated with disdain by teachers and students alike.

3. Music at St. Regis Comprehensive Secondary

> The questions that follow the playing of an extract from "Suite in G" by Handel have a rhythmic predictability to them: "What kind of style? Phrasing? Does it have enharmonic changes? Modulations? What kind of melodies did he write? Did you hear the influence of the French dance forms in this work of Handel's?" Most students are bearing with the tedium, others listen distractedly. Talking increases during the slow movement and the teacher's bid for attention and affirmation—"It's very elegant, isn't it?"—is lost beneath the not-so-elegant voices of the students. Interest piques momentarily when the harpsichordist breaks into the first variation, the speed of which meets one student's approval: "This is where he gets to the headbanging stage!" Attempts to engage students' attention in the theoretical wizardry of Rameau are unsuccessful; even the fact that he codified the Western tonal system— major, minor scales, chords, sequences of chords, dominants, etc.—is not enough to awaken the curiosity of these occasional composers and theoreticians. Few Canadian high-school students will ever learn of the painstaking process involved in the construction of the aural landscape that Western listeners have long assumed is the natural way of things. But, one has to wonder, in this pedagogical form, on this day, how many British students did?

The music program at St. Regis, while vital to a small core of committed students, is clearly of auxiliary interest for the vast majority of students. Like Kingsgate, a small music wing with its warren of miniature classrooms and well worn practice rooms functions as the hub of musical activity, with rehearsal space distantly located in the corner of the cafeteria or gym. Out of 1900 students attending St. Regis, only a marginal number of students (35) is involved in the

timetabled academic music courses. Others surface to participate in extra-curricular activities as they are offered: jazz band, choir, orchestra, wind band, musical productions. Due to the periodic nature of the activities and the sometimes tenuousness of their performing groups, music director and students look to the musical community outside the school for extra recruits or tuition. The school choir, for instance, which is only 30 in number (10 of them teachers) will typically join forces with a local community adult choir for their performances of larger works. Last year, they performed Faure's "Requiem," this year it will be Fanshawe's "African Sanctus." Students seek other playing opportunities in local community orchestras and bands and rock bands, and some journey to London on weekends for extra tutelage on their instruments at the Royal Academy of Music or Junior Guildhall.

The low level of interest in music study at St. Regis does little to dissuade the dedicated core of musicians there. Practice rooms are in constant use, with lessons by itinerant teachers underway throughout the day. The tiny lounge/waiting area for practice rooms is a favoured sanctuary of the musically inclined and is in constant use throughout the day. The range of music heard through the walls of the practice rooms is broad, ranging from experimentation with Debussian harmonies to improvisation on blues and current chart hits. Classes are businesslike and not for the timid. One student's tentative debut of Debussian efforts is eased by student quips insinuating that generic sounds deserve generic titles ("Bloke in a Boat" was voted most popular in the class observed). Results of students' Debussian efforts are varied, with some works effectively evocative of the impressionistic style and images and others clearly just dutiful études. Students accept muted praise for their work, as if there is a strong sense that unless the people there share the understanding that music is an exacting craft that requires a tremendous amount of tireless work and dedication to learn, *A level* music could cease to exist.

Summary of Music Education Practices in British Sites

While embeddedness in distinctive historical contexts (e.g., cathedral schools) contributes to the variations in breadth and sophistication of practices, commitment to a common educational structure (as laid out by the National Curriculum) also gives a remarkable consistency to programs observed. Typically, to earn a senior level credit in music, students at all three sites must enrol in a two-year examinable course which provides for private tuition on one instrument as well as class instruction in theory and history primarily of Western music. Due to rigorous demands of the course, it attracts and is realistically accessible to only a select group of experienced musicians (students are expected, by the end of it, to demonstrate a level of proficiency as an instrumentalist, composer and critic that is commensurate with what is expected of first and second year university students in Canada). In addition, opportunities to participate in ensembles are available as non-credit, extracurricular activities. These ensembles attract more students than do the timetabled *A-level* courses, but, as they attempt challenging repertoire and meet only infrequently, a requisite degree of competence is expected. It appears that, in British schools observed, a school's music enrollment is reliant on an educated clientele. The success of their music programs is not based on courses or tuition offered, but on the quality of the students attracted to them (assuming success is measured by the number of students involved in a program as much as by the calibre of its outcomes).

My interviews with administrators and music educators at all three sites yielded important insights into what they held to be the function and value of music education. All administrators and music staff spoke about the importance that music plays in preserving tradition, adorning the rituals in school life, evoking the spiritual and developing students' sensibility. As well, the administrator of the comprehensive school pointed out that whether the students have an interest in developing skills related to the music industry, playing in a rock band, organizing a "Battle of

the Bands," playing for a local fair or mounting a cabaret evening as a fundraiser, music provides a means by which students may be inducted into the wider community, brought head-to-head with the expectations therein and the kinds of relationships they will need to develop and sustain later in life. Music-making is a life-skill. Indeed, one administrator's pragmatic observation, "Music is a way to keep the students busy," was echoed by another who affirmed, "An active school is a happy school." The music teachers were more inclined to ruminate on the effect music may have on individual students: "The real thrill of teaching comes from helping students realize their potential, to have pupils achieve things before they're officially due to do something."

At the specialist music school, the purpose and frequency of student performances are oft-debated issues amongst staff and administrators. Pride in student work, pressure to maintain their distinguished reputation and the ever-constant need to attract new recruits clearly account for some of the school's concern with students' public performances. The headmaster and music teachers are quick to point out that not only are these public performances "good for business", but also that the students, many of whom are preparing for careers as performing musicians, benefit from these opportunities to perform due to the feelings of self-satisfaction and worth that public performances engender and affirm. What might not be to the students' advantage, the teachers observe, is the students' tendency to allow their personal feelings to atrophy in order to protect their vulnerability to the vagaries of audiences and judges, not to mention the danger of confining themselves to a diet of Chopin mazurkas and Mendelsohn trios with an exclusive group of peers at the expense of exploring and acquiring a range of other experiences and understandings. Aware of these problems associated with pre-professional training, the current administration (relatively new to Bridgemoor) is keen to change the way the community and students perceive and participate in music, to expand the traditional conservatory or

apprenticeship system where students are trained just to be good executives of music, and to create an environment that encourages students to explore the breadth and variety of music-making today in terms of non-Western musics, popular music and the whole field of sound engineering and recording.

Music Education Practices in Canada

1. Music at McRae Secondary

> It is 7:00 a.m. on a rainy morning in April. Twelve students of the senior chamber vocal ensemble—in school uniform of jeans and sweatshirt—stand positioned on choir risers on the stage. One student arrives ten minutes late, bearing a note to explain her tardiness. Impassive, silent, serious; nothing disturbs these students' discipline and concentration while working with their director to polish repertoire for their upcoming tour to Manitoba. Their repertoire includes Durufle's "Ubi Caritas", Bruckner's "Ave Maria", Percy Grainger's arrangement of "Danny Boy", Thomas Morley's "Hark All Ye Lovely Saints" and "Saul" by Hovland. Efficiency appears key; directions are curt and economic, and pace is brisk with the short breaks between songs allowing little time for the students' focus to slacken. The students are most professional in their attitudes and approach; any feelings of fatigue or umbrage taken at the unrelenting demands of the director are guardedly controlled. They work to ensure accuracy, tuning, tone, balance, diction. Requests to give "more presence", "more space to the sound," "warmth to the tone," and "brightness to the vowels" are given immediate attention. A sudden burst from the director: "What's going on in the baritone section today? We can't do this if your head is somewhere else. It's not good enough! You have to put your games aside and accept this opportunity to work together. Nothing can come between you and the music— you cannot shut yourself out from music. You can close up and protect your ego".... is received in silence by the students. They wait, uncomfortably, for the work to resume.

The MacRae music department, largely to the credit of its two long-standing (25 years) instrumental and choral teachers, not only involves one-third of the school population in one of the sixteen courses it offers, but it has achieved national recognition for the quality of its programs. A strong departmental infrastructure (in the complete and consistent calendar of courses it offers, and the student, parent, teacher support it has enlisted) underlies the success of

its many performing groups. Opportunities are available for students to experience a full range of both instrumental and choral performance courses at all grade levels. Through group instruction received in class, students are prepared to play and perform in one or more musical ensembles—junior or senior concert band, jazz ensemble, junior or senior chamber choir, vocal ensemble, vocal combo, and concert choir. Standards are high; the bands and choirs have earned Gold Standards of Performance many times in provincial festivals, and, in a choral competition in 1988, the President's Trophy for Outstanding Musical Achievement.

Two non-performance classes are offered: Composition 12 and CAPP 12 *(Career and Personal Planning 12),* the latter a music career preparation course in which students have the opportunity to gain work experience in the field of music through community and school involvement. Students selecting CAPP 12 course are required to complete a minimum of 700 hours of intensive senior level course work in instrumental and/or choral music, a music composition and music history course, and 100 hours of voluntary work in an area of music or the related arts. Many of the students involved in the music career preparation course also form the backbone of the MacCrae Student Music Executive, a student group that helps in planning concerts, conferences, festivals, retreats and summer music camps, fulfilling librarian duties and in leading sectional rehearsals. Members of the student music executive also act as peer advisors (for example, enjoining peers when they need to practise more, correct their intonation, etc.) and liaise with staff to ensure that teacher/student concerns are being addressed and communicated. In addition, a Parent Executive, in existence for twenty years, operates a non-profit charitable society to raise funds to support the music program. Monies raised (as much as $50,000.00 in a single year) have been used to procure a sound system, a grand piano, electronic equipment, music and instruments, and to sponsor a number of clinics, guest artist visitations and scholarships and bursaries for outstanding music graduates.

2. Music at Northumberland Secondary

A light spills from the bandroom, thankfully helping me to navigate my way down the dark, cold hallway, its walls still cool from the night air. At 7:25 a.m., fifty students are seated, instruments primed, ready for the morning band rehearsal to begin. A few remaining others scramble to position chair and stand, unwrap their instruments and warm the reeds or mouthpieces. The band director is preparing the score for this morning's rehearsal, consulting reference material on Holst's "Second Military Suite in G", and is considering stylistically correct ways of conducting it. The tone is subdued, businesslike, polite but positive; it is clear that the students want to make the most of their early morning efforts. After a slow chorale warm-up, the intonation of each section and, in turn, every student, is addressed by director. Tuning remains a problem on the slower numbers and becomes a focus of the director's critique. Matters of interpretation—climactic points, appropriate dynamics and articulation—are also high on the director's agenda this morning, and students attend to his requests. Respect for his leadership is palpable; inclination for distraction or diversions are purposefully restrained in order to fulfill a sense of obligation to him. Laughter can't be withheld, however, when particularly earnest attempts of younger students practising in rooms around them occasionally interrupts their own work.

Northumberland's music program replicates MacRae's in many ways. Like MacRae, Northumberland attracts a large proportion—one third—of the school's population to its robust music program. Classes have a strong performance component and serve to prepare the four choirs and eight instrumental ensembles for their frequent public performances. As well as giving regular school performances during the academic year, the bands often appear at local music festivals. In the case of this year, they have just returned from a trip to Britain where they participated in the 24th Harrogate International Music Festival. The full time band teacher and part-time choral teacher are supported on the whole by a student executive and a strong parent executive, the latter of which campaigns to finance travelling as well as equipment expenses and individual scholarships for deserving students.

3. Music at Lord Seton Secondary

The high school auditorium is packed at lunch with students eager to hear the second round of "The Battle of the Bands." Entirely student initiated and

sponsored (there is no noticeable teacher presence), a student MC manages the event, and each group is responsible for setting up and striking their own sets. Two bands compete this lunch hour, both of them led by students participating in my study, and their sounds and their commitment to the musical art manifested in these groups far eclipses, in my opinion, anything seen or heard at the previous evening's choir, band and orchestra concert. Paul's band was balanced, in tune, atmospheric, and played with conviction, every member totally in his role as singer, poet and shaman.

Lord Seton, like Northumberland and MacRae, has a well-established, well-subscribed music program. Owing to the two music teachers' areas of expertise, Strings and Composition/ Sound Engineering, the school's acclaimed orchestra and lab/studio-based composition classes are the program's distinguishing features. A recent tour of England was a successful one for the orchestra. They presented concerts in London, Hereford, Sourpost and Stourbridge and played in the Dudley Music Festival, placing first in six of the nine classes they had entered.

Summary of Music Education Practices in Canadian Sites

Large performance groups, either choir, band or, less commonly, orchestra, form the core of these Canadian schools' music programs. Since all of the schools in this study had two music specialists on staff—either band and choir or band and orchestra teachers— these ensembles could be offered at each grade level; Band 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 (or shared between two grade levels— e.g., Band 11/12). Each group meets for about three hours a week with the obligation to meet extra-curricularly (pre-school or in the evening) to rehearse with a multi-grade school concert choir, concert band or concert orchestra. Ensembles focusing on jazz literature, namely, junior and senior stage bands and jazz choirs, are also timetabled credit courses in the school schedule. Select auditioned chamber groups; senior vocal combo and jazz combo among others, are also given curricular credit. The major focus of these classes is to prepare repertoire for performances, hence students are assessed on the basis of their participation, commitment

(attendance) and technical mastery of performance repertoire. An in-depth study of related music theory and history is not a standard part of course content, and there are no written exams for students in performing ensembles at these sites. What may be lacking in depth, however, can be amply made up in breadth; it is not uncommon for students to take both choral and band classes and play and/or sing in four or five ensembles.

Typically, only one academic course in music is offered in B.C. high schools; Composition 11/12, and this was the case at the three B.C. schools included in this study. In this course, students are expected to learn various compositional styles and techniques, and write numerous compositions (from commercial jingles to pieces for school orchestra) using a variety of media. Students are encouraged to enlist technology in the making and performing of their compositions; one of the schools in the study had a full-scale computer MIDI lab reserved for music composition students, as well as a recording studio to allow them to explore the production of their works. Teachers in public schools in B.C. can propose additional alternative courses for their students, and, if they meet with ministry approval, they may be incorporated into the school program. One site had received approval for a course from the ministry—Career and Personal Planning In Music—in which students having aspirations to work in the music business could prepare for and gain experience in a variety of music-related professions (sound engineering, concert organizing, teaching, writing, critiquing, etc.).

In short, the B.C. schools' emphasis on music as a performing art for groups of music students is the complete antithesis of the British emphasis on music as an academic discipline for the individual music student. Furthermore, the fact that the success of programs and the level of student achievement in these high school courses in B.C. is almost entirely teacher dependent stands in direct contrast to the British system, where standard courses and standard expectations make programs less reliant on individual leadership and less vulnerable to teacher succession.

While both British and Canadian music educators encourage students to acquire skills and develop the musical literacy necessary to engage in a variety of Western music, a higher degree of discrepancy in the quality of programs and the type of education students receive in music was observed in the Canadian sites, resulting in a lower standard of performance and musical literacy amongst B.C. students. The following section, which highlights the pedagogical concerns and priorities of the B.C. music educators interviewed, may help explain the reasons for this disparity in student achievement between British and Canadian music students.

Interviews with four of the six music teachers, two out of three principals, one teacher supporter (who was also a member of his school's music executive) and one parent yielded insight into how "management" and "clientele" in these Canadian schools perceive the purpose and value of music, and the role of music education in students' lives. It was clear that though many of the music educators had once striven to achieve musical excellence with their groups, having the students realize what one experiences in the *process* of making music was their chief objective now.

> Our program is now geared towards working together; finding out about yourself, not just music.

> Our first goal now is not to win awards, but to have kids love music. In doing so, they are challenged to think about deeper things; their *Weltanschauung*, for instance. Through the process of making music, students gain a sense of themselves and their purpose.

> We've become more open in direction and teaching style. We feel it is important to empower students, to give them more opportunity to express themselves— musically, socially, morally—through their involvement with music.

> How far should we go in promoting excellence, in insisting on technical perfection to achieve artistic ends? That's the big question, isn't it? And I would answer by saying those things that have touched me most have not had much to do with the beauty of technical perfection and a lot to do with the beauty of the human spirit.

The process of music-making is valued, according to these educators, for its perceived ability to enhance students' self-understanding. Administrators' comments lent support to this view.

> The importance of music? It has value as a vehicle for students' personal growth. It serves students' creative side, their inner self. I think it's particularly important for Asian students, as their parents are so biased towards economics, business, law, mathematics, science. It provides the balance they need.

The belief that the purpose of music is to aid students' self-development tempers not only the B.C. music educators' zeal for artistic excellence but their support for the importance, even relevance, of academic knowledge of music. Academic knowledge is clearly secondary in importance to them, as confirmed by their comments.

> I think the problem with pursuing music as an academic subject is that students don't see the relevancy of it. They experience music through performing it. A lot of our kids have done the academy thing because parents force them to study music this way. But they drop it as soon as they can, and it will not be something they will retain. We put the emphasis on performing groups; the idea of making a contribution is important to the students.

> More important than the critical appreciation of music are the intangibles—the wealth of experience, knowing and feeling that will manifest themselves in so many different ways in students' future lives.

One educator felt that a pursuit of music or knowledge of art for art's sake was too narrow-minded a goal and could not be a sole aim of a public school music education. He felt, rather, that musical learning that promotes cognitive development justified its place in the school curriculum. Likewise, one administrator, while defending the importance of music as a way to explore students' interests and talents, stressed the potential of music learning to enhance students' critical thinking skills:

> I think it is important, too, that we not just defend music on the basis of affective learning and all that 'airy-fairy' stuff. Music teaches them discipline, structure and understanding of the complexity of another discipline, just like study skills in English. Music is not different from other subjects in that matter; there is review

and analysis. Students learn to think and analyze in music, through it they develop their critical thinking.

Clearly, the value of music education, for these teachers and administrators, was not the quality of music that could be produced but the extent to which music contributed to the students' personal growth. For them, what might be sacrificed in terms of music skills and knowledge acquired is amply compensated by the degree to which experiences with music foster students' general psychological and cognitive development.

CHAPTER 7: AN INQUIRY INTO STUDENTS' CONCEPTIONS OF THE PURPOSE AND VALUE OF MUSIC EDUCATION

Introduction

In the chapter, I present the participants' views on music education, drawing from comments made by students who were enrolled in school music classes at the time of this study as well as 'non-music' students, including those who had taken music at these schools in the past. 'Non-music' and former music students' critiques of school music practices were similar (in the degree to which they express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with school music courses) to those of the students still enrolled. Hence, I have not differentiated between the two groups in presenting students' reflections on the purpose and value of music education.

Views of British Music Students

Conversations with British music students revealed a strong homology between school practices and student expectations; most of the students' expectations were positively realized through their involvement in the school music program. Their comments about the purpose and value of music education tended to stress the importance of: 1) music education as cultural education, 2) music education as vocational education, and 3) music education as self-education. In general, comments from students at Bridgemoor and at Kingsgate fell more often into the first two categories, while comments from students at St. Regis were almost exclusively concerned with the value of music education as self-education. What follows is an explication of these views, including a discussion of contrary perspectives.

1. Music Education as Cultural Education

Students at Bridgemoor stressed the importance of music in broadening their awareness and

understanding of inherited historical and cultural traditions: "Music should be compulsory, as it is so much of our culture." Some spoke of this awareness as a type of cultural literacy which any educated person or heir of a strong cultural heritage is obligated to have; "It gives you an opportunity to form an opinion on something," "It is culturally useful; it gives you the ability to talk knowledgeably about it." Others felt music education should be regarded as being akin to an unalienable human right, since "it is an integral part of history and culture, hence, each of us." Many students commented, however, that music's connection to particular historical and cultural practices could be made more explicit in their music classes:

> We need more scholarly analysis, like we do in literature. We need to examine the composer's view; why they *[sic]* wrote a piece, what was going on in history at that point in time.

Also commonly expressed was the view that immersion in a uni-disciplinary, monocultural world (that is, the theory and performance practices of Western art music) does not give them sufficient exposure and understanding of music as a multi-cultural phenomenon. These students felt that without a wider conception of music, music education threatens to be too elite, too exclusive or too predictable:

> I'm concerned about the number of musically illiterate people. We really need to narrow the gap between those who do and those who don't do music.

> I really dislike music teachers' condescending attitudes towards other types of music.

> Our music training is too pretentious. There needs to be more effort to make music more accessible. The classical world could learn a lot from rock musicians.

> There is too much predictability and too little variety in our classes, and they are too conservative. We need to look to the future, not the past.

'Token' explorations of different cultural practices was not considered the answer, however:

> We've suddenly got a whole load of world music instruments; last year
> we purchased some African instruments and gamelans. I feel it's
> offensive to play them if you don't know them. We've had specialists
> come in, and music teachers have taken some in-service, but I still think
> it's kind of superficial.

2. Music Education as Vocational Education

To the students who planned to become professional musicians after graduation, the specific skills honed through an education in music were obvious reasons for its inclusion in the school curriculum:

> Music education should provide vocational preparation. What we do is a
> prerequisite to the profession.

> I am here to gain the qualifications necessary to go on into sound engineering.

Many students—at all three sites—appreciated and enjoyed the rigour of rehearsals to achieve standards approaching those that would be expected of a professional. Garnering an understanding of the theoretical foundations of the discipline was also endorsed:

> We need to have theoretical knowledge; we can't rely on musical instinct alone.

> Theory gives you a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms of
> the music you play and listen to.

These students felt that many of the requisite techniques learned, like composing pieces in the style of Bach, did not stifle but rather informed their own creative efforts:

> I respect classical composers, and the genius of being able to write something like
> that, particularly after writing something myself. Writing is so labour intensive.

While many *A-level* students felt that they were beneficiaries of a great education (i.e., that their music training equipped them with the necessary skills and understandings to advance in music), many were also aware that initiation into the professional world of music making was not without its costs. In the race to 'be the best', accolades are earned at the expense of alienation

from others, from one's art, even from oneself. One student spoke of her dislike of 'forced' music making (that is, doing it because of school pressure, because of one's desire for prestige or because it would be your livelihood) which she felt would ultimately destroy one's love for music. Others also felt that music was meant to be enjoyed, but that engagement in music was stymied by the training programs of pre-professional musicians. Students felt that treating music more like a 'science' than an art was dispiriting and insensitive to what music was all about. A few also mentioned that the hierarchy and structure of musicians that emerged in a competitive environment was damaging to peer relations, amplifying feelings of success or failure and divisions between self and others. Furthermore, incursions on one's sense of self are further felt in environments where conformity to well-defined styles and standards is required. One student alluded to what she felt were the self-alienating aspects of the performing artist's training.

> Here they are just churning people out, packaged, ready-made musicians. Too much routine, rules, uniforms here: there is a danger of losing our individuality. I feel like a bear in a cage some days, as people don't have very much meaning. This place forgets the individual due to its structure and rigidity. People need more time to be individuals, to have the opportunity to make their own experiences or else they will have nothing to say, to play. I think they are cutting options too soon here.

3. Music Education as Self-Education

A few students at Bridgemoor and Kingsgate, and all those with whom I spoke at St. Regis, directly addressed what they thought was the way music education can positively affect the way one feels and sees oneself, others and the world. Students spoke candidly about music's therapeutic or cathartic value, noting how experiences offered through music education can help release and express powerful human emotions.

> Basking in the sheer enormity of the sound of music (such as "Carmina Burana") is a great stress releaser. Without music, the world would be a much angrier place.

Music helps to animate and empower people. Their efforts are rewarded through immediate feedback.

Music helps to conquer emotional fears.

Given the importance of music in providing opportunities for self-expression and exploration, many students felt that it should be accessible to all:

Everyone should have a chance to experience music, as without it we could become trapped within ourselves, and our potential remain unfulfilled.

It is a way of unlocking expressiveness; you are able to be creative.

It allows you to communicate in other ways.

It allows you to learn something about yourself.

For others, the feeling that music awakens our spirit and brings ourself into the world, providing us with a means of learning about our relational being (that is, ways to connect and ways to build relationships), suggested to them that music is a critical social catalyst:

Music forces you to get out there. You can't be reclusive as a musician.

It's a good way to meet people.

It is satisfying to know you give people enjoyment when you are performing.

It helps you become familiar with the relationship between an audience and performer.

The payoffs of taking these risks in music, of getting out there and expressing oneself, is an increase in self-understanding and self-confidence. A decided majority of the students attested to the tremendous personal growth that had taken place as a result of their having reached a high standard of performance and having had opportunities to share their achievements with an appreciative audience.

Others spoke only indirectly about ways in which engagement in music might aid self-

development. One student suggested that "it looks good on a resume because it suggests *[sic]* that you have a disciplined character." Another agreed, saying that music involves dedication and gives people the ability to work under pressure and to deadlines. Other qualities gained or enhanced through performing may be the ability to 'get on with people', to work collaboratively with others as a member of a team. While many students saw acceptance of work in music as a necessary pre-requisite of pleasure and achievement, one student elaborated on how the sense of discipline may actually condition cognitive processes.

> It gives you a schema on how to approach academia generally because, as it takes a high level of training, you have to get a hold of technique. There is a lot of drudgery at first, but you have to go through that process first to reap the rewards, to get to "bits of me." Tension between those two things—technique and expression—is always prevalent in academia.

Yet too much emphasis on the discipline of learning music, this same student warned, can be counterproductive and ultimately means the human side of music-making is neglected, with dire consequences for the fragile ego of the fledgling musician. He stated that teachers needed to guard against the tendency to overlook the musician for the music, noting that "we should be expected to work *with* music, not *for* it."

The Views of Canadian Students

Questions posed to Canadian students about the purpose and value of music education and whether they felt music program courses were in tune with their beliefs about music elicited responses that were, on the whole, remarkably congruent with the stated beliefs of their instructors and the philosophies underpinning school programs. Of course, this compatibility with their instructors' values may explain why they are taking music at school or why these students volunteered, often at the request of their teachers, to participate in this study. Like instructors, parents and policy-makers, the students at all three schools felt that music

education's value lay not in its perceptible content—the knowledge and skills it develops—but in the changes in cognition, perception and attitudes that being involved in music engenders. Most prevalent was the feeling that music changed one's perception of oneself, that through the joy of expressing oneself through music with others one discovers hitherto unknown aspects of oneself. Thus, in contrast to the British students, who also saw music education as important in providing certain cultural knowledge and vocational skills, Canadian students focused almost exclusively on how music education enhance one's self-development. To the Canadian students, the value of learning music had more to do with its being a vehicle for learning about who they are, what they are doing, and where they are going in tandem with others, and for gaining an appreciation for life in general. The speechlessness that often greeted the question "What are you learning in music?" stemmed from their feelings that musical learning had a lot to do with the experiences and memories they were accruing and the intangibles associated with these, rather than with quantifiable knowledge and skills.

> It's more the process that one goes through [...] than what one achieves.

> I think when you get involved in the arts, you share a spiritual side of life.
> It's an internal thing, not perhaps a measurable thing.

The cognitive benefits of being involved in music they cited included sharpened awareness, attentiveness and mental acuity, heightened understanding of learning processes and strategies and a more disciplined approach to learning.

> Music has helped me to stop and think and listen, to notice things in a lot more detail.

> Music, like books, can be complicated. It's a form of mental practice.

> Music sets up pathways in the brain; you're going to be able to figure things out.

I think it stimulates certain parts of the brain. They say that reading music and playing it at the same time stimulates certain parts of the brain.

I think music sharpens the mind because it always involves at least two senses; voice, ear, eye. It stimulates your brain because of the physical co-ordination and facility it requires.

You learn how to maximize your time, what is meant by work. You can apply the steps you take in learning a piece of music to any sort of project: 1) go through it holistically, 2) attack it in more detail, work on tough spots, and 3) go through it again and sew it all together.

Mentioning the obvious outcomes of learning music—that one's skill as a player or singer increases and that one's understanding and appreciation of music and a musician's art increases—was rare. Only a few students addressed this value of an education in music.

You can't learn music by just listening to Nirvana; you have to listen to and play different forms of music. You have to put yourself in the musician's shoes.

The purpose of music education is to develop a better appreciation for better music, especially for those who make it.

Progress in music is very obvious; sound improves so much with age and practice (whereas with basketball, other than getting just a bit faster and stronger, I didn't see much progress between grade 8 and grade 12).

You learn more about it, learn to enjoy it more and you're exposed to all different types of music.

A good proportion—over one/half—of students suggested that these goals (that is, studying music for the purpose of acquiring musical skills and knowledge) were often either irrelevant or counter-productive, impeding, rather than enhancing one's enjoyment of music. One student reflected on his experiences with music as an academic subject, recalling the way music would be prevented in its disembodied form, unrelated to its contexts and purposes.

In Ontario, you would do a lot of theory and history in music classes, studying different music, doing boring projects in our band classes. Here every class is a rehearsal, and I prefer the performing focus. Our teacher teaches a little history

and theory but in a more interesting way, by demonstrating the influence it's had on music today, its importance, etc. It's not just facts and figures about Handel....

A former music student, reflecting on reasons for her gradual disillusionment with music in school, put it this way:

> I found the theory boring. There was so much to remember when you played; looking at the key signature, time, duration of notes, pitch. I just want to play an instrument, not have to go through all the learning part. I don't have enough diligence to learn an instrument.

For others, an emphasis on developing executive skills in band class seemed too restrictive. Some students spoke about feeling impoverished by the lack of intellectual, creative or emotional stimulation provided by their music classes:

> What did I learn in music class? There was no change before and after taking choir. My voice is the same, and I didn't learn about the broader aspects of music, like music history. Music education needs to be more integrated with other subjects, and there needs to be criteria to be met to pass the course, not just based on how well you contributed to group efforts.

> I'm more of a creative player. In band programs they tend to play set pieces and it's kind of boring and monotonous.

> My voice wasn't being heard in choir. I wanted to do it my way, but felt like a robot, and didn't feel good, didn't feel important, didn't feel like I belonged. I would have done better in a freer, less structured situation.

One student commented on how her experiences in choir, in contrast to band classes, were far more emotionally engaging:

> In band, you just show up and play. You count in and go. In choir, you look at the music more, what it means to you , etc. For example, in "When the Earth Adorned", I think of the sun, myself; I imagine things when I sing. Band is so focused on printed page. When you have to memorize something [as in choir] you really know it, and your mind can wander because music has entered the subconscious. You now own the music and it's your gift to give. In band, because you don't own it, it's not really something you have to give. You just look at the notes and think about the time, the tempo, the duration of notes.... Band is technical, technical. In choir, you have to think about the music.

A Comparison and Discussion of British and Canadian Students' Views

While there was a remarkable similitude among British and Canadian students' beliefs concerning the personal signification of music and reasons for valuing it (i.e., that it was a particularly effective way to express and communicate emotion) more divergent views appeared concerning the question of the purpose and value of engaging in music, and, further, in music education. A clear demarcation could be made between British and Canadian students' beliefs, with nearly all Canadian students maintaining that the purpose of engaging in music is to become more self-aware, and most British students maintaining that the purpose of engaging in music is to become more musically and culturally aware. While Canadian students, like the British, did acknowledge the public face of music as well (i.e., its efficacy as a repository and conveyor of shared knowledge and feeling) they were more inclined to make imaginative inferences about the interiority of this public face. Meanwhile, the British students' interpretations tended to stay within the realm of things that are empirically verifiable (e.g., what the musicians were doing, how they were getting certain sounds, what techniques and styles they were utilizing). Canadian students explored what they felt music evokes (e.g., the social solidarity and harmony that music can create, the belief in a better world it can inspire), while unique to British students' responses was the notion that music was for the purpose of social diversion (i.e., enjoyment, entertainment, relaxation, recreation, and community strengthening). When asked to consider the purpose of music education, Canadian students expressed the view that its cardinal purpose is to heighten awareness of oneself and others. By contrast, British students felt the purpose of music education is to enable them to become musicians (in order that they might provide pleasure to others). While these contrasting views were made clear by quotes given in the preceding section and were also implicit in some of their statements regarding the significance of music to them (quoted in chapter five), these additional comments may help to delineate if differences in belief:

The purpose of music education is to enhance musical talent. (B)

Music is part of our culture, yesterday and today. (B)

Music is for entertainment, enjoyment, relaxation—a way to pass the time. (B)

You know you're contributing when you're making music. It increases your personal value. (C)

The purpose of learning music is to better understand ourselves, artists and our place in the universe. (C)

The purpose of music is to record how people feel at each time in history for other generations to know. For example, for the blacks, the blues was an important form to express how they felt; we can now relate back and know how they felt. We can learn from their emotions. (C)

It seems clear that British students' feelings about the purpose of music and music education were more *music-centric* in nature, (i.e., that the purpose of music is learning about music and/or becoming a musician), while the Canadian students were more apt to conceptualize the goal of music as being more *human-centric* or *socio-centric* in nature (i.e., that music serves human more than musical ends). Given the duality of these views, one must consider that their respective origins may lie in differences between Canadian and British music education systems, and beyond them, in other cultural differences. Recall that British music education focuses on training that will adequately equip the future professional musician (for instance, the individual tutoring on an instrument and taking small group instruction in theory, history and composition) whereas the B.C. system focuses on providing large group performance experiences that will develop positive attitudes not only towards the subject but towards each student and their peers. The former has music or "the subject" as its abiding and ultimate goal, the other aims to ensure that the participants involved are the immediate and lifetime beneficiaries of an education in music. This comment from a Canadian teacher illustrates this point:

The purpose of music has less to do with the subject and more to do with the person. One of the pivotal experiences in teaching music for me was conducting a grade eight band. They played well in a concert, and at the end the looks on their faces—the incredulity, the joy of having done it and feeling good about it—really awakened me to what teaching was all about. It is for the kids. The music was a vehicle for making kids feel like they have accomplished something, like they're worth something.

In Britain, in order to attain the first goal (i.e., the musical goal), students are encouraged to achieve control or mastery of their area of specialization in music. In Canada, the *human-centric* or *socio-centric* goal encourages students to relinquish control in order to offer themselves to the cause of corporate music-making, and in doing so, embarking on not so much a strictly musical journey as a psychologically transformative one. Recall the Canadian teacher, who, in admonishing members of the school choir for their perceived lack of focus on the work at hand, told students that nothing should come between them and the music, that they needed to forfeit their egos, to "put their games aside" in order to "accept this opportunity to work together" and surrender themselves to the music. Unfortunately, what students are surrendering to in this situation may be only one person's conception of music. The more passionately and persuasively peddled, the more convincing this version becomes. The British goal—the musical goal— encourages students to serve music, to discover what they can do for music, while the Canadian goal is to have students experience how, by serving music (or the director's brand of music), music can serve them.

The uncovering of these distinctly different postures in music education policy and practice stimulated me to inquire further, in order to determine the historical bases of the two perspectives and the reasons for the discrepancy in belief and practice. I began this inquiry by striking up additional conversations with teachers having over twenty years of experience in the field and familiarity with the traditions and educational practices of their respective cultures. I also consulted with students who had lived in more than one country and who thus might be able to

offer comparative perspectives on music education practices in their adopted and native cultures.

With regard to how music is viewed, taught and practised in Britain, Robert Gardiner (a Cambridge scholar, a musician for twenty years and, at the time of this study, the president of the British Music Educators Association), reminded me that, first, I should not underestimate the influence of the patronage system in the shaping of England's artistic and educational traditions. Given Europe's long tradition of patronizing the arts, first through the church and then under the auspices of wealthy families and aristocrats, the notion that one supported the artist in return for his/her services is pivotal to understanding the relationship of artists to society in European countries. Invested with a duty and responsibility to humankind for his or her gifts, the professional musician was supported by society for providing a cultural and civic service to that society. The question of whether or not the artists were personally fulfilled by the terms of the contract was immaterial or, at least, of secondary importance. In response to the growing demand for accomplished performing artists, the apprenticeship of promising musicians was assumed first by the conservatory and then as schooling became more widely accessible, by the state and private schools. This tradition of offering patronage and training coupled with an academic tradition that descends from, according to Gardiner, "German scientism" remain defining features of the curriculum of school music programs in Britain today. While a public educational setting supports the notion that music be available to all students regardless of ability and interest, the belief that to pursue music at the higher levels of schooling one should somehow be gifted in the subject and considering a career in it continues to this day.

In speaking with students in Britain, I grasped that many are acutely aware of their embeddedness in the musical lineage and historical imperatives that define British musical landscapes today. Some students spoke of how they felt privileged, even awed, at having the opportunity to work within and contribute to a cultural continuum, while others expressed the

loss of autonomy and confidence one might feel in a post-Shakespeare, Byrd and Britten world.

The students in Canada, on the other hand, were aware that the relative absence of the patronage and apprenticeship systems in their history has permitted a very different set of rules and attitudes surrounding the arts to develop. Many students, particularly those who had recently immigrated, spoke of the advantages experienced by a society "unburdened" by history:

> We are a society not bound by traditions. We can manipulate the society in the present. (C)

> I like Canadians' better ability to compromise, to change, to look at the alternatives. Not much culture here (nothing is more than 20 years old), so people don't have a strong attachment to things. I notice I have a much stronger connection to places, things, people than my Canadian friends. (C)

> I can understand why Canadians don't flock to operas and symphonies; that's not the art of Canada. People are very much more into popular music, there is such a diversity, and people have such diverse tastes. In Sweden, people's tastes in popular music are more homogeneous; there is a real push to be like everybody else there. (C)

The 'weightlessness' engendered by a lack of traditions and cultural imperatives is not entirely positive, however, according to those students who have lived in and known other, more established cultures. They speak of feeling stranded in a naive and almost dispassionate present:

> Asians and Europeans still think of North Americans as still part of the New World; simpletons, savages, raw, not grown in a historical sense. Their outlook on life is extremely positive, something that perhaps comes from their own lack of informed understanding about reality and the world. They will look at the future and the unknown positively. The more you know the more pessimistic you are? Knowledge can be detrimental to enjoyment...friends think I'm a real cynic and pessimist. (C)

> I think if we had a better appreciation for history (something that you can learn from music) you might have a better appreciation for life. (C)

> Art has always been neglected here, and if you don't nourish it, it won't grow. Here it is considered recreational, not anything on a large scale. Festivals are usually for young musicians. Without concentrated energy from the government,

schools and parents, music will not achieve the same meaning and status it has in these (China, Russia, Germany) countries. (C)

Art is a fundamental connection to the past, but in this society I don't think art provides, or people are concerned with, a connection to the past. Art here is mostly "feel good" stuff. (C)

In America, when you say music, people automatically think of pop music—NOW. My concern is that although I might identify with pop culture now, I'm going to grow old and then what? (C)

Another student suggested that given this granting of a "cultural *carte blanche*" in North America, the spirit of optimism it engenders can generate self-fulfilling behaviours and ambitions that are quite foreign to people from cultures where responsibility to one's family, career and tradition are key. "Asians, on the whole, are much more materially-minded and goal-oriented. Hence, they find the drives towards self-fulfillment in Canadian culture bordering on the hedonistic."

Further insight into the impact of different historical circumstances on Canadian artistic and educational traditions and practices was provided by a teacher at one of the Canadian schools in the study. I suggested to him that I was beginning to see two different conceptualizations of music emerging, with the Canadian students viewing music, much as the above student quoted had mentioned, in a far more self-oriented or narcissistic way than I had noticed with the British students. He proposed that: "The narcissistic concept of music you are hearing from students may be directly related to music traditions in North America. Wasn't that what jazz was all about; self expression?" While one might be reluctant to presume that a musical phenomenon that is clearly American in origin might have ineluctable repercussions in Canada, the ubiquity of American culture and musical traditions in Canada cannot be denied. One need only consider the extent to which B.C. in particular has adopted American music education practices and their stress on the grooming of large performance groups and satellite jazz ensembles. In fact, it could

be argued that American musical culture has been foundational in the forming of the musical ethos in B.C. schools, an ethos that favours the experiential, the practical, the technical, the experimental and the expressive, and scorns the pedantic and the analytical. The following two comments, the first by a Canadian teacher, the second by a new Canadian student recently arrived from Hong Kong, offer evidence of this influence in Canadian music classrooms:

> Academic achievement in music? I think it's less important than the experiential part of being involved in music. The academic analytical training you get in a lot of other subjects—I don't want to teach music or have kid learn music like it was chemistry or something. Kids want to play music; they want to get their hands on it, do the whole thing. You have to take a whole approach to music, like whole language techniques.

> I enjoy the Canadian system more than Hong Kong's. In Hong Kong they would just teach what's in the book, with no concern for your questions. The downside here is that student's questions are sometimes not relevant. The emphasis was on exams in Hong Kong, which meant that you would forget what you learned. Here what you learn, how you learn, is of more practical use.

Of course, it is important to consider the context within which this conception of music and practice of music education occurs. It occurs within a system bred on the educational theories of Ralph Tyler, for whom pragmatism was key (see *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, 1950), and on the philosophies of John Dewey, who asserted that schooling existed not for the edification but for the empowerment of the child (see *Experience and Education*, 1938). We hear the legacy of these educationalists' reforms in this Canadian teacher's outcry:

> The point of music history, philosophy? Would they help me with the more urgent problems of dealing with and ameliorating the problems that students face? Most of what I do requires the skills of a negotiator and moderator.

The championship of such doctrines devoted to the sanctity and encouragement of human potential have translated into music education practices that have prioritized the pragmatic needs and individuation of each student. Conversations with Canadian students, indeed, reveal that

many have inherited a perspective that promotes a self-circumscribed view of the world.

This, in part, defines the world in which British and Canadian high school students perceptions of music evolve. The conditions of their worlds invite further investigation. In the next chapter I consider more closely the implications of these two differing music education practices on an adolescent's developing conceptions of music, and I address the ways I feel these practices have alternately ignored, served, manipulated and/or exploited the adolescent imagination.

CHAPTER 8: IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

Since I am proposing that music can serve a unique function as an imaginative outlet and narrativizing agent for adolescents in Britain and B.C., it is vital that we recognize its importance in students' lives. We have seen that some adolescents find music's ambiguity its most appealing quality, as it gives them permission to dream, to imagine, to create worlds that are resonant with a dignity, vitality and integrity that they otherwise experience too infrequently. Attempts to guide or restrict this relationship with music would likely be met with great resistance and opposition; to be forced to relinquish figurative worlds for literal ones would be intolerable to the romantic imagination of a young adolescent. Teachers in general and music educators need to respect this capacity for invention and inspiration, and concern ourselves with the sowing of ideas, not the husbandry of thought in our high school music classes. As Shepherd (1993) reminds us:

> The ability to invest affect and meaning is, indeed, an inalienable attribute of human and social existence. The capacity is diminished only to the extent that people are persuaded to misrecognize in music an ability to originate and determine its own meanings . . . Thankfully, cultural capital is more inalienable than economic capital. That is the basis of value and power in music (p. 202, 203).

We need to consider how an individual teacher's conceptualization of music, whether it is an academic discipline and performing art (that is, *music-centric* in nature) or a catalyst and voice for self-discovery *(human-centric)*, may account for the attitudes of students and contribute to predicting the strengths and problems of that teacher's music program. A *music-centric* approach may produce excellent instrumentalists and knowledgeable musicians, but at what price? For some students, such an approach misrepresents music and is therefore deceptive.

Music is emotionally driven but the English don't acknowledge that. (B)

A level music is dull, frustrating, pretentious; rock portrays true feelings. (B)

A level clichés music into being boring. Pop music has a better image. (B)

I don't like the expectations of music; musicians as self-disciplined, focused on laws and abstract part of the subject. (B)

To others, a *music-centric* approach frustrates or demoralizes.

I didn't like the composition bit. I wasn't very good at it. (B)

I didn't like performing. I don't have the confidence for the risks you have to take in music. (B)

I'm not cut out to be a musician as I'm too sensitive. Music means so much to me that it tortures me with constant feelings of inadequacy. I make myself so vulnerable in music, it seems to destroy me. Every other subject's emotional cycle is interrupted whereas music just seems like one long torment. A lot of my energy is nonproductively spent in practice as playing music is not about learning Bach, it is about fulfilling my need to be accepted by people, to prove myself. I am neurotically nervous about performing, and go to pieces in public. (B)

Teachers here don't praise enough. We still need kudos. (B)

For others, this approach discriminates.

Music is for the selected few and has nothing to do with the human being. (B)

It seems that they mark you on what you're born with in our *A level* music course. (B)

The range of music that we study is too narrow, and teachers put across the impression that other types of music, like Louis Armstrong, etc., are a bit inferior. (B)

For still others, the *music-centric* approach to music education stultifies. Here, two British

teachers, aware of the pedestrian character of some *A-level* teaching, relay students' concerns:

A level music is boring as shit. Because *A level* attracts only the so-called motivated students, teachers do not feel that they have to teach it in an interesting, engaging way.

I'm concerned about teaching styles. There is an over-reliance on teacher over student; we need more interaction in classes. We rely too heavily on the apprentice system of 18th and 19th century where musicians are good executives,

but.... We need to develop thinking musicians by integrating thinking activities in music; making judgments, developing leadership skills.

The sense of obligation to preserve the traditions of European art music and a societal rootedness in apprentice systems of the past, where the goal was to train select students for life as civic or ecclesiastical musicians, remain critical issues in British music education today. They have had the effect of instilling 'realistic' viewpoints regarding the competitive nature of the professional music world, and skeptical, even dismissive, attitudes toward other musics and other ways of knowing and being with music. The objective stance of those enculturated into this view of music allows the parcelling of music into categories, separated by function and types of human responses it evokes. Rock music satisfies "primal urges"; the social context of music-making and "belting it out with others" satisfies students' "animal instincts"; listening to certain musics "calms aggressive drives", and the concept of music as "a route to ego-centric self-actualization" satisfies romantic notions much like those of the "wandering Jew".

Music's connection to emotions fares only slightly better. Students often spoke of music as a means of communicating or releasing emotion, but were less inclined to ruminate on this perceived aspect of music (i.e., which emotions and for what purpose) than their Canadian counterparts. One student's comment that "music is emotionally driven but the English don't recognize that" suggests that, for the English, this way of knowing music may be largely subterranean, or at least, rarely voiced. Interestingly, an article by Sloboda (1998) in a British music magazine, makes pertinent remarks about cultural attitudes towards emotion in music. One comment in particular resonates with the foregoing remarks by a British music student, and alludes to the hesitancy of people in Britain to assign importance to the emotional attributes of music making: "We should not feel guilty for the emotions music arouses in us; they are central to it" (p. 25).

There is no question that British music education methods, which focus on the concentrated instruction of the serious (and usually talented) few, serve the goal of producing critically informed and competent musicians. While my data shows that Canadian students appear to have equal appreciation and knowledge of a wide variety of artists and eras of musics, the calibre of the British students' musicianship and level of playing in general far exceeds what one would typically hear from Canadian school music students of the same age. Most striking is their greater knowledge and skill as composers; where a workshop debuting students' Debussian efforts may be commonplace in British high school music classes, something comparable in B.C. music classes would be a rarity indeed. However, the British system is not without its critics. Its traditional (Eurocentric) literacy/performance oriented practices, which descend from an aesthetic that views art as cultural capital and from an epistemology rooted in a hierarchical Western belief system (one that has privileged the rational and the status quo), has resulted in important psychological, sociological, cultural and democratic dimensions of learning and teaching music being undervalued. Distinguishing between the *pavane* and the *gavotte* might be important to the French Baroque specialist, but removed from their human context and studied for their subtle clichéd theoretical attributes, these dance forms have little relevance to high school students. Swanwick (1979) has long reminded teachers of their duty to teach the lively art of music to their students:

> We are in the position of leading horses to water. Whether they drink or not is really their affair. But at least we can make sure it is to water we are going and not to a history of wells, or an analysis of H_2O, or learning how the word water is written, or hearing from more learned horses. (1979, p. 35)

In his theory of primary understanding, Egan (1988) offers reasons for the ineffectiveness of pedagogies that focus on the abstract. He points out that, as the mind may be predisposed to thinking in narratives and will shape the world to match these predisposed forms of order, theory

forces us to work against this weft, straining the mind's predisposed structures to conform with the external world. He suggests that embedding knowledge in a narrative structure, that is, giving it a human, embodied form, allows students to invest themselves in the content presented and, hence, have an apportionable share in the learning. Thus, what is needed is teaching that attends to the learners and to the way music, through its ability to stimulate the imagination and synthesize manifold perceptions into a cohesive meaningful whole (that is, a narrative), figures importantly in a young person's way of seeing and making sense of the world. Without giving attention to students' need to identify with the affective import of knowledge, to grasp it in its warm-blooded form, we sentence them to a conventional and deadening literacy:

> The mind that has successfully internalized literacy and whatever codes are given it to learn, but who has failed to convert those codes into distinct and unique living knowledge is the paradigm of educational failure..... "They will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality" (Phaedrus, 275, cited in Egan, 1990, p. 150).

Egan suggests that, as human beings are superbly equipped to deal with living knowledge, educational programs that focus on the dissemination and acquisition of coded information "are inevitably in trouble from the start, and can generally display 'success' with only a very small percentage of their subjects" (p. 151).

Programs that concentrate on knowledge that is assumed to be relevant to students (that which is common to students' everyday experiences) can be, Egan would assert (as do many Canadian students), equally unengaging. A *human-centric* approach, by which teachers take pains to ensure the production of music is not disassociated from its human source, may assure students of its innate significance, but, in the meantime, how much music is being learned? How many critical thinking skills are being nourished and potentialities challenged and realized? Some students question the level of competence that is expected of school musicians in B.C..

Standards of instrumental music in England are much higher and much more demanding. In Canada, where I studied music up to last year, the extent of theory in schools was harmonic and melodic scales. (B)

In Taiwan, the education is strict. Academic levels could be higher here; they don't push students enough. There is too much review, repeating what has been done the previous grade, etc. They could do more in band, too; there are a lot of band students that are not good enough to be there. There should be a top band and a lower band. (C)

When you're playing at a grade 9/10 piano level, you won't learn anything in band. Most people do it because they enjoy working in a group. (C)

I wish there were auditions for senior wind ensemble. Some players are just half-committed to the group and rarely practise. (C)

Other students question the degree to which the course content challenges students intellectually and aesthetically:

Some of the repertoire we do is cheesy, trite. A lot of songs we do are concerned with the short-term effect. You have a great time while singing, but it's really not challenging you; it doesn't change your way of thinking. You're not thinking, "Wow! I never thought of it this way!" When the band plays "Ovation Overture", for instance, you don't tend to remember it. (C)

I don't think we're conscious of creating art when we're playing. The band tends to look at just the technical side of things, rarely listening to the overall sound it is making. We need to be aware more of the big picture, the meaning, why we're doing what we're doing. It creates a better energy in your sound, too. (C)

Music education needs to be more integrated, not like a little kingdom unto its own. (C)

One senses that for some, this "kingdom" could be likened to a bee colony with the workers busily engaged in working to satisfy the director and that, in the process, the workers are compensated for intellectual sacrifices made for the good of the colony by an honourable mention in the "whole person" category. One of the teachers in the study affirmed these hunches:

Are we serving the individual in our classes? Probably not. We're not serving those who are especially creative, and those kids that think they are 'musically

slumming' by being part of the school band . But I think we reach more kids and, while we might not be serving them extremely well musically, we are serving their needs as a whole person. The band unit is still the most efficient unit to get across what you're teaching to a large group. For those who need more enrichment, they'll learn it on their own. But I do think we need to allow for personality differences, etc., otherwise you just have a trombone factory.

One student clearly felt the individual was not being served in his band class experiences:

I don't like the band environment. I need to learn in my own way, like listening to recordings of music and then playing it. In band, I didn't get a chance to explore these methods of learning. It was like a typing or data-processing class; more restricted. (C)

Clearly the emphasis on educating feelings or the' whole person' courts the danger of anything that promises self-enlightenment; a forfeiture of a certain amount of intellectual autonomy on the part of the participants. This problem is compounded for fraternities such as school music groups where one's pledges are to be fulfilled within the context of a similarly single-minded group. After taking up vows, giving up all worldly goods and preoccupations and surrendering one's soul to the cause, students are promised 'salvation' (self-discovery/ enlightenment) if they attend every early morning practice, endure the hours of tedious practice and humour the whims of the director. Blind acceptance of all terms of the contract is also a requisite, as another student pointed out:

There needs to be more communication in the courses; you don't know what's expected, there's no criteria for marking and no course outline. It's all very subjective, based on attendance, concerts. (C)

While the intentions of educators appear 'innocent' enough, using these exhortative methods to persuade students of the righteousness of one's particular ideological stance raises serious pedagogical questions. Egan suggests that methods of teaching that are attempting to influence belief more than instill knowledge are rhetorical in nature and need to be viewed with suspicion. If rhetoric can be conceived as "the body of knowledge and the practical skills that

may be employed in persuading others to see and feel about something in a particular way" (Egan, 1990, p. 65), then, as a pedagogical method, it persuades people to believe something is true rather than enabling them to know that something is true (Egan would call the latter a 'philosophic' or 'Platonic' method.) In order to be persuasive, the rhetorician shapes the content of his/her subject, highlighting the most engaging aspects of it and abridging or disregarding the rest, evoking, for listeners, understandings of the subject that originate more from a visceral, emotional response, rather than from a more thorough conceptual understanding.

This, I feel, accurately describes the artfulness of techniques employed by the B.C. music educators observed. Aware of the epic effort required to familiarize oneself with the immense canon of musical theory and history in Western music, they present a user-friendly version of their subject that will appeal to a general population of adolescents; a non-academic, non-theoretical, experientially-based, collaboratively produced and emotionally engaging version. Students subsequently adopt these understandings of music and crusade for it in a similar light, quite oblivious to the scale and complexity of the subject. What they have been led to believe may be partially true; music *is* emotionally engaging and collectively embodied. However, the fact that knowledge is withheld and the subject misrepresented in order to achieve these understandings suggests that it is not as much a pedagogical technique as a soliciting strategy that determines the nature of 'music' for students in B.C. The parts of the subject that could have been explained, its structure and its myriad contextual manifestations, is unexamined, leaving its claim to 'mysticism' unchallenged. If it takes a fully informed perspective to make judicious decisions and to form independent beliefs, educators need to consider more seriously how we compromise this capacity and the tenets of a liberal arts education by effecting illusory understandings of a very complex topic.

The tendency to present expurgated versions of music in the B.C. schools observed, thereby

setting up certain parameters for students' understandings of music, needs further unpacking. One could argue that such a presentation of music serves a particular ideological agenda, one that is concerned with the propagating of certain aesthetic beliefs. The testimony of educators and students suggests that this agenda is most closely linked to the tenets of an aesthetic theory known as "absolute expressionism." This theory proposes that music, intrinsically (i.e., within its discrete artistic properties), is expressive of subjective reality. Langer, a major proponent of this theory, wrote exhaustively on what she held to be the profound relationship of the life of feeling to art, suggesting that "Music is a tonal analogue of emotive life" (1953, p. 27). Appropriated by Reimer in his arguments for the importance of an aesthetic education in "A Philosophy of Music Education" (1989), Langer's suppositions took on a decidedly more proselytizing tone, captured in the mantra, "The aesthetic is that which is unique to the arts and essential for all people" (p. 32), that suffuses Reimer's testament to aesthetic education. Such passionate pitches as, "There is no more powerful way for humans to explore, embody and share their sense of the significance of human life than through the making and experiencing of art" (p. 68), and "The deepest value of music education is to enrich the quality of people's lives through enriching their insights into the nature of human feeling" (p. 53), have inspired legions of music educators in North America who have been anxious to find a message that could somehow epitomize their beliefs and bring parents, public and students alongside. With its Romantic overtones, its hinted promise of redemption, and its one-size-fits all affability, this is a doctrine that has gained wide currency in North American public education. Essentially a democratization of the aesthetic canons of nineteenth century German Romantics, everyone, by virtue of being human, is capable of achieving the once mystical aesthetic experience. It wrests art from the grip of formalism, from its ensconcement in credos such as *"art for art's sake,"* and returns it to the people. It is a beneficent notion, and one that has helped music education draw up alongside other curricular

areas that were, in response to Dewey's call for educational reform, refitting education so it would fit the learner.

Ostensibly magnanimous (what could be wanting of a theory that prioritizes human interests?), the way this particular aesthetic theory has seized hold of the imaginations of educators and now monopolizes the mandates and practices of music education in B.C. now calls for attention. Commandeered with the zeal of crusaders, it has been brandished to give meaning to programs that need to justify their place alongside a roster of examinable high school courses. The urgency of the music educators' positions (e.g., "students need music because of its subjective value, its role in the education of feeling and in the development of the 'whole person'") becomes more apparent when one considers what *raison d'être* remains if the aesthetic rationale is omitted (as many of the students disillusioned with the lack of challenge they had experienced in music class intimated). The existence of the programs depends on the persuasiveness of music teachers' rhetoric, the tightness of their programmatic hold on the production of meaning in music, and the naïveté of their clientele. These are the conditions that distinguished at least two of the programs observed (one need only remember the number of students who reiterated "music is for us, about us... about educating feeling... developing the whole person... understanding what it means to be human").

While Walker (1990) might suggest that B.C. educators have misplaced their pedagogical energy, given his view that "aesthetic theory has tended to become remote and distant from what musicians actually do" (p. 136), de Man (1986) might go on to suggest more specifically that B.C. educators have based their practices on misplaced rhetoric, embracing a rhetorical concept of education while forgetting the rhetorical basis of art. By denoting music's aesthetic significance, B.C. educators obscure the possibility that the relationship between sound and meaning may be conventional, not phenomenal, thereby promoting a belief in a single reality

rather than multiple realities. Indeed, due to some individual's tendency to play the aesthetic card as a way to prove the inviolability of one's cause, de Man suggests that the aesthetic serves the ideological function of "manipulating others and depriving them of their freedom through the machinery of persuasion and the luxuriance of rhetoric" (1986, p. 24). Before allowing students to work with music as a *text*, to discern for themselves the asymmetry between text and world and the ambivalences between text and meaning, an aesthetic or ideologically driven method of teaching suppresses these discontinuities to offer seductively coherent, customized accounts of what music 'means' and reasons for engaging in it.

As an antidote to this compulsion to offer pre-masticated versions of the text's sound/ meaning relationship to our students, de Man recommends a greater use of *literariness* in the teaching of texts (1986, p. 9), that is, a greater focus on *form* rather than *function* as it curbs proprietorial needs to make pronouncements about the nature of the world. He explains: "More than any other mode of enquiry... the linguistics of *literariness* is a powerful and indispensable tool in the unmasking of ideological aberrations, as well as a determining factor in accounting for their occurrence" (1986, p. 11). Translated to music education, such an approach would mean allowing students far more opportunity to engage with the text in a conceptual and structural way by familiarizing themselves with the techniques, traditions and craft of musical composition. Opportunities to compose, where one relies on the text and tools of music to express a textual understanding of one's own while being constantly involved in formulating ideas which are fully intelligible only in musical modes of understanding, is especially critical in helping students construct what Woodford refers to as "their individualized musical selves" (1997, p. 16). The relative lack of composition practices and other opportunities to deal directly with the musical text in music education classes leaves students critically and musically undeveloped and hence more vulnerable to solicitations for engagement in non-negotiable forms of music and music

pedagogy. Woodford contends that a tendency of school music cultures to nurture and reward musical sociality, through the formation and maintenance of groups such as bands and choirs, can lead to "indoctrination and the loss of personal identity and control over musical consciousness, leaving one susceptible to manipulation by others" (p. 15). As a result of participating in music education environments where independent musical thinking is at best epiphenomenal, Woodford argues that students are "ill-equipped to participate in the continued and hopefully democratic shaping of their culture. Reduced to simply doing what they are told by authority figures (e.g. parents, teachers, and the media), they tend only to reproduce, rather than reconstruct, musical culture" (p. 16). Furthermore, based on student/teacher testimonies in this study that show a striking resemblance of views, we need to ask if students in B.C., indeed, are not part of a reproductive cycle rather than a reconstructive process of belief. If musical democracy could be defined as "the freedom to participate, both individually and collectively in musical decision-making with respect to what is of musical value to self and society" (p. 16), to what degree are these students involved in the shaping of musical belief and the determination of musical values? Are they not instead helping to concretize prevailing beliefs?

Two questions remain. What causes students to accept these terms of participation in school music programs? Are we serving or capitalizing on the emotional vulnerability of adolescents? Given many students' fragile sense of themselves and the need they have to establish connections with people outside of their families, an invitation to be part of a similarly-motivated peer group has much appeal. While it may appear that music is a part of their scholastic life that is attuned to their socio-emotional needs and is serving this need unconditionally, the affable aesthetic doctrines promoted by these programs may in fact be serving the needs of a tentatively situated school department. In such cases, when the admirable *human-centric* goals of music education are fetishized in order to defend the value of one's program, both the intended aesthetic and

psychological benefits of being involved in a school music program are seriously compromised, even debased. By capitalizing on student interests for political ends (a well-subscribed music program epitomizes a wholesome school to many North Americans), one needs to consider the extent to which our choristers and instrumentalists are being exploited as much as they are being served.

Perhaps I am shooting the messenger here. Perhaps in a culture where the arts are considered integral to a child's education, one would not need to employ such questionable recruitment and leadership styles, styles which presume one must possess a child's mind before one can teach it. The politicization of music does not begin in the music class, it begins with pervasive social forces that are powerful dictators of how the members of a culture should think, believe or act. Consider the legacy of one of the historical foundations of North America; as the "New World," it inspired the building of a community committed to the principles of democracy, where each person had the right and power to choose her or his own destiny and version of the world. To the Romantics who responded to this first promise of Utopia in a "new" land, the challenges and rewards would not have disappointed for they represented an opportunity to achieve heroic status, to escape the mundane and to test one's will and ingenuity by exploring unknown worlds. The opportunities to define and establish one's own version of freedom would not have been long-lived, however, and the gradual sedimentation and reification of those dreams would have had subsequent waves of settlers soon facing the questions "Whose Utopia?" and "At what cost?" And then, to what degree would the quests for equality, justice and a free world have been undone by people's own desiring? By a possessing righteousness that blinded one to the terms of one's "original" desires and allowed one to accept the terms of the ones available? One need only see the legacy of this pattern in the "industry of romance" (Egan, 1990, p. 72) that flourishes today by the number of people that are willing to surrender to the terms of the tele-

evangelist, the tarot card reader, the tabloid writers, the afternoon talk show hosts, the house and garden experts, the horse whisperers, the psychologists who have pinned down the multiple ways of knowing and most effective ways of being in this world to seven, the travel writers who have unearthed the mystery of life in Peru or by retracing the footsteps of the faithful in Spain, the maternity wards that have Mozart's "Ah, Vous Dirai-Je, Maman" on auto-repeat, the educational programs that promise to rescue self-esteem as if it were a non-contingent construct, the thrice-divorced rock diva who claims that love is eternal and the "I am Canadian" marketing campaigns that offer the most recitable credos of the national dream and identity. This compendium of manufactured desires is a rich and ever-growing one in twentieth century North American society, a phenomenon underwritten by a type of romanticism that Egan suggests pervades the thinking of many adults today (so much so that he feels the twentieth century will be known as the century in which romantic understanding dominated public media and discourse [1990, p. 16]). While at its best, romantic understanding instills life with a sense of wonder and invites and rewards our investments in it (as was affirmed by adolescents to explain their particular relationship with music), at its worst, when inadequately stimulated and developed, it is "particularly prone to whimsy, sentimentality, weak mysticism and high-sounding vacuousness taking the proper place of reason" (p. 172-173).

These two powerful "engines" of North American culture—a devotion to the tenets of democracy and a spirit of romanticism—underlie a multitude of cultural values and pressures. Expansive in perspective, optimistic in temperament, the appetites of the democrat and the romantic lean towards the broad and unrestrictive, championing human potential, and impatient with, even intolerant of, the precious and abstracted. We see how this manifests itself in the belief that all children must have access to all, in order that the whole person be served, a belief that has had incalculable influence on the way public education is conceptualized and delivered

in B.C. While British music education focuses on the selected few, B.C. embraces the multitudes. While British education leads students to an in-depth theoretical analysis of two or three subjects by the end of their public schooling, B.C. education encourages students to continue exploring a range of subjects and fields right up to their senior years of schooling. While British educators expect the subject to be served, educators in B.C. expect the student to be served.

We hear this same educational imperative in the circuitous arguments presented for the justification of music in schools. Typically every reason—cognitive, affective, social and physical—is cited for the learning of music except its most obvious; that it teaches and allows students to practise the artform that musicians are engaged in. Stating the obvious would do little to persuade the North American public, not only because it shifts attention away from the student and on to the subject, but because to many in North America, as one teacher points out, art connotes the "effete," the "airy-fairy," the "plaything" and exclusive property of the leisure class. Hence, we are forced to abandon *the art for art's sake* argument in favour of reciting the far sturdier and more useful by-products of learning music, like the development of self-discipline, self-esteem, the cognitive, interpersonal and leadership skills it fosters, and its usefulness as a public relations vehicle.

Other studies offer further evidence of the extent to which schools and staff succumb to external pressures, and pervasive cultural conceptions of the value of music. In a study on teachers' beliefs in Ontario, Hanley (1989) found that teachers found it easier to capitulate to extrinsic conceptions of the value of music and to compromise their former beliefs in the aesthetic value of music to support more utilitarian functions of music making. Harris, in her study on music education policy and practice in Canadian schools, *Administering School Music in Three Canadian Settings: Philosophy, Action and Educational Policy* (1991) found that, similarly, educators often relinquish personal beliefs about music in order to accommodate the

expectations of the wider community in which they work. Harris found that while educators and curriculum documents may support the aesthetic value of music, in reality, in order to enhance music's status in environments that value the economic and the technological, educators are swept into a cultural reproductive cycle of grooming the artistic elite (often from a higher socio-economic status) while giving the other students little serious opportunity to develop their abilities and experience success in music.

The *human-centric* or *socio-centric* approach to music education is clearly, then, more than an educational phenomenon. It is a cultural one, a descendent of a long romance with a belief in the indomitability and beauty of the human spirit, and the value of the arts in evoking this 'truth'. The flaw, as has been discussed, is due to its incompleteness or selectiveness as a pedagogical method; what is taught is that which can be narrativized (i.e., that is, the parts of the subject that are humanly and affectively engaging). Denying all but narrative understandings of the subject, the *human-centric* approach thereby promotes a cycle of dependency and vulnerability to external control amongst its followers and graduates.

Egan, who claims that the narrative mind (particularly as romantically embodied) is particularly active in young adolescence, would suggest that, up to age fifteen, an approach that capitalizes on students' romantic interests is an effective way to present content areas to students. As "connections among parts of knowledge are not matters of much urgency, young adolescents tend to connect themselves with particular areas of engagement directly, by means of romantic associations" (1990, p. 177). In romantic thinking, certain great figures, ideas and dramatic events might be recalled but there will be a lack of systematic grasp of the historical or theoretical framework in which they are embedded. After this age, however, the adolescent is ready to enter into a more philosophical view of the world, one where "students realize that the world is a complex interconnected unit of some kind and that they are part of it, they are no

longer transcendent players but are agents in complex processes" (p. 177). Here, a metaphoric grasp of the world (the need to interpose an imaginative interpretation of things, to invent a meaning for it) is gradually weakened, to be succeeded by a more literal acceptance of things. In such a framework, music can be just music (e.g., "an early harmonic style with very little use of appoggiaturas or other non-chord tones in the melodic line"), rather than a tropological stand-in (e.g., "it reminds me of people singing, screaming on a hill in the fog"). During this "philosophical" time in one's development, interest is fixed on concepts and ideologies like society, culture, mind, evolution and human nature, and beliefs are pruned to ensure they are free from contradiction. A realization that schemes cannot adequately reflect the complexity of reality signals a transition to the next layer of understanding that Egan terms the *Ironic*, and which he suggests marks adulthood. Here the skeptic takes over; schemes and laws that once seemed invulnerable are, upon closer scrutiny, rendered too confining or tenuously structured. Particulars, contexts, and greater appreciation for "what is" rather than "what one believes should be" allow "ironic" thinkers to enjoy a freedom and playfulness that a degree of impartiality brings. But remnants of one's primary understanding of the world remain, allowing such qualities as metaphoric quickness, poetic imagination, and inventiveness to continue to vivify and give affective meaning to things. Egan stresses that "there is no external or necessary quarrel between abstractions and imaginative visions" (1990, p. 172). Both of these together constitute the first major step in becoming educated in a literate culture.

It is interesting to note the contrasting degree to which British and Canadian participants appeared to have entered into a "post-romantic" layer of understanding. While for both Canadian and British students romantic or narrative thinking is important as a way to structure their imaginative understandings of music (as I discussed in chapter five), the Canadian students I interviewed were more apt to employ this type of thinking to all areas of understanding and

learning. By contrast, the British students seemed to be able to disengage this perspective when considering questions which might be more effectively served by a more literal and less subjective grasp of things. Learning about the complexities of musical structure that are at a composer's disposal are not assisted by student perspectives that are resolutely self-engaged. A "what's this got to do with me?" attitude compounds the solving of any issue or task (such as the unscrambling of a dictated five-part chord) that appears to be not even tangentially related to their lives. Furthermore, how helpful are these attitudes when considering the broader socio-cultural implications of the functions of music and the reasons for participating in it, the engineered uses of music in various societies, or the intertwining of personal, social and political investments in the production of music's meaning? Subjective perspectives don't 'travel' well; the understanding of the role and function of musics in all their diversity is poorly facilitated by perspectives grounded in personal niches of meaning. While a few Canadian students appeared to have been endowed with the ability to contest the ideologies that have conditioned our understandings and practices of music, more commonly it was the British students who spoke from a more objective place, addressing the literal, musical, or political reasons for valuing music and an education in music (For instance, "music is used for the sake of material gain or for sentimental reasons. The media is in the business of emotions, and will use music to promote their position, like the music chosen for the news, Bosnian documentaries, ads, etc. An education in music prevents people from being manipulated by this.")

The fact that Canadian students appear not to have acquired an integrated understanding of a school subject and may be stalled in narrative conceptualizations of it finds analogous support in a study conducted by Seixas (1993) in the field of history education. With his research into the ways adolescents make sense of history in schools in the same area of B.C., Seixas found that students had similarly well developed personal views of history, but lacked a systematic grasp of

the subject due to not having absorbed some key criteria of historical thinking, such as 1) the ability to identify events of historical significance, 2) the ability to adapt to new findings in history, based on evidence, and 3) the ability to understand, through empathy, human agency in history (p. 302-303). He suggested that students need to learn how to apply this framework to the more subjective approaches and the knowledge about history they glean primarily in non-school contexts: "Given a common framework of historical methodology, school might be a place where private and personal meanings drawn from stories of the past emerge in a broader more systematically critical setting" (p. 321-322). If one was to apply Seixas's work about how students need to think about history to how students might learn and think about music, curricular goals in B.C.'s music education programs that are commensurate with Seixas' recommendations could be flagged and brought to the forefront in classroom practice. These would be the goals that stress the abilities to understand, apply, assess and appreciate the variant processes and contexts of music making and how to utilize them to inform one's own musical endeavours and understandings of self and the world. Quoting Seixas (1993) and the B.C. Ministry of Education Music Curriculum Guide (1995), a framework of correspondent goals in history and music education would look like this:

<u>**History Education Objective #1**</u>
- ability to identify events of historical significance.
- understand what historians do.

<u>**Music Education Objective #1**</u>
- develop literacy in music, including familiarity with the conventions of written music.
- develop ability to discern effective compositional and performance techniques.
- demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of artistic and aesthetic expression. (see Endnote 6)

History Education Objective #2
* ability to adapt to new findings in history, based on evidence.

Music Education Objective #2
* investigate and experience emerging technologies that find application in music.
* explore, create and interpret self-and-world awareness through the study of music and music traditions of world cultures.

History Education Objective #3

* ability to understand human agency in history (through empathy).

Music Education Objective #3
* appreciate the role of music in society.
* accept and respect the ideas of others by working together to create, explore and express through music.

A dearth of theory and history in high school music courses in B.C. has resulted in students graduating from these courses with myopic, undeveloped perspectives on music. Attempts to deepen student understanding of music's structure and broaden their understanding of the cultural contingencies of these structures will allow for more coherent and embracing conceptions of the practice of music and will allow them to find "their own ways of being musical" (Schafer, 1976, p. 61). An emphasis on these goals would help to balance the following targeted goals in the B.C. music curriculum guide that are (at least according to study participants) being successfully met.

* connect knowledge gained with experiences in music with other aspects of their lives.
* use expressive skills gained in music to convey meaning in other aspects of their lives.
* develop independence, self-motivation and positive self-image through experiences with music.
* practise co-operation in social interactions involved in the creation, exploration and expression of music.
* develop discipline and confidence through experiences that demand focused and sustained practice. (1995, p. 1-2)

Attempts to broaden student understandings of music, and dislodge them from their fiercely defended nexus with identity and romance will not be an easy task, as it challenges a much deeper culturally held conception of art (as has been previously discussed). Canadian author Atwood reminds us of how entrenched these conceptions of artists' work are in North America, and how the aura that surrounds art will likely not be readily dispelled: "We have a somewhat romantic notion on this side of the Atlantic about what an author is. We think of writing not as something you do but as something you are" (cited in Sullivan, 1998, p. 4). But the responsibility that such a romantic notion of art entails, the defenses that must be erected and the battles that must be won for the sake of one's righteous attachments, may prevent one from ever being truly available to hear the music. Or, as Atwood points out, they may prevent one from playing the music that anyone would wish to hear: "I don't believe poetry is or should be self-expression in any naive, personal sense. Rather I see it as a lens through which the human universe can see itself, an aural focusing through which human languages can hear themselves" (p. 248).

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS

The mark of a moderate man
Is freedom from his own ideas. (Lao-Tzu, 1963, p. 110)

Our new knowledge and understanding of the context within which our students come to know music compels us to return to and interrogate anew my earlier surmises about the significance of music to adolescents. By grounding my investigation and interpretation of students' interpretive responses to music in aesthetic and psychological theory, I was able to offer the provisional conclusion that, due to the dominance of views which expressed a relationship between students' subjectivities and music, there may be a commonality to the significant ways in which music nourishes the subjective lives of our students. By engaging Kristeva's theory of the *semiotic* and Barthes notion of *jouissance*, I was able to locate and articulate attributes of human desire that may enable us to respond to art in a pre-reflective way. Recruitment of theories that have explored human development, such as Sutton-Smith's idea of the *narrative mind* and Egan's theory of *romantic understanding*, have allowed me to suggest that for adolescents, "I feel therefore I am" may be an apt descriptor of adolescent cognition.

Subsequent inquiry into the educational settings in which students develop, and the divergent views that emerged in regards to the broader purposes and values of an education in music, have forced me to consider other possible conditionalities of belief. We saw how the British students, particularly those who were being schooled in a private institution, relinquished their subjective attachments and imaginative understandings of music when considering the social, intellectual and cultural implications of one's education in music. That one is being inducted into a complex world dense with traditions and conventions, with the ultimate expectation that one is doing this to serve one's society is tacitly acknowledged by students

involved in music in their senior years of schooling in Britain. While students in the one public school in the study in Britain were likewise engaged in a program that was equipping students with the knowledge and skills that would be useful to the musician, the sense that they were being groomed for a trade or life in public office was less pronounced, and its relative absence allowed them to dwell on personally gratifying aspects of participating in music. Taking one step further are students whose music experiences are realized within the enclave of public schooling in B.C., Canada, where the whole notion of preparing students for a career in a subject area is secondary to ensuring that the 'whole child' is served by an exposure to a wide variety of disciplines and experiences. The intentions of this latter system are admirable, but, in the process of dissemination, are susceptible to myriad forms of intervention at the administrative, pedagogical and social levels. Each level of dissemination has had an indelible impact on the way education is administered and viewed, and, for music education, the consequences have been especially profound. Charged at the outset with the conveying of the romanticist's desires and outfitted with a rationale that could withstand utilitarian critique, music, as suggested by the findings of this study, is steadfastly lodged in the narrative consciousness of many North Americans. We noticed how persuasive a hold this conception of music had on Canadian students, how they did not veer from entrenched views that music was a vehicle for self-realization, even when asked to probe the social and cultural value of engaging in music. Their imaginative understandings of music were not considered ways of personalizing the meaning of music, they were paradigms of belief that could be widely applied to all aspects of music making and learning.

What needs to be modified now in my original conclusions about adolescent conceptions of music is the notion that subjective consciousnesses can be formed and informed in part by discourses, and that one's understandings are indeed, according to my data, subject to cultural

beliefs. That one's concept of music may be particularly susceptible to the educational culture and the form of mentorship to which one has been exposed has been particularly highlighted by my study. The Canadian students' exposure not only to normative cultural acceptance of the romantic or personal narrative in public discourse, but to pedagogies that affirm the association of education with personal realization, allow the adolescent predisposition to the romantic and the narcissistic to flourish relatively unimpeded. The leaching of the private into the public sphere is commonly embraced in the Canadian cultures observed; it is perhaps but one way in which a democratic society demonstrates its egalitarian values. Such is clearly not the case in the British schools studied; less professed prizing of the subjective needs of the students (we recall the condescending tone of the teacher who compared desires of self-actualization to that of a "wandering Jew" and the article that claimed one needn't be ashamed of responding to music emotionally) has prevented a more public disclosure of one's subjective attachments to music. Indeed, it was more difficult to explore this dimension of musical response and understanding with British students than Canadian students; their absorption of attitudes towards the open expression of one's subjective desires are perhaps indicative of the degree to which matters of emotion have been relegated to the underground in the British school cultures observed.

Perhaps what has been revealed here is not that an educational culture produces certain conceptions of music, but that it acts as a calibrator of the degree to which certain versions of music may be permitted to flourish and dominate perceptions. If we are to listen to Giroux (1989) who says that the "production and regulation of desire are as important as the construction of meaning" (p. 18), then we must consider the significance of these moderating forces upon students' conceptions of music. B.C. public school ideology permits, and, when advantageous to its aims, promotes an imaginative, metaphoric vision of music, allowing it to preside over all manner of musical engagement. Beguiled by the romanticists' conception of

music, with its claims to be able to transcend the antinomies between thought, language and reality, and seduced by the felt effect of music, there exists an antipathy towards an exploration of the pieces that produce that effect, as if it may betray the moments of synthetic apperception that music inspires, and distract from its Utopian function. There is a charitableness and a whimsicality to this stance; by fortifying musical symbols with emotional imperatives and comforting sentiment, it acknowledges the need to make coherent and cogent meaning of this life. Literalism, or *art for art's sake,* which appears to be a more typical position of British educators, can be an inhospitable place to stand, requiring "an effort of demystification that appears superficially far removed from any hopeful or affirmative standpoint" (Norris, 1989, p. 343). (see Endnote 8)

We stand to learn from, and remember, the adolescents' romantic narrative, their resistance to the "politicization of reality" (Grossberg cited in Giroux & Simon, 1989, p. 101) and to recognize the elements that organize their subjectivities and sensibilities, and the conditions of learning that enable them to locate themselves in familiar territories of affective investments and pleasures. We learn how interconnected identity and music are, and that in nurturing students' relationship with music, we minister to their deepest self-yearnings. And, by locating their desires, we know they are linked to our own because, while our desires may be in part the result of our own embodiment in this world, they are conditioned by the constraints imposed by the interpretive communities in which we live. Hence, by unearthing the heart of our children's desires, we are forced to confront the profound realities of our culture that have both empowered and disempowered us. To the British schools observed, it may mean recognizing that the available maps of meaning no longer correspond to the students' "mattering maps." The common refrain from students that "the classical world could learn a lot from rock music" or "rock music portrays true feelings", and one student's petition, "We should be expected to work *with* music,

not *for* it," suggest that a culture of formalism and detachment is inhibiting to the experience of pleasure, affect, corporeality and sociality that is closer to the "culture of authenticity" to which they aspire. Giroux speaks to the promise of such a culture: "The sociality that structures popular forms may contain the unrealized potentialities and possibilities necessary for more democratic and humane forms of community and collective formation" (1989, p. 12).

While B.C. music education practices seem more attuned to the affective and imaginative needs of our students, Giroux cautions us that the "ego-expansionism" that is satisfied by the pleasures of understanding those who appear Other to us is not entirely constitutive of a pedagogical practice (1989, p. 25). Rather, from this point, it is important to offer the skills and knowledge that will scaffold students' continual learning and offer the tools they can use to construct their own ways of being musical, in consort with their peers. And in helping to enlarge their world and opening up new territories of experience, we facilitate new ways of imagining themselves, in interaction with a continually expanding repertory of ideas and identities. Perhaps we should heed Foucault who speaks of the possible impoverishment of "identity" in its traditional sense.

> Maybe the target for nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and build up what we could be... we have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries. (1982, p. 785).

Our privilege as educators is more than a matter of permitting our students to be, and to discover themselves, it is to help them enact, to make real—for themselves and others—the compass of their imaginative lives.

It is my hope that this study offers findings and interpretations that are pertinent to the discussion of music, meaning and schooling today. The findings shed light on how students who are given optimal opportunities to experience music interpret music, and hence, will be

generalizable to this segment of student populations only and will not be applicable to all Canadian and British high school students currently studying music. This study cannot be offered as a paradigm of adolescent belief in music; due to the nature of a qualitative study and a meta-interpretive document such as this, other readings of those students' relationships with music are possible. Since language, textuality, identity and power are in constant flux and deferment, the horizons of researcher and participants located here are contingent and partial, formed from the conversations and experiences at these particular moments in time.

What is needed now is for other researchers to offer other vantage points and other hermeneutics of the realities of our students' experiences and the conditions of their beliefs. A compendium of views across the curriculum might be especially instructive, providing substantive grounds for a re-interrogation of our own beliefs, those lessons we hope our children will learn and those that they must challenge. My findings suggest that we can take heart at the apparent infrangibility of adolescents' connection with music, but the question of whether or not this relationship is being ignored, served or manipulated is the issue that calls for our immediate attention. Knowing this, it is with more compassion on the one hand and more caution on the other that I recommend we must now proceed.

ENDNOTES

1. It could be argued that music has not always been considered an expressive symbol, indeed, the battle between the notion of music as formal structure and music as affective communication has a long history. One of the earliest exponents of music being capable of representing or evoking specific human emotions was Plato. In his work *The Republic*, Plato outlines the types of modes, melodies and rhythms he felt would most positively influence the disposition and character—*the ethos*—of a republic's people (see Walker, 1990). This notion that music could influence, if not the moral character, at least the emotions of its listeners was a predominant assumption in the communities of students I was investigating. Hence, I adopt it as a defining feature of music for this document.

2. It should be noted that though Egan's work has found a wide audience, there are those (see Buckley, 1994; Jardine & Clandinin, 1987) who argue that some of the assumptions he has made about children's thinking and the ways in which he suggests will develop it are too closely and uncritically allied with structural theory. The structuralist's penchant for "reading the world as if it were a text" (Willinsky, 1991, p. 58) is felt to be monistic and misleading, and assumptions that their claims are generalizable offend not only the empiricist but those who feel that there is an unquestionable multiplicity to life and truth, embedded in the texts and contexts in which they originate. Egan's claim that children evolve naturally through particular stages, and culture, according to shaping forces, insinuates a hierarchical structure where the two are linked in a progress/development sequence. Egan, in the fine-tuning of his theories, has replaced much of his reliance on structural theory and highly contended development schemes by incorporating the Vygotskian notion that intellectual tools drive both culture and nature (see Vygotsky, 1978). While advocacy of the imagination and the child's capacity for invention remain a central concern of Egan's theories, Egan now embraces the idea that the child's interaction with cultural technologies, through social discourse, stimulates the construction and reconstruction of the kind of sense and meaning children make of their experience, continually challenging their imagination and their potential to learn.

3. Hereafter in this document, students and schools will be identified as either *British* or *Canadian*. In Canada, "English" commonly connotes language and cultures stemming from that language (such as "English-Canadian"), so use of the name *British* helps to make clear the reference to country, rather than language. And, knowing that the international research community would be more familiar with Canada than with a province of that country, British Columbia, I refer to Canadian research participants by their nationality rather than their province of residence. I am aware that there are distinctive regional variations in British and Canadian music education practices, and this is not discounted by use of this nomenclature.

4. It should be noted that in B.C., public schools are like Britain's state-governed comprehensive schools. They are entirely publicly funded (through municipal taxes and government support) and all children between the ages of 6-18 are eligible to receive their education in these schools.

5. The one student who saw music as more precise in meaning than language was comparing *music as analyzed* to *language as expressed* (i.e., what Saussure [1959] would term music's *langue* [structure] to language's *parole* [speech act]), and noting that, in its objectified, decontextualized form, music has been given discursive regularities.

6. To add to this educator's views, psychologist Mitchell (1986), states that if adolescents are unable to find something to believe in or to attach themselves to, an identity crisis occurs, leading to an "over-identification with movie stars, athletic heroes or music sensations and a simultaneous surface rejection of parents and parental values" (p.33).

7. It should be noted that the language used in the 1995 B.C. Music Curriculum Guide (*Integrated Resource Package*) is not entirely condoned by this researcher. However the goals which advocate attention to the variety of musical structures and traditions, are generally reflective of my recommendations.

8. As if to balance the penchants of their respective worlds and the tenor of their pedagogical practices, it was interesting to note that Canadian students' art music preferences were clearly within the Renaissance and Baroque periods, while British students more often favoured music of the Romantic era.

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APPENDIX A

Adaptation of Listener Response Framework
from Reader Response Theory

SIGNIFIER	COGNITIVE PROCESS	SIGNIFIED
READER RESPONSE		
text symbol/sign author's intentions style context	matching – recognition setting up tentative framework setting, situation, tone responding/reflecting	affective meaning social meaning efferent meaning aesthetic meaning
LISTENER RESPONSE		

sound
symbol/sign
 	
style
context
	matching (filtering through
	   previous experience)
	identifying
	imaging (visual, auditory
	   real world analogies)
	monitoring (of emotional,
	   physical, musical response)
	evaluating
	contextualizing
		inherent,
		congeneric
		meaning
		delineated, extra-
		generic meaning
		aesthetic meaning

TABLE 2: Categories of Listener Response

SOUND

1. **Musical Description of the Sound**
   (complex rhythms, dense harmonies, fast tempo, repetitious melody, etc.)

2. **Historical Style**
   (Gregorian chant, neo-classical, country & western tune, etc.)

3. **Musical Evaluation**
   (good because of its harmonic surprises, vocalist's flawless technique, etc.)

MEANING

4. **General Description of the Sound**
   (light, buoyant, aggressive, pointillistic, etc.)

5. **Emotional Effect**
   (it makes me feel relaxed, energized, pensive, agitated, etc.)

6. **Associations, Images, Personal Experiences Evoked by the Sound**
   (I 'see' a knight on a cliff, it reminds me of a hot summer's afternoon, etc.)

7. **Cultural Function**
   (it has a religious purpose, it is meant to entertain, to disturb, etc.)

8. **Personal Evaluation**
   (I liked it because I thought it was beautiful, powerful, I could relate to it, etc.)

(categories adapted from Shrofel & Browne, 1989)

In Relationship To

personal experiences	personal development	gender	music education	family	culture
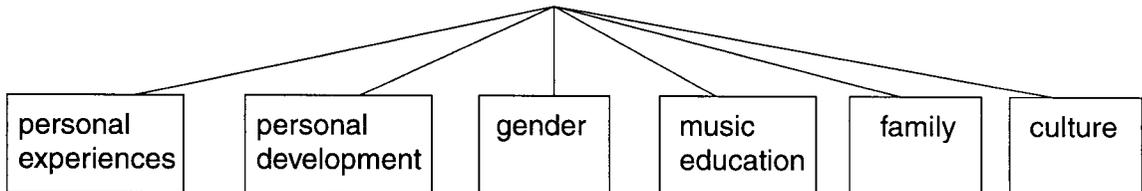
TABLE 3: Flow Chart of On-Site Research
(read from bottom to top)

On-Site Research Conclusions

MUSIC STUDENTS

NON-MUSIC STUDENTS

Weeks 3 & 4

Interview #2
(memberchecking)

Conversations
with other
informants

Interview #2
(memberchecking)

Weeks 3 & 4

Listener Res.
(indiv) #2

Interviews
with music eds

Listener Res.
(indiv) #2

Listener Res.
(group) #1

Observations
(school)

Listener Res.
(group) #1

Weeks 1 & 2

Survey

Observations
(music classes)

Survey

Weeks 1 & 2

Interview #1

Interview #1

Response
Journals

Document
Analysis

Response
Journals

Recruitment of Student Informants:
• introduction of study, letters of consent,
timetabling of interviews & response sessions

TABLE 4: Conceptual Model for Music Category

Value

Purpose

Reflections on Music

Origins

Definitions

Preferences
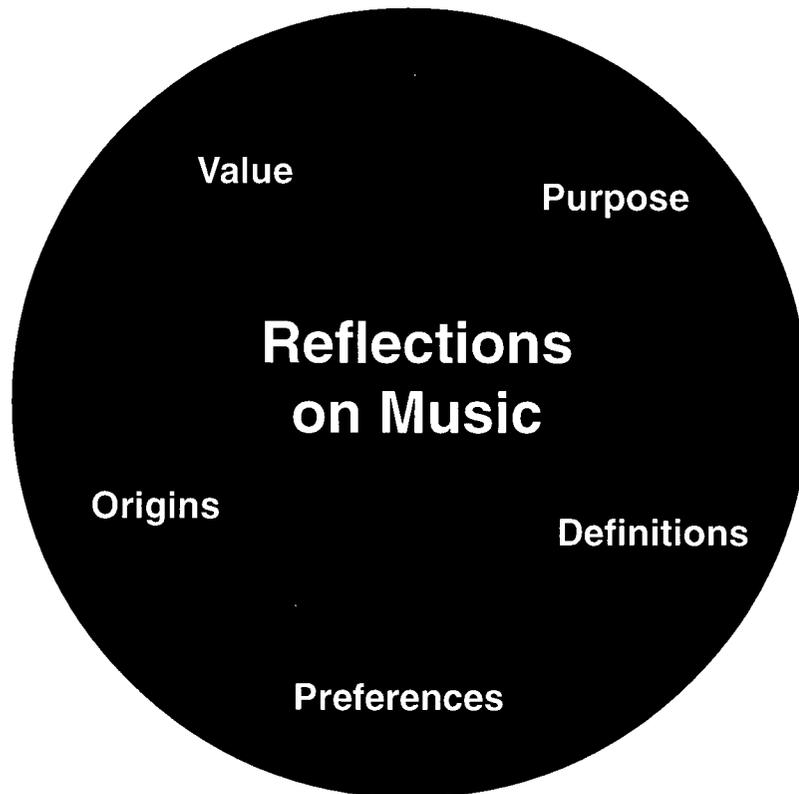
TABLE 5: Conceptual Model for Education Category

Socio-Cultural Context

EDUCATION
Music Education

Purpose

Significance

Preferences

Musical Understandings
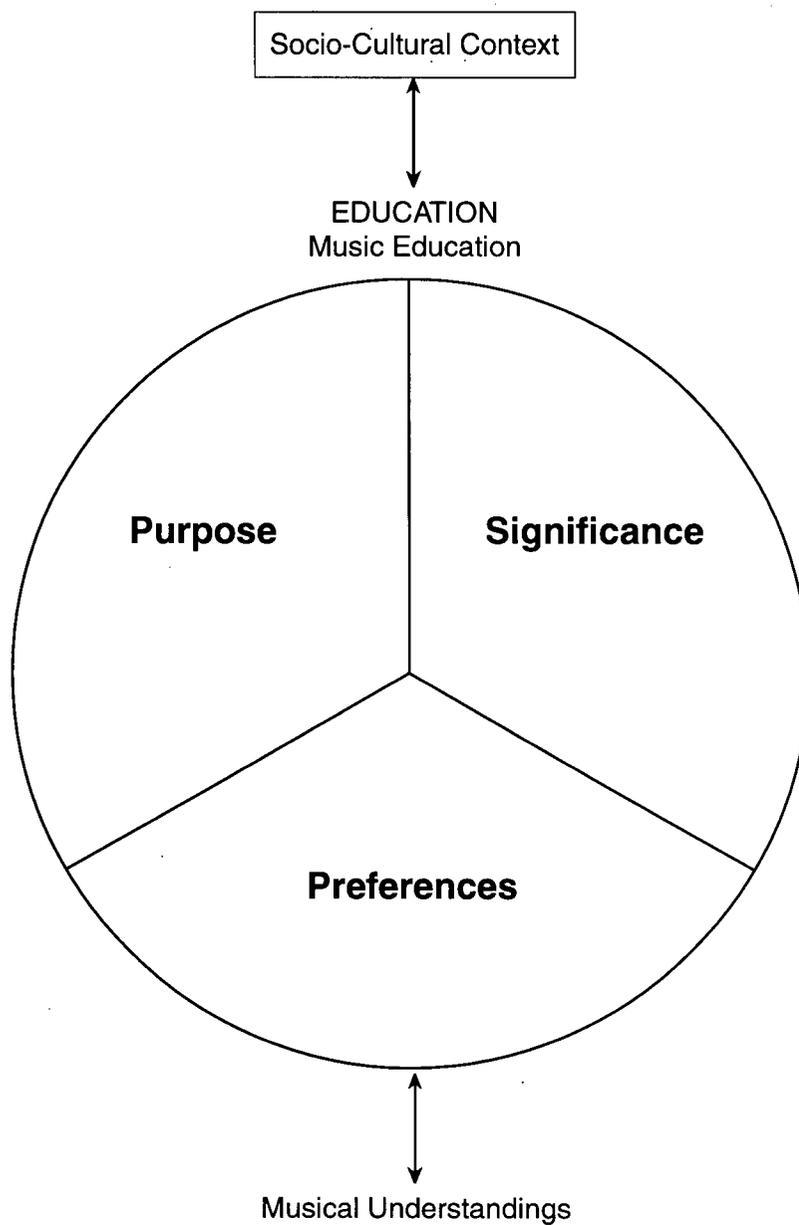
APPENDIX B

Letter to School Principals to Request Permission to Conduct Research

Dear _____:

I am writing to request permission from you to conduct a study at _____ on students' conceptions of music. My name is Joan Thompson and I am currently a doctoral student in the Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of British Columbia. The objective of the proposed dissertation research study is to explore the nature of adolescents' experience in music and how this experience is mediated by personal, social, educational and cultural factors. Specifically, by working with a group of students in the Lower Mainland of B.C. and another in southwest England, I hope to examine how the enculturation processes at work in Britain and Canada affect the way in which students come to value, understand and participate in music. The focus questions include:

1. what role does music take in these students' lives?
2. what role does music education have in students' valuing of music, preferences and type of response to music?
3. what role does psychological development and personal experience have on students' experience in music?
4. what role does social milieu and cultural background have on students' experience in music?
5. is there a gender difference in valuing, understanding and participating in music?
6. what are the critical processes used to listen to and interpret music and how are these processes similar/ different to processes involved in 'decoding' literature?
7. what is the transfer of learning in music to other areas of the curriculum, to students' educational development?

To conduct this study, I would like to work with approximately twenty 16-18 year old students in over a period of 4-5 weeks, preferably between May 13-June 21, 1996. As I am interested in the possible effects of gender, cultural and musical training on students' experience in music, it would be preferable that 10 of these students be school music students, and 10 be non-music students, with equal gender representation in both groups. The study with each student would involve a minimum of 2 hours of their time over the 5 week period (occurring in extra-curricular time, if necessary). During that time, I would like to:

1. interview each participant to ascertain the role music has played in their lives, their experiences in music, and critical views on music and music education today. One or two interviews, each about 45-minutes in length, should be sufficient to allow students to share reflections on these topics.
2. conduct one or two 'listener response' sessions, one with each student individually, and one with students in groups of 5. Each session would last approximately 45 minutes, with students being given pieces of music to which to respond and discuss, much as if they were in English class and responding to various literary genres. Purpose of these sessions would be to ascertain the strategies students engage in understanding and interpreting music.
   An optional component of the study—if time permits, and students are interested—would be:
3. request that participants keep a 'music response' journal over the period of the research study, in which they keep account of: a) responses and further ideas relevant to research questions and process, and b)encounters with music each day and thoughts associated with these encounters.
4. encourage correspondence between Canadian and British students (perhaps via e-mail).
5. survey a larger segment of school population (perhaps two classes) to determine whether views reinforce (or conflict with) views of key participants. The 45-item written survey would be derived from questions used in oral interviews of key participants, and could be completed in 45-60 minutes.

I would also like your permission to observe formally two music classes during the 5-week research period, and to observe informally students in general social interaction in school hallways, at lunch-times, during school concerts or assemblies, etc. As well, in order to gain a better understanding of the broader educational context in which the students are situated, I would like an opportunity to interview the music teachers at _____. An opportunity to speak with you or the school librarian, and perhaps a few parents, would help me gain a fuller understanding of the school and the community it serves. If you would prefer to respond to these questions in writing, I have attached them to this letter. I very much appreciate your valuable contribution to this study.

The significance of this study lies in its focus on the socio-cultural mediation of learning. This type of

Letter to Music Educators to Request Permission to Conduct Research

Dear _____:

   I am writing to request permission from you to conduct a study on students' conceptions of music with a group of your music students. My name is Joan Thompson and I am currently a doctoral student in the Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of British Columbia. The objective of the proposed dissertation research study is to explore the nature of adolescents' experience in music and how this experience is mediated by personal, social, educational and cultural factors. Specifically, by working with a group of students in the Lower Mainland of B.C. and another in southwest England, I hope to examine how the enculturation processes at work in Britain and Canada affect the way in which students come to value, understand and participate in music. The focus questions include:

1. what role does music take in these students' lives?
2. what role does music education have in students' valuing of music, preferences and type of response to music?
3. what role does psychological development and personal experience have on students' experience in music?
4. what role does social milieu and cultural background have on students experience in music?
5. is there a gender difference in valuing, understanding and participating in music?
6. what are the critical processes used to listen to and interpret music and how are these processes similar/ different to processes involved in 'decoding' literature?
7. what is the transfer of learning in music to other areas of the curriculum, to students' educational development?

   To conduct this study, I would like to work with approximately twenty 16-18 year-old students over a period of 4-5 weeks, preferably between May 13-June 21, 1996. As I am interested in the possible effects of gender, cultural and musical training on students' experience in music, it would be preferable that 10 of these students be school music students, and 10 be non-music students, with equal gender representation in both groups. The study with each student would involve a minimum of 2 hours of their time, over the 5-week period (occurring in extra-curricular time, if necessary). During that time, I would like to:

1. interview each participant to ascertain the role music has played in their lives, their experiences in music, and critical views on music and music education today. One or two interviews, each about 45-minutes in length, should be sufficient to allow students to share reflections on these topics.
2. conduct one or two 'listener response' sessions, one with each student individually, and one with students in groups of 5. Each session would last approximately 45 minutes, with students being given pieces of music to which to respond and discuss, much as if they were in English class and responding to various literary genres. Purpose of these sessions would be ascertain the strategies students engage in understanding and interpreting music.
   An optional component of the study—it time permits and students are interested, would be:
3. request that participants keep a 'music response' journal over the period of the research study, in which they keep account of: a) responses and further ideas relevant to research questions and process, and b) encounters with music each day and thoughts associated with these encounters.
4. encourage correspondence between Canadian and British students (perhaps via e-mail).
5. survey a larger segment of music students (perhaps one full class) to determine whether views reinforce (or conflict) views of key participants. The 45-item written survey would be derived from questions used in oral interviews of key participants, and could be completed in 45-60 minutes.

   I would also like your permission to observe about 2 music classes during the 5-week research period, and any performances in which the students may be involved during this period. As well, in order to gain a better understanding of the broader educational context in which the students are situated, I would like an opportunity to interview you about the music at _____. The interview would be 45-60 minutes in length.

   The significance of this study lies in its focus on the socio-cultural mediation of learning. This type of inquiry is important to a field such as music education that has often failed to account for how environmental factors influence the way we perceive and practise music. The results of the study will form the basis of my

I_____ consent/do not consent to participate in the research project entitled "Music in the Lives of Canadian and British High School Students" as proposed by Ms. Joan Thompson in the attached letter.

Student's Signature: _____

Phone No.: _____

Date: _____

Please detach here and return bottom portion.

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the consent form and all attachments for my own records.

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____

I_____ consent/do not consent to participate in the research project entitled "Music in the Lives of Canadian and British High School Students" as proposed by Ms. Joan Thompson in the attached letter.

Student's Signature: _____

Phone No.: _____

Date: _____

I_____ consent/do not consent to the participation of _____ in the research project entitled "Music in the Lives of Canadian and British High School Students" as proposed by Ms. Joan Thompson in the attached letter.

Parent's Signature: _____

Phone No.: _____

Date: _____

Please detach here and return bottom portion.

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the consent form and all attachments for my own records.

Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

I_____ consent/do not consent to the participation of _____ in the research project entitled "Music in the Lives of Canadian and British High School Students" as proposed by Ms. Joan Thompson in the attached letter.

I_____ consent/do not consent to the participate in the survey for the above-stated study.

Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Interview #1 (with music students)

Personal Data

1. Name: _____ I.D. # _____ Pseudonym: _____
2. Age: _____ Grade: _____ Place of birth: _____
   No. of years at this school: _____
3. Musical instruments play or have played: _____
4. Music lessons taken and level achieved: _____
5. School music courses taken: _____
6. Musical activities involved in currently or in the past: _____
7. Parental involvement in and support of student's involvement in music:
   _____
8. Career aspirations: _____

Introduction

I am interested in knowing all about your particular relationship with music—the role music has had in your life—from the time when you first remember hearing it and being involved in it to what you are doing in music today. Can you describe your life as it might be seen through music? (what it means to you, the highs and lows of being involved with music, the people who have had an influence on you, major events, the sacrifices you maybe made, the current realities of being involved in music, the attitude that prevails when you walk into music class each day.....)

Specific Questions

(These specific questions will be asked if student does not address them in general reflections on music in their lives. Students will be given the option of revisiting these questions in their music response journals).

I.   PURPOSE OF MUSIC
1. What do you think is the purpose of music (why do people create, make music?)
   _____
   Would this be true of all cultures, all periods in our history? _____
   _____
2. What would life without music be like? _____
   For those people not involved in music? _____
3. If you were to talk about 'what music means (represents) to you', what might you say?
   _____
4. When were you most affected or moved by music? _____

II.   DEFINING MUSIC
1. If you were to describe music to someone who has never heard it, how would you define/describe it?
   _____
2. What do you think the origins of music are? _____
   _____
3. How would you compare music to speech? _____
4. How would you describe a sound that is 'musical'? _____
   _____
   Is beauty a criteria for a musical sound? _____
   How would you describe a person that is 'musical'? _____
   _____
   Do you consider yourself to be 'musical'? _____. Why or why not? _____
   _____

III. PREFERENCES

1. What makes some music better than others (i.e. what is your criteria for good music or music that you like?) _____

2. What makes some music more popular than others? _____

   (Do you think rock music sells because it is commercially promoted or because it is a 'people's art'? __)
   What do you think of the current top-selling recording in Canada and England? _____

3. What types of music do you listen to, play or sing in your own time? _____

   Why? _____
   Do you watch music videos? _____ Why or why not? _____
   How does the types of music you listen to compare to that listened to by friends?
   _____. By parents? _____

4. Have your musical tastes changed over the past 2-3 years? How might they have changed? _____
   What (or who) has shaped your interests and preferences in music? _____

5. What is most important of a song to you; the sound or the meaning (lyrics)? _____
   Why? _____
   Do the 'messages' in the music you listen to affect the way you perceive and function in the world? ___

IV. CULTURAL ISSUES

1. I am also conducting this study with students in Britain (Canada). How might their experiences and responses to music compare to yours? _____

2. How would you define the concept of culture? _____
   What culture do you identify with? _____
   How conscious are you of your particular cultural situation (that the way you think,feel, act may have something to do with your culture?) _____

   What opportunities, or restrictions have you felt as a result of living in the culture that you do? _____

3. Is there such a thing as a youth or student culture'? _____
   If so, what is it? _____
   Are there particular social groups within this youth culture? _____

   What role does music play in 'defining' these groups? _____

4. Is there such a thing as a 'mass culture'? If so, what is it? _____

V. REDEFINING MUSIC

1. If you could 'reinvent' the way we did, or thought about music in our society, what would you change:
   a) people participating in it? _____
   b) how the music is being made and performed? _____
   c) what music is being made? _____
   d) the way we treat it? _____

   Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?

   _____

Thank you very much for your time and thoughtfulness in the carrying out of this interview. You may have found that it has provoked a new reflectiveness of your musical experiences, in which case I would like you to use this journal to keep an on-going critique of music, as you perceive it, over the next 4 weeks. Use the journal to record thoughts on music heard, played, sung, experienced, and any ideas that may expand on what we have talked about today. Use whatever genre or medium—prose, poetry, song, image—to record your responses.

Interview #2 (with music students)

<u>**Personal Data**</u>
1. Identification No: _____

<u>**Introduction**</u>
I am interested today in knowing more about your school music experiences. What are your earliest memories of music in school, what have been key moments, and how has your interest and attitude towards music developed and changed as you advanced through school.

<u>**Specific Questions**</u> (if topics are unaddressed in student's initial reflections).

I. <u>PURPOSE OF MUSIC EDUCATION</u>
1. Why are you enrolled in music? _____
   _____
2. What do you think should be the goal of your music class. What do you hope to learn? (do you think the goal of education in music should be to make musicians or music lovers) _____
   _____
3. What is the goal in this class. What do you think your teacher hopes his/her students will learn? _____

II. <u>LEARNING PREFERENCES</u>
1. Which way do you think your learn about music the most; through listening to music, talking about it, singing, playing, moving, performing, composing, or learning how to read it? _____
   Which do you enjoy the most? _____
   Why? _____
2. Do you like performing music? _____
   Why or why not? _____
3. What do you like about your music class(es)? _____
   Do you find what you're doing in class meaningful or relevant?_____
   What don't you like about your music class (es)? _____
   What would you add to your music class? _____
   Why? _____
   What has been the high point (the quintessential moment), the most valuable experience in your musical life? _____
4. If you had a chance to do anything in music class that you wanted, what would you do?_____
   _____
   If you had a chance to teach a music class, what would you teach? _____
   _____

III. <u>MUSIC PREFERENCES</u>
1. What styles of music are studied, used, composed most in your music class?
   _____
   What has been your favourite piece of music studied or performed this year?
   _____
2. Is the music you do in school the same as what you are involved in at home, with friends? _____
   If not, how do you 'rationalize' the involvement with two differing types of musical experiences? (how do you live with this conflict?) _____
   _____
   What do friends think of your involvement in music?_____
   How do you think it's perceived by other teachers?_____

IV. ASSESSMENT OF THE VALUE OF MUSIC EDUCATION

1. What do you think you have learned from being involved in music at school?
   _____

   Has your interest in music grown or decreased as a result of your training in music?
   _____

   Why? _____
   Do you think you will continue to be involved in music once you have finished school? _____

   _____
   In what way? _____
2. Music teachers often justify their subject by saying how much music helps young people, and society (makes for better people and a better society). Would you agree with this statement? _____. Why or why not? _____

   _____
   How is your education in music helping you now in school, in life (i.e., how is it contributing to the broad goal of "the educated citizen"?) _____

   _____
   What have you done in your life generally as a result of taking music in school?
   _____

   _____
   How might an education in music benefit you later in life? _____

   _____

V. INFLUENCES

1. Who has had the most influence on your interest and learning of music: your school music teacher, your private music teacher, yourself, your peers, your family, a musician that you idolize? _____

Student Evaluation of Interview Process

1. What have you thought of the interview questions—dumb, bizarre, redundant, meaningless.......
   _____. What would you change? _____

   _____

2. Do you think by asking questions we can come to know people's understandings of music better, or just their ability to talk about their thoughts, experiences?_____

   _____

3. Do you think we can come to understand people, society, and culture better by examining our concept of and relationship to music? _____

   _____

4. Do you have any final questions for me? _____

   _____

Interview #1 (with non-music students)

<u>**Personal Data**</u>
1. Name: _____ I.D. # _____ Pseudonym: _____
2. Age: ____ Grade: ____ Place of birth: _____
   No. of years at this school: _____
3. Major academic interests: _____
4. Musical activities involved in currently or in the past: _____
   _____
5. Parental involvement in and support of student's involvement in music: _____
   _____
6. Career aspirations: _____

<u>**Introduction**</u>

   I am interested in knowing all about your particular relationship with music—from the time when you first remember hearing it, your reactions to it and to the experiences you have since had with music both in and out of school. Can you describe your life, your interests, and the role music has played in your life? (the positives, the negatives, the people who had an influence on your attitudes towards music, your current perception of music?)

<u>**Specific Questions**</u>

   (These specific questions will be asked if student does not address them in general reflections on music in their lives. Students will be given the option of revisiting these questions in their music response journals).

<u>**I.**</u>   <u>**PURPOSE OF MUSIC**</u>
1. What do you think is the purpose of music (why do people create, make music?)
   _____
   Would this be true of all cultures, all periods in our history? _____
   _____
2. What would life without music be like? _____
   For those people not involved in music? _____
3. If you were to talk about 'what music means (represents) to you', what might you say?
   _____
4. When were you most affected or moved by music?_____

<u>**II.**</u>   <u>**DEFINING MUSIC**</u>
1. If you were to describe music to someone who has never heard it, how would you define/describe it? _
2. What do you think the origins of music are? _____
   _____
3. How would you compare music to speech? _____
4. How would you describe a sound that is 'musical'? _____
   _____
   Is beauty a criteria for a musical sound? _____
   How would you describe a person that is 'musical'? _____
   _____
   Do you consider yourself to be 'musical'? _____. Why or why not?_____
   _____

III. PREFERENCES

1. What makes some music better than others (i.e. what is your criteria for good music or music that you like?) _____

2. What makes some music more popular than others? _____

   _____

   (Do you think rock music sells because it is commercially promoted or because it is a 'people's art'? ___)
   What do you think of the current top-selling recording in Canada and England?_____

   _____

3. What types of music do you listen to, play or sing in your own time? _____

   _____

   Why? _____
   Do you watch music videos? _____ Why or why not? _____
   How does the types of music you listen to compare to that listened to by friends,
   _____, by parents? _____

6. Have your musical tastes changed over the past 2-3 years? How might they have changed? _____
   What (or who) has shaped your interests and preferences in music? _____

   _____

7. What is most important of a song to you—the sound or the meaning (lyrics)? _____

   _____

   Why? _____
   Do the 'messages' in the music you listen to affect the way you perceive and function in the world? ___

IV. CULTURAL ISSUES

1. I am also conducting this study with students in Britain (Canada). How might their experiences and responses to music compare to yours? _____

   _____

2. How would you define the concept of culture? _____
   What culture do you identify with? _____
   How conscious are you of our particular cultural situation (that the way you think,feel, act may have something to do with your culture?) _____

   _____

   What opportunities, or restrictions have you felt as a result of living in the culture that you do? _____
3. Is there such a thing as a youth or student culture'? _____. If so, what is it? ___

   _____.

   Are there particular social groups within this youth culture? _____

   _____   _____.

   _____What role does music play in 'defining' these groups? _____

   _____   _____

4. Is there such a thing as a 'mass culture'? If so, what is it? _____   _____

   _____   _____.

V. REDEFINING MUSIC

1. If you could 'reinvent' the way we did, or thought about music in our society, what would you change:
   a) people participating in it? _____
   b) how the music is being made and performed? _____
   c) what music is being made? _____
   d) the way we treat it?_____

   Do you have any questions you would like to ask me? _____

   _____

Thank you very much for your time and thoughtfulness in the carrying out of this interview. You may have found that it has provoked a new reflectiveness of your musical experiences—in which case I would like you to use this journal to keep an on-going critique of music, as you perceive it, over the next 4 weeks. Use the journal to record thoughts on music heard, played, sung, experienced, and any ideas that may expand on what we have talked about today. Use whatever genre or medium—prose, poetry, song, image—to record your responses.

Interview #2 (with non-music students)

<u>**Personal Data**</u>
1.   Identification No: _____

<u>**Introduction**</u>

     I am interested today in knowing more about your school music experiences. What are your earliest memories of music in school, what were key moments, and how did your interest and attitude towards music develop and chang as you advanced through school.

<u>**Specific Questions**</u> (if topics are unaddressed in student's initial reflections).

I.   PURPOSE OF MUSIC EDUCATION
1.   Why are you not enrolled in music? _____

_____

2.   What do you think should be the goal of music in school (do you think the goal of education in music should be to make musicians or music lovers)? _____

_____

3.   What was the goal of the classes or lessons in music that you took? _____

II.   LEARNING PREFERENCES
1.   Which way do you think you learned about music the most—through listening to music, talking about it, singing, playing, moving, performing, composing, or learning how to read it? _____
Which do you enjoy the most? _____
Why? _____
2.   Do you like performing music? _____
Why or why not? _____
3.   What did you like about your music class(es)? _____
Do you find what you're doing in class meaningful or relevant? _____
What didn't you like about your music class(es)? _____
What would you have added to your music class? _____
Why? _____
What has been the high point (the quintessential moment), the most valuable experience in your musical life? _____
4.   If you had had a chance to do anything in music class that you wanted, what would you do? _____

_____

If you had had a chance to teach a music class, what would you teach? _____

_____

III.   MUSIC PREFERENCES
1.   What styles of music were studied, used, composed most in your music class?

_____

What has been your favourite piece of music studied or performed?

_____

2.   Was the music you did in school the same as what you are involved in at home, with friends? _____
How were you able to (or not able to) reconcile the two conflicting types of musical experiences to continue on in music? _____

_____

Do you have any regrets about not continuing on in music? _____
What is your perception of music students? _____

IV. ASSESSMENT OF THE VALUE OF MUSIC EDUCATION

1. What do you think you learned from being involved in music at school?

   _____

   Did your interest in music grow or decrease as a result of your training in music?

   _____

   Why? _____

   Do you think you will continue to be involved in music once you have finished school? _____

   _____

   In what way? _____

2. Music teachers often justify their subject by saying how much music helps young people, and society (makes for better people and a better society). Would you agree with this statement? _____. Why or why not? _____

   _____

   How might an education in music help students in school, in life (i.e., how is it contributing to the broad goal of "the educated citizen"?) _____

   _____

   What have you done in your life generally as a result of taking music in school?

   _____

   How might an education in music benefit you later in life? _____

   _____

V. INFLUENCES

1. Who had the most influence on your interest and learning of music: your school music teacher, your private music teacher, yourself, your peers, your family, a musician that you idolize? _____

Student Evaluation of Interview Process

1. What have you thought of the interview questions—dumb, bizarre, redundant, meaningless....... _____

   _____ .

   What would you change? _____

   _____

2. Do you think by asking questions we can come to know people's understandings of music better, or just their ability to talk about their thoughts, experiences?_____

   _____

3. Do you think we can come to understand people, society, and culture better by examining our concept of and relationship to music? _____

   _____

4. Do you have any final questions for me? _____

   _____

Interview with Music Educator(s)

Personal Data

1. Identification No: _____ Name: _____ Pseudonym: _____
2. No. of years music educator: _____
3. No. of years music educator in this school: _____
4. Qualifications: _____

Music

1. Please describe the role music has played in your life, and how your involvement in it led to this profession (the evolution of your interest and involvement in music from when you first remember hearing it until now).
2. Are you involved in music outside your capacity as a music educator?
3. As a listener, how often do you buy CD's, attend concerts?
4. What types of music do you prefer to listen to, play or sing? Why? Have your musical tastes changed over the past 10 years? How?
   If you where to choose one piece of music as your signature tune, what would it be? If you were to choose one piece of music we would send into outer space to inform other possible beings of life on earth, what would it be? Why?
5. What do you feel is the purpose of music?
6. If you could reinvent the way we practised or thought about music in our society what would you change:
   a) people participating in it?
   b) how the music is being made and performed?
   c) what music is being made?
   d) the way we treat it?
7. What type of effect do you think 'culture' has on people's perceptions and involvement in music? (How do you think this affects students' responses?)

Music Education

1. Does _____ operate as an 'arts magnet' school? What does this mean?
   Does _____ make any special dispensations for music in regards to scheduling, budget, student awards, etc.? What type of support do you get from administration, colleagues, parents, students?
2. What are the number of students involved in the music program and what percentage is that of the school's student population?
   What are the number of students involved in each course and extra-curricular activity offered?
   Why do you think students are taking/not taking music?
3. Who determines the courses taught, and the curriculum followed? If it is largely 'locally' developed, what guides you in your choice of courses offered, repertoire used and teaching methodology employed. (which way do feel students learn music the most, which styles of music are used, studied and composed, etc.).
4. What do you think justifies music's place in the curriculum? (why are you teaching music?) What are your goals as a music educator, what do you hope to have your students achieve? What do you feel are the general benefits of being involved in music — does it, for instance, contribute to the broad goal of the "educated citizen"? Is this evidenced in graduates of your program?
5. What have been some high points in your career?
6. Over your career, has the character and role of music in schools changed? Can you describe the changes, the new challenges music educators face? Has music at _____ changed; for instance, how has it met our postmodern social and economic challenges? Do you feel academic changes in school—with an emphasis on an interdisciplinary 'critical-thinking' approach and preparing students to meet the 'realities' of the marketplace—have been positive for music education? What do you see in 20 years for music education in _____?
   How could we improve our professional lives and educational programs? _____

Interview with Administrator

Personal Data

Identification No: _____ Name: _____ Pseudonym: _____

No. of years administrator: _____

No. of years administrator at this school: _____

Qualifications: _____

School Demographics

1. What is student population of school? What is number of full time or full time equivalent staff?
2. What is number of students in Grade 11, Grade 12?
3. What are the criteria used for the admission of students to your school?
4. Describe the general ethno-racial and socio-economic background of the students.
5. Describe the community _____ serves and how (if at all) it has changed since the school's inception.

School Operation

1. What are the types of programs offered at _____? What are its particular foci and why?
2. Does the school have a particular mission statement or philosophy that underlies its mode of operation, policy-making, etc.
3. Is there student involvement in decision-making in the school? If so, what kind?
4. What are the operating costs of your school and how are they provided for?
5. What percent of the annual budget is allocated to the music program?

Music

1. Are you, or have you been, involved in music in any way?
   As a listener, how often do you buy CD's or attend concerts?
2. What types of music do you prefer to listen to, play or sing? Why?
   Have your musical tastes changed over past 10 years? If so, how?
3. If you were to choose one piece of music as your signature tune, what would it be? Why?
   If you were to choose one piece of music we would send into outer space to inform other possible beings of life on earth, what would it be?
4. What do you think the purpose of music is?
5. If you could reinvent the way we did or thought about music in our society, would you change:
   a) the people participating in it?
   b) how the music is made and performed?
   c) what music is being made?
   d) the way we treat it?

Music Education

1. Do you consider the music program important? Why or why not?
   Are there any programs or types of music that you think should be supported more than others? Why?
   How do you support music in your school?
2. What do you feel is the purpose of music education?
3. What do you think students learn, how do you think they develop, through music education? Do you think music education has a general educational benefit—e.g., do you think it contributes to such broad goals as "the educated citizen"?
4. Do you think music education should adapt to social and economic changes and if so, do you think it is responding to the times?
   What would you like to see (in music education) in the future?

Interview with Parents (could be adapted into survey form)

Personal Data
1. Identification No: _____ Name: _____ Pseudonym: _____
2. Occupation: _____
3. Birthplace: _____
4. No. of years in this community: _____

Music
1. Are you, or have you been, involved in music in any way? Please describe your past memorable experiences in music.
   As a listener, how often do you buy CD's or attend concerts?
2. What types of music do you prefer to listen to, play or sing? Why?
   Have your musical tastes changed over past 10 years? If so, how?
3. If you were to choose one piece of music as your signature tune, what would it be? Why?
   If you were to choose one piece of music we would send into outer space to inform other possible beings of life on earth, what would it be?
4. What do you think is the purpose or value of music?
5. If you could reinvent the way we did or thought about music in our society, would you change:
   a) the people participating in it?
   b) how the music is made and performed?
   c) what music is being made?
   d) the way we treat it?

Music Education
1. Do you consider your child's involvement in music important? Why or why not? Are there any programs or types of music that you think should be supported more than others? Why?
   How do you support your child's involvement in music?
2. What do you feel is the purpose of an education in music?
   Are there different reasons for having your child enrolled in private music lessons?
3. What do you think students learn, how do you think they develop, through music education? Do you think music education has a general educational benefit—e.g., do you think it contributes to such broad goals as "the educated citizen"?
4. Do you think music education should adapt to social and economic changes and if so, do you think it is responding to the times? What would you like to see (in music education) in the future?

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │                                                 │  │
│  │              FIELD DIARY                        │  │
│  │                                                 │  │
│  │      Music in the Lives of Canadian            │  │
│  │          and British Students                   │  │
│  │                                                 │  │
│  │          Name: _____            │  │
│  │                                                 │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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How to use this journal? As a chance to reflect on research process, on thoughts related to your encounters with music (both in and out of school) over the next few weeks. Use it as often (every day) or as little as you like.

You may want to begin entries with:
    Right now, I'm.....
    Right now, I'm feeling......
    The music I'm listening to is.......
    I'm writing after playing _____ to........
    Today, I've heard............
    My music class today was.......
    Things I'd like to add to what was said in session with you today....
    I'd like to know........

Survey to Include in Students' Field Diaries

The way we relate to music may have something to do with who we are, what we do. For this reason, could you tell me more about yourself using the following questions as a guide? The research study you are involved in will be more effective if you complete all questions; it will help give me a better idea of the similarities and differences in the environment in which Canadian and British students grow up. However, if information is too personal to disclose, you have the right to decline from answering that question.

Name: _____

Number of years living in Canada/Britain: _____

Parents' occupations: Mother _____ Father _____

Brief biography (focus on life-changing events): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Personal Interests

1. Number the following aspects of life from the most (1) to least (10) importance:

good marks	_____	music	_____	sports, games	_____
family	_____	friends	_____	animals (pet)	_____
TV	_____	boyfriend/	_____	social issues	_____
other	_____	girlfriend	_____		

2. If a day =100%, how would you 'typically' spend your time?

    _____

    _____

    What are you going when you have the least consciousness of time (apart
    from sleeping!), i.e. what do you enjoy doing the most? _____

3. Please draw a map (pie chart, for example) displaying which things you care about most in life.

4. What are your favourite:

books _____	e.g.	_____
magazines _____	e.g.	_____
movies _____	e.g.	_____
TV programs _____	e.g.	_____
radio stations _____	e.g.	_____
people ('heros') _____	e.g.	_____
sports, games _____	e.g.	_____

5. <u>Music</u>
    How often do you attend concerts? _____
    What type of concerts do you attend? _____ e.g. _____
    How often do you buy CD's or tapes? _____ What type of CDs do you
    buy? _____ e.g. _____
    Do you think rock music has a negative impact on young people (like Tipper Gore, American woman
    who lobbied to get warning stickers placed on CD's that might be "offensive")? _____. Why or
    why not? _____

    Is time any different when you listen to, or are otherwise engaged in music?

    If you had to make up or choose another word for music, what would it be?

    If you could choose only one piece of music as your signature tune, what would it be?

    If someone was to make a film of your life, what pieces of music would you hope would be in
    soundtrack? _____
    Why? _____
    If you could choose only one piece of music as the piece we would send into outer space to inform other
    possible beings of life on earth, what would it be? _____

General 'Life' Issues

1. Do you enjoy school? _____ Why or why not? _____
    What would you change? _____

2. What are the ways in which you use technology? _____

3. Would you describe yourself as someone with a social consciousness? (i.e. someone with a concern for
    environment, social injustices, etc.) _____
    What are ways in which you exercise this social consciousness? _____

4. What are your personal hopes or dreams? _____
    Your career aspirations? (if different) _____
5. If you could forecast the future, what would it look like? _____