

Sociological Explorations

**Proceedings
of the
5th International Symposium
on the
Sociology of Music Education**

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**edited by
Brian A. Roberts, PhD**

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Culture, Relevance, And Instrumentation In The School Music Ensemble: Moving Beyond The Band-Orchestra-Chorus Trilogy

Bernadette D. Colley
Boston University

Context

As a third year music teacher, while crafting a curriculum on American folk music for my fifth graders, and researching bluegrass instrumentation, I had an epiphany about my preparation to teach music and what was now required of me. Why, when listening to country music, could I not distinguish the pedal steel from a slide guitar? Why had learning about dulcimers and banjos not even been possible at university, much less part of my music studies, even though these were the rage in the folk music scene at the time? Why was it that I graduated from music school knowing what a *positiv* organ was, but not a *dobro*? I was the music teacher. I felt I was supposed to know. Though I dutifully introduced my students to Western classics as I'd been taught to do, and enjoyed doing so, I began to question the disservice I'd been done, and I continued to question who, or what forces, were responsible for that?

Fast forward about thirty years. At the last meeting of this symposium in Amherst, during a discussion following presentation on whether the National Standards after ten years had been a blessing or curse for our field, I mentioned that I viewed and often characterized the orchestra-band-chorus ensemble trilogy pervasive in American schools as music of the aristocracy, music of the military, and music of the church. Easy enough to paint broad generalizations with a sweeping brush that have a memorable ring, but there *is* more than a modicum of truth to this claim in view of the large ensemble's historical legacy in public schools. Further, I contended that if music education intends to flourish and thrive, there was a fourth category to which we need to attend, and that is, lacking a better category... "music of everybody else."

Broadly viewed, and like it or not, two major developments have forced our field to examine the appropriateness of allowing these

ensembles to dominate musical opportunities for kids in schools. The first is the rapidly changing demographics of school age populations. The U.S. census bureau predicts that between 2000 and 2020, enrollments of Hispanic school age children will increase by 60% (Spring 2002, 131). Secondly, the wealth of ethnomusicology scholarship in the past five decades marked by the founding of the Society of Ethnomusicology in 1953 (Volk 1998, 72), coupled with the widespread emergence of world musics in the concert hall, at the music festival, on the air waves and on the internet, has heightened public awareness of music outside of the Western canon.

Following our October 2005 symposium, I taught a graduate seminar entitled *Critique in Music Education*, a research methods class in which music education students are responsible for designing, researching, and writing a semester long research project for which they are encouraged to collect, analyze and grapple with actual data. We begin with introductory sessions where we lay our “wonderments” on the table about burning questions we have had as music teachers, and evaluate these as possible research projects. One student, recently graduated from Ithaca College’s undergraduate music education program, was in her first few years as a middle school band director in a Latino community outside Boston, and said,

I don’t know Dr. Colley, there’s something about band that’s just not cutting it for these kids. It seems somehow wrong to be trying to make these kids play this music, and I can’t really get at why that is, or why I have these feelings (Pardo, 2006a)

I encouraged Elena to pursue her instincts on this issue. Since it was Elena Pardo’s resultant research project that was the impetus for my paper today, I’d like to begin by summarizing her study, briefly (Pardo, 2006).

Elena’s literature review led her to studies in cultural context and instrument preference, and it was around these two issues that she framed her questions.

Is our role as music teachers to align our ensembles with the traditions of our student populations, or to introduce students to new traditions via established ensemble models and repertoire. To what extent should students' preferences – inherited, embraced, and still practiced by their communities, shape and mold school music programs?

These questions fed the larger question which was the source of her discomfort: *Is it still practical, or even appropriate, to assume and implement the traditional American band program as standard practice?* Using her sample of 72 middle school band students, 87% of whom are Hispanic, she gathered more detailed demographic information than was available from school records, information about the students' home and community musical habits, and about the musical activities of family members. She discovered that her grade 5-8 middle school band was 73.8% Latino, and English was a second language for 76.7% of them. Her survey probed students' nationalities, music in the students' home environments, students' musical preferences, students' instrument preferences, and the extent of musicianship among family members, including the specific instruments that family members play.

When asked to describe their ethnicity, Pardo's students reported these sixteen different locations of heritage, the majority (68%) of which derived from Puerto Rico or Central America; African, African American, Albanian, Antiguan, Brazilian, Cape Verdean, Colombian, Costa Rican, Dominican, Guatemalan, Honduran, Italian American, Mexican, Peruvian, Puerto Rican, Salvadorian, and White. Collectively, her band families listened to a wide mix of musics of ethnic, stylistic, and geographic range: Rhythm & Blues, Creole, Classical, Jazz, Rap, African, Spanish, Rock, Hip-hop, Salsa, Merengue, Reggaeton, Country, Christian or Gospel, Brazilian, Pop, Salvadorian, Mariachi, Bachata, Mexican, Cumbia, Vallenato, Funk, Albanian, Techno. Those most frequently listed to were the following, with about three fourths of the students, not surprisingly, listening to Latin music in the home and at family and community events:

Most Frequently Listened to Styles

Reggaeton	49%
Salsa	46%
Hip Hop	41%
R & B	28%
Merengue	28%
Bachata	25%

Total: 72% of students listen to Latin music at home, or with family

Data collected about family members' activities revealed that roughly two thirds of the students did have an older relative who played an instrument, the most common (48%) among them collectively being guitar, followed by percussion (11%), or keyboard (9%). When asked, "...if *you* could play any instrument, including band instruments, what would it be?," the results most surprised and disturbed her: 69% of her band members preferred to play an instrument not offered by the school band program. Instead, Latin percussion instruments, guitar, and piano received the highest preference indications.

Pardo's next step was to gather recordings of Latin music suggested to her by her students, and to analyze its instrumentation and voicings. She then sought to determine whether there was a relationship trend between her analysis of timbres and voicings the styles students listened to, and their preferences for instruments. Among those students whose environments were rich with salsa, e.g., their preference for learning an instrument fell along those timbral lines. Percussion (claves, cowbells, guiros, maracas, congas, timbales, bongos) is of primary importance in salsa. Melodic instruments typically consist of piano and guitar, followed by trumpet, trombone, saxophone, and flute depending on the size of the band. Among those students who listen to salsa at home with their family or had family functions such as weddings parties or other celebrations, the following instruments were most preferred: percussion (23%), guitar (20%) piano (17%), flute (17%), trombone or violin (7%), clarinet, trumpet, or cello (3%). Similar parallels were found for the other Latin styles Elena examined and matched with students' preferences.

So now, to return to, and extend, Elena's question: *Is it still practical, or even appropriate, to implement traditional instrumental large ensembles as an assumed practice in schools?*

If, on the basis of population ethnicity, the answer is *no*, then what shall we do instead? If one decides to expand beyond the traditional orchestra and band programs to institute something in its place, in what direction shall we move? Toward smaller ensembles? Toward alternate instrumentations? How shall we do it? And on what educational grounds shall we defend such changes? If not band and orchestra, then what? It's that fourth category, "...music of everybody else," that presents the contemporary music education field with a thorny dilemma, in terms of its next "ensemble legacy," if you will. How shall we choose? If ethnicity is to be our criteria, whose music shall prevail? taught to whose children? By whom? And how-by written or aural/oral tradition, or some hybrid of both? Furthermore, who is equipped - indeed, who has the *right* to make these decisions? The community? The kids themselves? The music teachers? The teacher training institutions?

With Elena's study as inspiration, I decided for this research project and presentation to suspend these weighty prescriptive questions that we in higher education have the luxury of time to debate. Teachers do not. I instead gathered stories directly from the field, in order to record the experiences of some music teachers who *already have moved* beyond the traditional ensemble trilogy in their school settings, in ways that they have found successful.

Method

My method was to seek individual cases of "alternative" instrumentations being used on a regular basis embedded into school music programs, and to interview the individuals who led them. The three inclusion criteria for participants were: 1) that the ensemble had to have been begun and still taught by the resident, certified, music teacher, 2) it had to be an outgrowth of the school's regular music program, ie. is not an after-school club directed by a guest artist-in-residence or adjunct employee, and 3) the instrumentation or instrumental style had to be that not found in traditional band and orchestra programs.

Substantively, I was curious to know and record how and why these ensembles and programs had come to be, and what factors had been influential in their genesis. What, eg., in the teachers' own lives as musicians had led to their departure from the status quo? What were the school and district conditions under which the ensembles grew? What support and reception had they received from parents, administrators, and fellow music teachers? How did the ensemble determine membership and define musicianship? Who was responsible for program maintenance and growth? What broader organizations of support systems existed for them? In terms of the future, what did these teachers think these ensemble programs would look like in five and ten years? Finally, what were the music teachers' views on the implications of their work for the prospect of replicating these programs elsewhere?

My purpose today is to report the answers to these questions, and in so doing, I hope to begin to identify issues and address questions concerning how alternative ensembles come to be, what it takes to maintain them, and what future prospects exist for their sustainability. This is done with an eye toward acknowledging the changing face of music ensembles in schools, expanding musical opportunities for kids in schools, and in turn, informing and influencing music teacher pre-service education.

Sample

The sample of four ensembles and individuals was garnered by a combination of research, convenience, and serendipity and resulted in a surprisingly diverse and interesting collection: a recorder consort *Collegium* of 5th and 6th graders in an urban school in central Massachusetts, a country and bluegrass ensemble embedded into a small high school chorus in rural Kentucky, an elementary school marimba ensemble in Washington state, and a secondary school mariachi program in Nevada. Three of the interviewees are the music teacher-founders of these groups; the fourth is a music administrator-founder. The bulk of data was collected via 60-90 minute telephone interviews with the teachers, supplemented by artifacts, recordings, concerts and concert programs, etc. where available and possible. (Note: Participant #2, the teacher from Kentucky consented to have all statements used for the research, but preferred I use pseudonyms for identifying information. All others signed consent for

both identity and information to be shared publicly for the purposes of this research). Data reported by the participants was not corroborated by site visits nor interviews with students or other school personnel. Briefly sketched, the four scenarios are as follows:

1) *Dennis Ferguson - Collegium - Roosevelt School, Worcester, MA.* Dennis Ferguson's fifth and sixth grade Collegium has existed for seven years at the Roosevelt School in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he teaches K-6 elementary music. Ferguson estimated the demographic make-up of Roosevelt as approximately 30% Hispanic, 30% African American, and the rest an "international mix." Approximately 30 students plays soprano, alto, tenor and bass recorders. Each year 80-90% of 200 eligible fifth and sixth graders audition for 30 available slots, and the group performs 3-4 times per year in the school and community of Worcester. The Roosevelt program is well supported by parents, and the school administration wants Dennis to separate the Collegium into separate 5th and 6th grade ensembles next year so as to accommodate more students.

2) *Patty Jo Lazarus, Redhook, Kentucky (Pseudonyms).* It was while casting a broad net searching for non-traditional school ensembles, using "bluegrass in the schools" as a search phrase, that I found my second participant. I landed on the website of the *International Bluegrass Music Association* (www.ibma.org), and learned that in the fall of 2007, the Kentucky School of Bluegrass and Traditional Music will open its doors to its first freshmen class of 25 students who will graduate 2 years later with an Associates degree in music. The school's mission is "...dedicated to the study, performance, preservation, promotion, and advancement of *heritage music* in the cultural traditions of Kentucky and the Appalachian mountains <http://www.hazard.kctcs.edu/Jy5/bluegrass>). I called the school's director, and asked if he knew of any music teachers that ran traditional country or bluegrass programs as part of their regular music program, ie. not as an after school club. I was informed that Patty Jo Lazarus teaches middle and high school choral music a few towns over and has wonderful student players, and that they recently jammed with a prestigious visiting string quartet, and were phenomenal, but that Patty Jo ran the ensemble as part of her high school chorus.

Patty Jo Lazarus teaches in the same middle and high schools she attended growing up, and has done so for twenty-nine years. Red-

hook's high school of three hundred fifty students has, for thirty years, offered band and chorus as their only music electives. There are no performance ensembles at the middle school of 400 students. Patty began early on in her teaching to seek out musical middle school students in her general music classes to encourage them to join the high school chorus. Since she knew ahead of time what the students' instrumental skills and style interests were, she was able to tailor her high choral school program and repertoire to fit their needs. In a chorus of 51, she now has 21 boys, and the chorus performs classical, rock, jazz, country, gospel, and bluegrass using a core of "chorus instrumentalists" consisting of guitar, fiddle, banjo, mandolins, bass, and piano. The ensemble arranges for, and accompanies, the choir on 2-3 selections per 3-4 programs per year, including a local coal festival each September. Of this subset of her chorus Patty Jo said,

I feel like these are the gifted students in our school because they go beyond the day to day musicianship of the average high school music student including changing keys, styles, arranging pieces, and modifying songs. For example, I have a gifted country female vocalist who has a brother that plays bluegrass/country, and gospel fiddle by ear. He did not like to sing in middle school but when he got to high school **he** became the bass that everyone leans on because he has a great sense of pitch and a good ear (Lazarus, 2007)

Patty Jo reports that these students, once embraced and integrated into the choral program, excel in state choral contests and festivals, because of a very well developed aural approach to music and musicality.

3) *Walt Hampton - Rugare Marimba Ensemble, Kennewick, WA.* My third music teacher, Walt Hampton, is the founder and director of *Rugare*, a marimba ensemble of 4th and 5th graders from Sunset View Elementary School in the relatively affluent suburban community of Kennewick, Washington. Founded in 1993, *Rugare* performs about 30 concerts a year, tours extensively through schools in the pacific northwest, has been invited to perform in South Africa, and in March played in Boston at the Massachusetts Music Educators convention, where I

first heard them. Each year, roughly ninety-seven percent of the school's fourth graders try out for 12 coveted spots in the fourth grade ensemble which leads to a second year of public performing with the group. Elementary school marimba ensembles are fast gaining popularity in the region, due largely perhaps to Walt's extensive lecture/performances with the group, which number about 18-20 school assemblies in area schools each year. In addition, Rugare is now one of four Marimba ensembles in Kennewick's 14 elementary schools.

4) *Marcia Neel, Secondary Mariachi Program - Clark County School District Las Vegas, Nevada.* Marcia Neel, a 36 year veteran of public school music education in Ohio, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Nevada, has for many years been the supervisor of secondary music education in the Clark County School District, Las Vegas, Nevada. Though Marcia herself is neither a teacher of, nor has any musical background, in mariachi music, she was responsible for its initiation and development in Clark County, and thus my choice to interview. With an enrollment of over 300,000 students in 186 elementary schools, 50 middle schools, 36 high schools, and 20 alternative high schools, the Clark County School District is the fifth largest school district in the United States. Its population is roughly 4% Asian Pacific, 14% African American, 35% Latino, and 47% Caucasian. Though there is some ethnic mix within schools, most schools mirror the dominant ethnicity of their local neighborhoods. Until 2002, the music program was, in Marcia's words, "strictly Euro-centric." During the last five years, things have changed.

In 2007-08 Clark county's *Music Mariachi* program will employ fifteen mariachi music specialists, all having been certified as *mariachi* music teachers by the state of Nevada through the business and industry professional license track. These fifteen specialists service ten middle and high schools, in which 50% of the students participate in the mariachi music program, which is a combined vocal-instrumental model. The development of Clark County's secondary *Music Mariachi* program -- a comprehensive, standards-based instrumental and vocal ensemble program, is chronicled in the April 2007 Newsletter of MENC Mariachi (MENC 2007). There, one can read a sequenced account of the following seven stages in the program's establishment, which took nine years from original concept to program implementation: *I. Selling the Program, II. Recruiting Mariachi Educators, III. Licensing Mariachi Educators, IV.*

Establishing a Sequential Curriculum Based on the Content Standards, V. Organizing a Mariachi Festival, VI. Professional Development for Mariachi Educators, VII. Development of Other Relevant Performance Experiences. I'd like to speak now a bit about Marcia Neel's explanation of *Step IV - Establishing a Sequential, Standards-based Curriculum.*

In its first year, Clark County's *Music Mariachi* program was piloted in just six of Clark's seventy nine middle schools. Since it is customary in many professional mariachi bands for all musicians to play all instruments and to sing, Clark County developed its program additively, i.e. beginning with just the 6th graders in six schools, and adding new instrumental instruction sequentially each subsequent year:

Sequence of Music Mariachi Program Development

Year 1 – Guitar- mariachi guitar, vihuela

Year 2 – Added Mariachi violin

Year 3 – Added Guitarron, began mixed instrument ensembles

Year 4 – Added Trumpet and trumpet to the ensembles

The Clark County program is a multi-instrument/vocal approach to developing musicianship in that all students follow this sequence of applied instruction in voice and a number of instruments. For others interested in beginning mariachi programs, documents are now available online from MENC. On MENC's website mariachi link, one can access a complete set of standards-based curricular outlines, specific lesson plans, and numerous teaching resources from Clark County and elsewhere. These include applied music method series for the mariachi instruments, ensemble repertoire to which, Clark County, e.g., adds fifteen new titles each year based on a 3 year cycle, and interdisciplinary materials for related art forms in Ballet Folklorico and Latin American musical theater. Although Clark county was not the first district to offer a school mariachi program, it does seem to be the first to do so systemically and comprehensively.

Analysis

So, what did this curious mix of settings, individuals, and ensemble experiences tell about initiatives seeking alternatives to the ensemble status quo in schools? Let's first re-cap the group's characteristics:

Dennis Ferguson	Patty Jo Lazarus	Walt Hampton	Marcia Neel
European Renaissance	American Folk Tradition	Shona-tribal Zimbabwe	Hispanic/Euro-pean Hybrid
Urban EL Single school	Rural HS Single school	Suburban EL Single school	Urban Grades 7-12 Large District
Low SES	Moderate SES	High SES	Low/Moderate SES

We have musical roots spanning the European Renaissance, a modernized American Appalachian folk tradition, a Zimbabwean-Shona tribal tradition, and a European/Hispanic hybrid. The schools' locations span one suburban, one rural, and two urban school districts, which range in size from 700 to 300,000 students. Two of the programs are elementary, and two secondary, and the socio-economic levels of the communities range from poor to affluent.

In what first was an exercise in frustration, synthesizing and analyzing the disparate components of these four situations was, eventually, nonetheless fruitful. Taken collectively, this sample's composite picture begs questions of currency in our field *as they are defined and answered* (regardless of whether or not this is their intent) *by teachers*, a perspective too often neglected in academic discourse: "What constitutes a living tradition?" "What is cultural relevance?" "What music is culturally authentic?" "What is the value of music literacy?" "How do we define musicianship?"

Examining these four school ensembles' stories in terms of: a) their genesis, b) their current status, and c) their prospects for sustainability, helps us to frame an initial discussion about the viability of alternative instrumental programs in schools and, moreover, serves to identify specific factors which enhance or inhibit their growth.

Genesis

First, why did these programs come about? In two cases the impetus was for musical excellence; in two it was to match a musical/cultural aesthetic with the local population. Both Walt and Dennis began their marimba and recorder ensembles, respectively, in a quest for *musical excellence*, i.e. to produce the highest level of playing possible in an instrumentation which grew out of their elementary general music classes. Walt set out to found an instrumental ensemble for children whose musical outcome was both good and interesting, or, as he put it, "...that parents would *want* to listen to, instead of *having* to listen to." Patty Jo and Marcia, however, began their programs because they observed that the current music programs were not satisfying cultural-musical expression of the *community's population*. In addition, there were external factors which played a role in the program's initiation, some personal and some environmental. Dennis's personal musical interests had led him to early music study abroad, and he had established successful consorts in three other institutional settings. Walt Hampton had, in the midst of a PhD program in applied percussion been asked by Patricia Sheehan Campbell to arrange a piece from Zimbabwe for Orff instruments and teach it to his elementary school students. The children's abilities far exceeded his expectations, which led to Walt's own epiphany about how musically limited our requests of children in elementary music programs generally are, and eventually to his firm commitment to an elementary music program that was, as he expressed it, "experiential instead of theoretical and analytical."

Patty Jo works with, and adapts her *program to* whatever musicians she has in her school community at any given time. Though it is usually country and bluegrass, there are years, she reported, when the instrumental ensemble in her chorus leaned more toward folk and rock. Marcia, clearly, was responding to demographic changes in the Las Vegas school population, but she was also influenced by a successful curriculum-based single-school mariachi program in Arizona, which she used a demonstration model in Clark county to "sell" the program to students, parents, and administrators. Both Marcia and Patty Jo characterized their decisions to start these programs as servicing the needs of their clientele.

Finally, it will come as no surprise to anyone here that to begin and run these ensembles required skills typically *not* acquired in music teacher training programs. In three of the cases these skills were acquired at the teacher's own initiative and expense, but derived both from various individuals and outside influences. Dennis was trained as a classical pianist, spent a period teaching music at the Commonwealth American School in Lausanne, Switzerland, and then spent twelve years in Ireland where he taught himself to play the recorder. He began playing in consorts there, continued studies in early music at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, and initiated his first school recorder program at a school for the blind in Dublin. Walt Hampton was an applied percussion major through graduate school, and studied Zimbabwean Shona marimba band style and technique with Dr. Dumisani Maraire who, he reported, first brought the music from Zimbabwe to the Pacific Northwest. Patty Jo was an applied piano major at a traditional music education undergraduate program at a state school in Kentucky. She says she has learned all she knows about country, bluegrass, and rock music from her students. Marcia Neel, a former high school choral director, has no training whatsoever in mariachi music. All those she hires to teach in the mariachi program are working professional mariachi musicians, whom through intensive professional development at Marcia's initiative, Clark County has developed into effective teachers.

Status

In examining the present state of the ensembles, I asked these teachers about membership, music literacy requirements, and any organizational or systemic provisions that are in place for feeder programs and program continuity. Ensemble membership processes included both open enrollment and audition, and were either curricular-based or extra-curricular. As previously mentioned, both Dennis' and Walt's groups are prestigious select ensembles whose relatively few spots are coveted by those eligible to seek them. All students in feeder grade levels study recorder and marimba, respectively, but only 12-15% play in the performance ensemble. Patty Jo accepts any capable instrumentalist interested in playing

with her chorus to do so, and she then adapts the repertoire program to their skills and interests. The secondary music mariachi program of the Clark County School District is open to any interested student. Roughly 50% of those eligible elect to participate, a statistic far exceeding participation levels in secondary music program nationwide, which averages generally from 5-15%.

Views on the importance of music literacy within this small sample of four run the gamut from “absolutely essential” to “not encouraged.” Reading music is both essential and heavily stressed in Dennis’ *Collegium*, and Marcia’s music mariachi program. Conversely, Patty Jo does not require her instrumentalists to read music to join chorus, and most of their playing and arranging is done by ear. She reports that many do eventually begin to read notation, however, as a result of chorus participation. Walt Hampton neither requires nor includes music literacy as part of his elementary school program, in keeping with his philosophy that music be 100% “experiential” in the elementary years. Although he does sketch out some of the more complicated arrangements for his own benefit, he insists that students learn all music by rote.

There are a range of networks which exist to support these four programs beyond their locales, some of which are used by the interviewees, and some not. Although recorder materials abound for elementary music teachers, Dennis Ferguson writes most of his own teaching materials and arrangements for his group, since his recorder program was not conceived as a “pre-band” introductory experience for the children. And, although an umbrella “Early Music in the Schools” organization might exist, Dennis does not seek collegial support networks to share his ensemble’s experiences, other than a close relationship he has developed with a music store that specializes in early music instruments and repertoire. A similar scenario exists for Patty Jo Lazarus. She is not involved in the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA), although she knows the director of its education initiative. Moreover, she emphasized that her students’ style is more accurately described as “country” than “bluegrass.” The IBMA publishes a lengthy and detailed *Bluegrass In The Schools Implementation Manual* including funding suggestions and grant opportunities, numerous sound and print resources, and a 10 page listing of bluegrass bands and organizations with program materials. Of the school programs described, none appears to incorporate the music into

the school's regular music program, with the exception of a few schools who host a 1-2 week residency in the genre as part of the traditional orchestra or band program. The remainder are after school "clubs," usually developed and led by someone other than the music teacher. One elementary school in Stanton, KY has an instrument lending program arranged through the school's library. Although ten states are represented in the list of schools having a bluegrass ensemble of some kind, interestingly, none is located further west than Colorado. Walt reported that his state MENC affiliate is cognizant and supportive of his work, as is his regional and state Orff-Schulwerk association. As reported, in Marcia's case with the Clark County School District, the MENC is responsible for considerable reportage and dissemination of the secondary music mariachi program in Las Vegas. MENC now has an affiliate membership category for mariachi, which numbers over 1300 members, with the heaviest geographic distribution in Pennsylvania, California, Illinois, New York, Connecticut, Florida, and Georgia (Beelendorf, 2007). According to Neel, prior to the MENC's involvement, an extensive network of mariachi educators had already existed, and one of its leaders, Richard Rodrigues of Curran Middle school in Bakersfield, California, was instrumental in persuading MENC to develop the mariachi membership affiliate category.

Sustainability

Program sustainability was examined in terms of data reported by interviewees describing the feeder systems in place for entrance into the ensembles, and the opportunities for continued skill advancement in these instruments in students' subsequent school years. Also, I asked each of the respondents how they thought their own program would develop over the next five or ten years, and whether the program each had developed was replicable, or already replicated, elsewhere.

Both Dennis' recorder *Collegium* and Walt's *Rugare* marimba ensemble are an outgrowth of their elementary general music class instrumental curricula, and thus have considerable numbers from which to draw membership. However, *no* subsequent playing opportunities exist for these children once they leave their elementary schools and advance into middle school. When asked about five and ten years prospects,

Dennis said the program would probably end when he leaves the school to retire. This was the case in his previous school, from whom he tried to purchase the unused instruments for Roosevelt school's use, but to no avail.

Walt explained that, even if it is maintained, *Rugare* will change considerably as an ensemble, once he leaves, because he writes all the arrangements for it, and it is very much driven by his own personality. Patty Jo Lazarus, when asked what the program would be like in five, or ten years, said... "I don't know... depends on what kids I get." Whether her community's "alternative instrumentalists" will have a place in their school program once she retires, she says, depends on who replaces her. Music Mariachi in CCSD, in its extensive breadth and depth as a curriculum-based program in a state which certifies the mariachi specialty, is very likely to remain established, but even there, time will tell. If and when a new dominant ethnicity replaces Las Vegas' Hispanic population, it is interesting to speculate whether the music program offerings in the schools will change yet again.

Systemic adaptation of experimental models in education depends on the extent to which the model is replicable and sustainable in other settings with different personnel in charge. In three of these cases offering alternative instrumentation, the ensemble clearly could be replicated in terms of instrument availability, scheduling, access to students, and to some extent, repertoire. The trickiest components, i.e. teacher qualifications and skills, are more problematic and ensemble-specific.

In Dennis's case, as long as a music teacher developed sufficient facility on enough instruments to develop a recorder consort, Dennis contends that it would be possible to replicate his program anywhere. He himself, however, has not initiated attempts to do so, and was unaware of such efforts, though it is very likely that similar groups exist elsewhere, given the resurgence of interest in early music in recent decades. Dennis did speculate, however, that the spread of such programs would come from a grass roots effort among teacher-musicians, and not from teacher training programs. Walt Hampton knows of numerous marimba ensembles in the Northwest and across the country, and Orff ensembles that play marimba style music, but *Rugare's* more challenging repertoire is not, at least not yet, available for dissemination.

Patty Jo's ensemble is, by personal choice and philosophy, 100% membership driven in that it is *designed to adapt* to the instrumentation and abilities of the school constituency, and therefore not replicable as a program. Certainly, as a philosophy, however, it is indeed replicable. Marcia Neel developed music mariachi *to be* replicable and replicated as a "curriculum based, standards driven comprehensive vocal and instrumental music program," both within and beyond Clark County. Numerous workshops and dissemination venues are currently being offered at state conferences throughout the Southwest and west coast. In two weeks, Marcia Neel and Javier Trujillo will offer a week long hands-on workshop on "Starting Your Own Mariachi Program" at Villanova University in Pennsylvania. In addition, the states of Washington and Texas each have specialized mariachi teacher websites.

Summary

There is ubiquitous discussion about our field's need to adapt to changing demographics and respond to the increased scholarship in world musics in school music programs. The experiences of these four practitioners, three working single-handedly in relative isolation, convey what just a few music teachers are doing to address these problems, whether they are *motivated* to do so by the problems or not, or moreover, whether they are even aware that they are doing so, *per se*. Issues of "cultural relevance," "ethno-musicological authenticity", whether one music is a "living tradition" and another is not, e.g., may be of importance to scholars of music education research, but my conversations with teachers indicate that to practitioners they are very much less so. These four individuals, as examples, have broken timbral ranks with the status quo for *whatever various* reasons, but all in order that children might have more, and/or better, options for music making. I contend that this rationale is both justifiable and sufficient. Furthermore, I propose that we do what we can to support teachers and school systems who embrace such endeavors as their professional responsibility. We can learn much from their experiences in order to change and improve the present, woefully outdated, pre-service education options and paths for music teachers.

Some view the traditional ensemble trilogy as a tyranny. At the very least, its pervasiveness, supported by a rigorous, aggressive festival

and competition network, is difficult for the individual music teacher to circumvent. Though daunting to consider in an administrative and logistical light, what, for example, would and could an MENC *Country Music/Bluegrass Membership Affiliate* distribution look like if, in ten years, the newly formed Kentucky School of Bluegrass begins certifying music teachers? In the early music programs now extant in universities, could we not institute teacher education paths so that early music consorts could enjoy the same growth that, say, school jazz and rock ensembles did in the last few decades? Anything's possible, really. This pilot research has demonstrated that, indeed, where there is a will, there *is* a way. Witness also Chris Tanner's newly published *The Steel Band Game Plan: Strategies for Starting, Building, and Maintaining Your Pan Program*.

So, stay tuned. The ensemble scene in schools is changing. The trilogy isn't toppling anytime soon, but it is being tested.

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