Music Education in Canada  
Part II: The Need For Change

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(Part I of this article appeared in Vol. 23, No. 3, p. 18)

Canadian music educators have much to be proud of, but many changes are needed if music education in Canada is to continue its growth and development.

Research can help to guide Canadian music educators into the twenty-first century. But very little serious research in music education has been done in Canada. Canadians can draw on the work of foreign researchers, but there is also a real need for more and better music education research in Canada. Descriptive, historical, experimental, curriculum, and evaluative research—all are necessary. Canada has had nothing comparable to the American funded research projects in music education. The Canadian federal government has generally avoided the field of education, and provincial governments have not viewed music education research as a priority item in their budgets. Nor have private foundations in Canada contributed to music education research in ways comparable to the Ford and Rockefeller foundations in the United States. Nor have research and development labs like CEMREL been established in Canada. More communication is needed among those researchers who are at work in the music education field in Canada, and more emphasis on research is needed in Canadian university Music Education programs, particularly at the graduate level. Teachers need to be made aware of the value of research findings for their work in the classroom situation.

There is a need for more effective evaluative procedures throughout the music education field in Canada. Very little work has been done in Canada on the evaluation of music education. Canada has no program comparable to the American National Assessment program, and the provincial ministries of education do not have reliable information on musical achievement or on the effectiveness of music programs. No one has easy answers to questions concerning the evaluation of arts education, but Canadian music educators must address such questions and seek possible answers. A concerted effort must be made to evaluate the effectiveness of current music programs and the musical achievement of today’s students, in order to guide the future development of Canadian music education.

Objectives for music education at all levels need to be clarified in order to improve programs and develop suitable evaluative procedures. In developing objectives, it is important to distinguish between two basically different types of music program:

(1) training for the gifted, the potential professional performer, composer, musicologist, or music teacher, and
(2) music programs for the amateur without special talent or professional interest in music.

Firmer philosophical foundations are needed to guide the work of Canadian music educators. Provincial directors of music, music consultants in local school boards, university music departments, voluntary associations of music educators—all should address basic philosophical questions.

With declining enrolments and increasing emphasis on “the basics”, music programs are being cut back or are being threatened with cutbacks. Music educators need to work together to articulate clearly and forcefully to parents, administrators, other teachers, and politicians the value of music education as an essential part of the Canadian educational system. The voices of individual music educators may not be enough to change the opinions of those who regard music as a frill. But the national voice of music educators, speaking through their voluntary associations with firmly based arguments justifying the importance of music education, may be stronger if they come from music associations cooperating with associations of teachers in the other arts disciplines.

There is a general need for higher standards of music instruction. In order to raise standards, more music specialists are needed at the elementary school level to work with classroom teachers in planning and teaching music. It is also important to improve teachers' qualifications by expanding and improving in-service training for teachers provided by local boards and music educators' associations; by increasing the offerings of university level part-time and summer music courses for teachers; by improving teacher training programs at the undergraduate level; and by strengthening masters programs in Music Education and making provision for doctoral study in Music Education. At present, for example, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education which is one of the world's largest and finest institutes for the advanced study of education (masters and doctoral level programs) has only one full-time faculty member in the field of arts education, and he is a drama specialist. OISE should expand its arts faculty and should co-operate more closely with graduate departments in the various arts disciplines in order to expand its offerings in arts education. In general, Canadian university Music Education programs have tended to stress performance training. There is a need to broaden teacher training programs to include approaches which stress comprehensive musicianship, creating and listening, and which consider the use of music in special education and aesthetic education.

In the elementary and secondary schools, there is a need for a wider variety of music courses. The best programs have been in the performance field. There is a need for more emphasis on listening, creating, and analysing in order to raise the general level of musical literacy and aesthetic sensitivity. The comprehensive musicianship
approach should be used more extensively. At the elementary school level where music is compulsory, strong general music programs should be offered for those without special talent or interest in performance. Expanded curricular music programs for the gifted are also needed. Provincially supported music high schools in the large urban centres would be an excellent way to provide advanced music training plus basic academic study for talented music students. Residential facilities would be needed for students from outside the urban areas. There is also a need for more and better music programs in special education and in community programs for the handicapped. Improved and expanded offerings in aesthetic education (including not only music but the other arts) are also needed.

There is a need for better facilities and space for music education particularly outside the larger urban areas. More co-operation between schools and the community is needed, and more outreach programs are needed to bring performers and teachers to outlying communities.

Not all provincial ministries of education have a music director or music staff. There is a need for more direction from the ministerial level, particularly in program development and evaluation. Each province should have at least one well qualified music specialist to provide leadership at the provincial level. More and better work in curriculum development is needed, not only at the provincial level but also at the local board level where more teachers can be involved in the process of curriculum design and implementation.

There is a need for more thoughtful, discriminating use of foreign approaches, adapting music and methods from abroad to the Canadian educational system, incorporating what is most relevant and useful from the work of such men as Orff, Kodaly, Suzuki, and Dalcroze, British music educators like George Self and John Paynter who stress creative approaches, and Americans like Bennett Reimer who emphasize music listening and aesthetic education.

At the same time there is a need to teach more Canadian composed and folk music in order to help Canadian students develop a stronger sense of national cultural identity. Of course, the Canadian music selected for use in schools should be skillfully written, formally interesting, musically expressive, and pedagogically suitable. Teachers need guidance in locating suitable Canadian music, and composers need guidance and encouragement in writing for student performers.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation needs to work more closely with music educators to develop effective school music broadcasts for various grade levels. Research is needed into the aesthetic and educational impact of various formats for school music broadcasts. More use should be made of radio and print combinations for school music broadcasts. Procedures should be developed for the distribution for
The voluntary associations for music educators in Canada are fighting to survive with relatively small memberships, limited financial resources, and rising costs. Greater co-operation among the various associations is needed in order to avoid needless duplication of services and to broaden the outlook of the teachers involved. Such co-operation is possible, as was evidenced by the joint sponsorship by the Canadian Music Educators' Association, the Canadian Association of University Schools of Music, the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Associations, and the Fédération des Associations de Musiciens Educateurs du Québec of the 1978 International Society for Music Education Conference held in London, Ontario. A good deal of federal funding is currently given to voluntary associations in the field of physical education. Increased federal support is needed to enable voluntary associations of music educators to continue and expand their work. Federal funds are also needed to support music education projects of a national nature which do not fall within a particular province's jurisdiction.

It is an exciting time to be a Canadian music educator. There is much work to be done, many changes that need to be made. The field of music education in Canada is small enough that an individual can have a real impact on progress, can help to initiate change. Committed teachers and administrators, working together at the local, provincial, and national levels, can strengthen and improve music education in Canada in the final decades of the twentieth century.

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FOOTNOTES
1. Unless otherwise indicated, information in this article is based on research carried out by National and Provincial Task Forces as part of the Canadian Conference of the Arts National Inquiry into the Arts and Education in Canada, 1977-9.
2. The music survey administered by provincial Task Forces into Arts and Education included the question, "What is the rationale for the inclusion of music in the total educational program with which you are involved?"
3. In 1979, approximately 60,000 candidates were examined in approximately 250 centres. Most of these candidates took examinations in the lower grades (grades one to ten of the Conservatory syllabus), but some were seeking the Associateship diploma.
5. A doctoral program in Music Education is in the planning stages at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario.

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