

Music Education Philosophical Statement
Draft #2

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Perhaps a voice is capable of more than words. Perhaps a group of instrumentalists, brandishing the tools of their trade, can manifest pure, undiluted emotion. Perhaps these potentialities are worth exploring. The musical art form is one that commands respect; those who learn music command that art form. Music educators can guide this path of discovery, the honing of talents, the enhancement of skills – inexorably affecting the whole of students' learning with the exploration of pitch and rhythm. This responsibility is a significant one, and the nature of its purpose is multi-faceted.

Humans have a need for music. As a culture, we cannot escape this necessity – permutations of this medium permeate almost every corner of society. Music can be found constantly abound, and is constantly shaping the lives of its listeners. Beginning at a very young age, children have a palpable propensity for the comprehension and utilization of tonal and rhythmic skills. Gleaning base content from the music (or musical sounds) that occur around them, children can begin to hear and attempt to reproduce sound even before they can speak. The nurturing of this perception is crucial – if a child is not coached to embrace this undeveloped listening and speaking literacy, his or her development of a skill set may be hindered. What's more, children develop neural connections because of musical stimulation (Schlaug, 1994). Music's combination of the esoteric and the analytical, the expressionistic and the logical, serve to connect the two hemispheres of the brain as information is needed from both. Listening to, learning about, and performing music can increase this type of much-needed neural functioning. By extension, students of music are often more perceptive and analytical about the world around them. However, it is easy to overlook the more subtle benefits of musical study; this technicality is but a mere portion of music's greater educational possibilities.

Humans have a need for expression. For millennia, civilizations have honored and cherished musical traditions. There is some incomprehensible force that lies dormant within music, some quality that when released can move a person on an

unparalleled level. Music is an art form, and as such is a reflection of the human spirit, an encapsulation of emotional expression. Music education is the furthering of this art form's study, and the subsequent imparting of this depth of knowledge. The educator can not only instruct his or her students in the particularities of music – the structure, function, and technical aspects cannot be denied – but can also give students a window, podium, or a new (or renewed) voice. It is with that voice that the students can more effectively express themselves and communicate with others. With their heightened perception, students can see their success and gain self-confidence. Performing in ensembles utilizes these attributes to strengthen bonds, unify goals, and build character between all students involved. The course of learning music can take their consciousness to levels unattainable by any other medium, and influence achievement in most every facet of life. Perhaps to learn music, to create, to exude this profundity – perhaps that's worth teaching.