

NATIONAL ISSUES

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All of us who are fortunate enough to be attending this Summit are obviously deeply concerned about the future of music study. We know that there is a difference between valuing music and valuing the *study* of music.

We also know that there are other areas within the curriculum that have a higher priority than music study, although most everyone agrees that music study is a "good thing." Values issues about music and music study lead us to our *first major national issue*. If we want to improve education in music at all levels and in all of its dimensions, it is important to convince more people that music study is valuable, not just for potential professionals, but for the lay public. To accomplish this, we must be able to craft meaningful messages that make distinctions and draw connections between passive appreciation and active engagement by way of sequential music instruction. We must not allow our enthusiasm for identifying and training great talent to dilute goals for general competence, nor should we allow the juggernaut of popular culture to obscure our collective mission to serve and assist in the development of a culture that values deeper aesthetic meanings and manifestations.

A second critical issue is the preservation of our infrastructure, not for its own sake but for its ability to serve the development of individual musical knowledge and skills. In the United States, from a Federal standpoint, we are blessed to have a decentralized delivery system for education at all levels. At the same time, we have strong national professional organizations with standards, statements of principle, and objectives that give us a remarkably common framework. Importantly, we do not have, nor do we need, a central bureaucracy that attempts to control education in music or music itself. Our diverse system is a tremendous strength. It is consistent with the best American traditions of freedom, responsibility, and local control. This means that we must continue to rely mainly on the aggregate of individual and local expertise to produce the national results that we here at this Summit espouse. Given the overall successes of this decentralized system, we cannot, or should not, seek centralized control in any form. What we need, instead, is continuous improvement, individual by individual, institution by institution, and community by community, guided by the quality of leadership that is represented at this Summit. As we think about and discuss this and other issues, we must also recognize the distinction between high standards and standardization which inhibits local initiative and self-determination.

This leads to a third national issue, that being the necessity of focus on the content of teaching and learning and on the development of individual knowledge and skills. From a national perspective, we should not become preoccupied with *how* people achieve competence. We should care more that competence is reached. We should not try to substitute process for content, systems for individual competence, or political action for substance. This means, among other things, that we should be extremely careful about how we spend our time with evaluation and assessment mechanisms and with agendas that could inhibit individual creativity. For example, "teaching to the test" discourages both individual student creativity and innovative teaching.

This leads to a fourth issue. We must pay attention to the content and context for music study but take caution in terms of our priorities in relation to those with whom we seek partnerships and those from whom we seek funding in support of our mission and goals. Funding, legislation, agency activities, personalities, foundation grants, teaching methodologies, funded philosophies, and many other contextual forces are important, but they must not be *the* major agenda for music or music education. The major agenda for both is music itself and our ability to deliver quality instruction, since both involve a connection with and among people. Thus, the connection of individuals and music study is what is at the center. Everything else should be in a supportive role. To lose sight of this fact is to lose our policy force by being seduced away from fundamental responsibilities as musicians and teachers. In this context, it is important to keep Washington and our state governments in perspective. From our perspective, we in higher education have

an important role to play in the future, but we understand fully that it is not an exclusive role. We are good ensemble players. We understand that at times our role is prominent, while at other times it provides accompaniment and support to the work of others.

Within higher education's future, I see three issues of paramount importance in the next decade. First, more and more of us are committed to finding better ways to integrate the various elements of music that comprise professional preparation. For example, it is increasingly important that musicians not only have a more than basic foundation in music theory, but also that they use theory creatively in their daily work. Music teachers in the schools should integrate their theory skills in ways that develop knowledge and understanding at appropriate levels in their own students. Music theory, musicology, ethnomusicology, performance, or any other related subject studied by prospective elementary or secondary teachers, must not be left behind when they enter the school classroom. The National Voluntary K-12 Standards call for this kind of an approach in music education, and we all see the need for more of it in the development and training of musicians. This integration or synthesis agenda is true to the nature of music, and we must pursue it as part of our higher aspirations for excellence.

A second issue of great importance relates to a different type of integration. The music community in the United States is large and effectively splintered into many groups. In fact, our community is so large and so divided by type of work that a real sense of community is often all but forgotten except when we come together on occasions such as this. Again, the answer we envision is not more bureaucratic organization at the national level but rather the growth of a better understanding on the part of all constituencies about the relationships among the many and varied parts of the profession broadly. These relationships and connections can best be built at the local level, with guidance from national leadership, and this is a task that obviously *must* be led by musicians.

Third, we must include the highly important sector of early childhood music in our discussions. We must extend our vision and discussions beyond K-12 levels to incorporate this burgeoning movement in recognition of both its validity and its future significant role as an essential component of our overall educational mission.

All music organizations hold enormous collective power and concomitant responsibility to provide leadership that could positively influence the substance of teacher training and music teaching in the schools for many years to come. We are here to address an awesome responsibility. I dare say that there is no one present here who is not passionately dedicated to advancing the cause of music by every legitimate means possible. We in higher education believe that music programs on our campuses have a tremendous role to play in this effort. Fortunately, new initiatives are under way in many institutions to equip more effectively or to enable musicians to take a more active role in the future of the profession and its context. NASM and CMS pledge their substantial resources to continuing to support and encourage such new initiatives, and to working with you in any ways that we can to ensure the best possible future for music study and teaching.

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