

Ten years ago this year, CMS President Patricia Campbell assigned a task force to evaluate the state of music higher education and offer a bold path toward the future. This document, titled *Transforming Music Study from its Foundations* became known colloquially as “The Manifesto.”

While those newer to CMS will have little or no context, many within this organization will remember a time when the Manifesto was simultaneously an inspirational document shining a light on many aspects of our profession that demanded change while also casting controversy and division amongst our organization and beyond. It is without doubt that, at the time, the Manifesto was a disrupter in higher education music, as it boldly instigated conversation and called for action moving forward.

Over the past ten years, we have collectively experienced many social changes, including the #MeToo movement, a national reckoning on race via George Floyd and other victims of police brutality, and divisive politics. All these cultural conversations have influenced the conversations in music academe as we examine “whose music matters.” Looking backward from where we stand today, much of the manifesto has proven to be prophetic as we collectively examine America’s history of colonialism, slavery, and sexism. It seems to me that the Manifesto has aged well.

We stand today at another crucial moment. We live in an era of global politics, worldwide connectivity of economics, looming environmental pressures, and the introduction of technologies in AI that will impact our future beyond comprehension. And, lest we forget, we are only four years out from a global pandemic that has incalculably impacted the arts. Here in the United States, we are also experiencing an ever-rising movement of anti-intellectualism and threats to higher education in general. The Arts, in particular, need increased activism and advocacy to continue to positively impact our communities, as we always have done, while navigating a post-pandemic climate and increased pressures on resources.

Of course, this impacts how we in education position ourselves for the next generation of young musicians. From pre-k to doctoral programs, every one of us is in a position to urgently examine where we are and to dream of solutions to move us in music to a future where we can ever better prepare and inspire a new generation of artistic music-makers.

As such, we are working on what it means to create the 2025 Manifesto 2.0.

We believe this process must be inclusive, ground-up, organic in nature, ongoing, and collaborative. We will not aim to create a ‘manifesto’ in the classical definition but will instead build a compendium of big ideas and action steps that can move us forward and stand as a building block to build upon conversations in the future in our ever-changing musical and cultural landscape. We need a process that will bring us all together.

We are planning the CMS Think-Tank Summit 2025 for January 17-19, 2025. Look for an exciting announcement soon. I invite you to dream of the future with us...

BC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BK Chin'.

Brian Kai Chin
President, College Music Society