

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
Peering Through the Transparencies of
Singing, Gender and the Music Classroom

by

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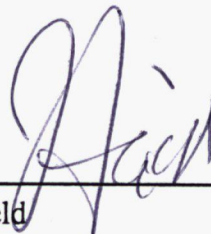
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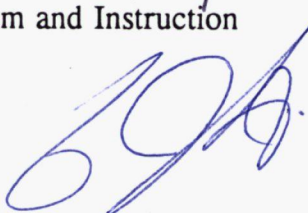
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THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Peering Through the Transparencies of Singing, Gender and the Music Classroom" submitted by Rosemarie Sherban in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



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ABSTRACT

Singing forms the basis of many Music Education programs in elementary schools in Alberta. It is viewed, by many music educators, as fundamental to further acquisition of musical knowledge. As well, singing taught in a rote manner provides many children their first experience in group music making and musical performance.

However singing in the upper elementary grades is generally not subscribed to by male students. In an attempt to identify why males do not subscribe to singing, observations were conducted in a grade one class and a grade five class as they engaged in activities, including singing, in a music classroom taught by a music specialist. Individual interviews of both male and female students at both levels, the music specialist and the administrator were conducted to give further insight into this problem. The researcher's personal experiences as a music educator, is part of the writings.

Issues of gender, particularly, the genderization of choral music emerge. The influence of the required music curriculum, the role of the specialist, teacher education and performance issues related to teacher evaluation are intertwined to shed light on the problem.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As one sings their own unique plaintive melody one inevitably finds many airs and excerpts of the songs of others. Their songs have made one listen, caused one to learn and add to one's repertoire. To those who have shared in the composition of my song:

- Both my parents sang a song of sacrifice and patience that I should become musically literate ... my mother, Elizabeth Pesklivets, from whom I heard and learned the beautiful Ukrainian melodies; my father, Nick Sherban whose melody, although unsung, emitted a strong sense that women should be educated and have alternatives.
- From daughter, Rosalind Robertson, I heard the song of a love so deep that my practice as a teacher changed forever more; because of her I realized fully the life of a child and the preciousness of childhood; her song will be different, her melodies interpreted through a dance expressing what music for people should be truly about, self fulfillment and enjoyment -- whose question as a young child now has special import.... "Do you think daddy would mind if I became a full Ukrainian?"
- Esther Huck, a true teacher and dearest friend and mentor, who sang a song of womanhood and the courage of age.
- my dear Carl Saarinen, whose song was of patience and friendship, beckoning me into areas yet unexplored, mountains yet to be conquered.
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To all, thank you.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This study examines the phenomenon of music education through reflections on my practice as a music educator. These reflections, combined with classroom observations, student's accounts and the music specialist's accounts, are utilized to cast light on the underlying issues at work in music education in the schools. The focus on the genderization of singing, specifically why boys do not sing, will lead to an examination of performance and the presence of elitism embodied in the notion of pure sound. The life world of the classroom sets the stage where observations of grade one children and grade five children as they interact with their peers, the specialist and the music curriculum can occur. As well as performance and elitism, the presence of aggression and its influence on the direction of classroom instruction will be addressed. This provides insight into how genderization of singing could occur. Thus the role of the specialist, the influence of the unacknowledged curriculum of performance, and the basic tenets of music education in public education will be addressed.

Research Orientation

This study lent itself well to employing techniques often associated with sociological and ethnographic studies. Genderization and music are both products of a culture and I was concerned with the educational culture as played out in the music classroom. Eisner (1991) states that qualitative inquiry represents a "new way of thinking about the nature of knowledge and how it can be created." (p. 227) He states further that through this type of research, life worlds may be examined. The life world

in this research was a classroom setting where students were brought together to interact with each other while exploring concepts and developing skills to form a knowledge base in music. The relevance of gender to children as they are initiated into social norms was explored. By observing children's interactions with each other, as well as children's individual actions, their participation in music activities was noted.

Within these daily interactions, the language of the participants, as they engaged in music activities, assumed importance. "Language is so fundamentally a part of our humanness that Heidigger (1971) proposed that language, thinking and being are one" (van Manen, 1989, p. 38) van Manen states further that "whosoever wants to become acquainted with the world of teachers, mothers, fathers and children should listen to the language spoken by things in their life worlds, to what things mean in this world." (p. 39)

Classroom observations, interviews of students, the specialist and the principal, field notes and reflections on the observations and interviews formed the data collection. I attempted to connect the observations to my own practice and upbringing, thus to enter the life world of the children and music specialist in the music class. As suggested by Van Mannen (1988), "the researcher should fully understand the language, the practices, the rules and beliefs of the culture under observation." (p. 46) Although I was knowledgeable in the area of music curriculum and instruction, I lacked a template through which gender bias could be viewed and interpreted. I took a self-study half-course in Women's Studies, read books and articles to enhance my understanding of the nature of gender bias as it exists in society today. It was through these readings that I

developed the "transgressive courage" that Rogers (1993) speaks of; the courage that "involves going beyond the strictures of forbidden knowledge of relationships, including cultural conspiracies of silence that surrounds women's knowledge." (p. 258) The "cultural conspiracies of silence" in this study would be the pressures from groups, where I was once accepted and acknowledged as a valuable member, to say nothing about certain issues, even though I saw flaws in things as they are. To do so, I risked banishment from the groups.

The approach to the research could be termed feminist. "A feminist methodologist, for example, rejects the belief that one can separate the 'subjectivity' of the researcher from the object of her research and, in fact, creates research practices that close the inevitable distance between the researcher and the participants in the research." (Rogers, 1993, p. 266) My own gender and experiences as a female in music education influenced that which I observed.

As Rogers goes further to suggest I sought ways to enter the research as a protagonist, interpreter and author, by including myself in a subjective presence throughout the research. While interpreting the text of the research, I engaged in reflection as the data brought new meanings to experiences I had had as a young girl studying music in a rural setting, as a university student and as a music educator of twenty-five years, teaching music as a generalist, as a music specialist and, as a system consultant in music education.

The use of the narrative as text is based on the assumption that humans are "story telling organisms, who, individually and socially, live storied lives. Thus a study of

narrative is a study of the ways humans experience the world." (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p. 2) In this research, my practice and that which influenced it are treated as data and the narrative becomes the language I used to gain insight on the lived experience. The stories I include were selected with a view to what Van Maanen (1988) refers to as apparancy and verisimilitude; apparancy meaning that what is evident, verisimilitude the apparent truth of this evidence. It is what these stories had to say about music education in the life world of music classroom that made them significant and persuasive. Gadamer (1975) suggests that "If something is called or considered an experience, its meaning rounds it into the unity of a significant whole." (p.60) Diltthey (1985) uses a musical metaphor when he states that, "Lived experiences are related to each other like motifs in the andante of a symphony, these motifs are heard and reflected upon to give meaning to them." (p. 227) "Narrative reasoning contrasts with logical reasoning in that the premises and the conclusions also have narrative forms." (van Manen, 1992 p. 23) These narrative forms can persuade at both an emotional, moral level and an intellectual level.

Settings

As well as the various settings of my life, the natural setting of the school was used to gather data related to the investigation. The study was conducted in a "public" school as opposed to a school of a particular religious denomination. If a site had been chosen in the Separate (Catholic) School system, the influence of religious instruction would have to be addressed in the discussion.

I selected a school with an administrator and music specialist who were interested in the topic. This suggested a willingness by both to give me access to the school and

students with an open mindedness to an examination of gender issues. My experience and observations had made me aware that gender issues were not recognized and/or widely accepted by the teaching force as a whole. I preferred to work with an administrator and a specialist who would not find this topic, in any way, difficult to accept. Thus both the administrator and the music specialist were given a copy of my thesis proposal to read before permitting me to conduct the research at their school.

Access to two classes, a grade one music class and a grade five music class taught by the music specialist, was required. The grade one class would provide a view of children early in the process of schooling and the grade five class would provide a view of more mature children further along in the process. A specialist situation was selected for two reasons. First, I wanted the same teacher teaching both classes and second, I wanted a teacher who was comfortable teaching the music curriculum. My personal experience as a specialist was the practise that concerned me most, a practice I felt needed to be closely examined.

Written permission from the parents for students participating in the study was received prior to the commencement of the study. To retain anonymity of the school and the participants, pseudonyms were given to the school and to all participants.

Observations

Four observations of each music class were conducted over a two week period. Each music class engaged the students in a variety of musical activities including singing. I made field notes during the observations. Each lesson was audio taped and transcribed. After each lesson I reviewed my field notes while listening to the audio tape. Following

this, I wrote a reflection on each observation.

Interviews

After the observations were completed, interviews with two male and two female students from each class, who exhibited enthusiasm towards singing were conducted. This was balanced by interviews with two male and two female students from each class who exhibited a reticence towards singing. The music specialist assisted me in the selection of these students. The questions focused on attitudes about music, musical experiences outside of the school, and musical preferences. Although these questions formed a basis for the interviews, the sequence of the questions was determined by the flow of the interview. Each interview was transcribed immediately.

The data were compiled and placed in a binder and were analyzed for significant instances, patterns, themes and categories. It was while analyzing this data that I, after being out of the classroom for four years, returned to active teaching as a music specialist in an elementary school. Revisiting the observations as an active music specialist gave an immediacy to the research. The return to active service caused me to view the research far more critically, searching for deeper meanings and values that permeated the life world of these children and their music specialist. I came across practice in the observations that was familiar to my own practice, practice I thought I would change. As an active practitioner I realized that change was far more difficult than I had remembered. Parent and administrative expectations of performances and curricular emphasis on notational reading skills soon began to drive my practice again. Thus my active practice illuminated my research and my research illuminated my active

practice. The data was read carefully and what was meaningful selected and categorized. Out of these categories themes emerged. New phenomena yielded new concepts and insights such as the impact of a performance based program, the relationship between the performance and teacher evaluation, the emphasis of the British choral sound, and the curricular attempt to make students musically literate, to mention a few.

The study was not limited to the language used by the participants but also to the actions, passivity and silences of the participants who were observed and interviewed. It focused upon the student response to musical activities and how students constructed meaning through what they did in class. The school, the students, the music specialist and the program were not to be evaluated in the standard sense of assessing methodology or learning.

The interview with the school administrator yielded a different point of view. As well as the socio-economic profile of the school population, the interview provided administrative perceptions on staff deployment, in particular the rationale and meaning behind the position of music specialist. There was an attempt to gain insight into the unacknowledged music curriculum. This is a curriculum that emerges because, although there are spoken expectations of the music program, these expectations are not acknowledged as influencing what and how music is presented to children in the classroom.

CHAPTER TWO

Of Boys and Girls and Singing

When I was trying to decide on a thesis topic someone told me to select a topic that was like an itch that needed scratching. An itch can be persisting and annoying. Once you begin to scratch it, the itch can either go away or cause one to seek further remedies. My itch was a concern that singing was becoming a dying art amongst boys in upper elementary school. Although I had had this concern throughout my teaching career, there was a distinct incident that reactivated the itch.

A few years ago I was visiting an elementary school in my capacity as a music consultant with expertise in choral singing. I had been invited to listen, critique and workshop three choirs. As I entered the school's gymnasium a familiar scene met my eye. On my left was the school's Division One (grades one to three) choir with two thirds female and one third male. In the middle was a visiting Division Two (grades four to six) choir of approximately ninety children, all female. On the right was the school's Division Two choir with, again, approximately ninety children but only five boys. As the vice-principal and I sat down to listen to these groups, she, too, had quickly observed this lack of boys in the groups. She said, simply, "Why is that"? I was at a loss for an answer.

As a music consultant, I had witnessed this scene repeatedly but this time the question had greater import. The vice-principal's questioning of the unequal subscription to singing on the part of the boys made me aware that the problem was out of the music room and in the public view. It was the first time I had encountered questioning of this

nature by someone outside music education. Previously I witnessed administrators demonstrate concern over the classroom management techniques of various music specialists. As long as there were no overt behaviour problems, music specialists managed to maintain a free rein on all they did in the music classroom. Music, in many instances, was taught by teachers who had knowledge of the symbols of music. Administrators often commented that they could not evaluate the content of the music curriculum as taught because they simply did not understand the symbolic mode of music. However, in the vice-principal's simple question "Why is that"? I sensed an underlying, unspoken administrative concern about how the children engaged with the music curriculum and the teaching practices of some highly regarded music specialists. Moreover I was alarmed that, although I was the elementary music consultant and spokesperson for music teachers, I had no idea how to answer the question. This administrative concern, I felt, spoke to a larger question, that of gender bias in our schools.

At about this time gender bias was beginning to be addressed at the board level. Speakers such as Shakeshaft, Baker and Robertson addressed the issue of gender bias in the instruction and instructional materials in our schools with senior administrators and program specialists. The focus of these speakers was how gender bias short-changed our female student population. However the incident with the choir demonstrated the opposite, that is, the perceived lack of the male voice. There was a definite segment of the school population omitted from the experiences of those choirs. The lack of participation in singing as boys matured through the school system became the focus of

my investigations -the itch that needed scratching.

As I researched this topic I found that the decline of singing in the upper grades, especially as subscribed to by male students, was also noted by Castelli (1986). Gates (1985) noted that in Boston, in the early eighteenth-century, women needed encouragement to sing in public. Singing was dominated by men. By 1930 the numbers reached parity. And by the mid-1980s there was a very rapid decline in the willingness of boys to subscribe to singing; singing was almost exclusively female. Although I could find research that noted the decline in the subscription to singing, there was little to be found explaining why this decline occurs.

"There is a challenge in the issue of gender bias, but it can be an interesting one for both to students and teachers to address. It can cause people to be left out and certainly to be considered less than they could be. A commitment to how and what we study in the classroom, whatever the level, can be the genesis of major and far reaching changes." (Hammett, 1991 p. 8)

Why This Concern With Singing?

But I began then to think of time as having shape, something you could see, like a series of liquid transparencies, one laid out on top of another. You don't look back along time but down through it, like water. Sometimes this comes to the surface, sometimes that, sometimes nothing. Nothing goes away.

Margaret Atwood, The Cat's Eye (1988, p. 3)

Unless I could uncover how my own liquid transparencies of time came to surface in my passion for singing I might never understand the forces that propelled me to become involved in a study of why children seemed to lack a similar passion. Moreover, I felt it was necessary to retrace my journey because of the influence I have had on

music educators and choral directors in the province. These accounts, I hope will encourage some music educators to make their own pilgrimages and become more critical of what has driven their practice to date. There is a risk, however, that the pilgrimage may lead one to find that one's practice is so incongruent with one's being that a career change may become a necessity.

Pedagogically understanding children is not a simple affair. 'Often we adults do not understand children because we do not understand our own childhood.' (Freud). This requires that one can address the heteronomy of one's pedagogical vocation and responsibility. (van Manen, 1992, p. 1)

My own passion for singing had its beginning during my childhood spent in a Ukrainian community in Northern Saskatchewan. In this community, singing and dancing were a part of everyday life, subscribed to equally by males and females. My religious, cultural, educational and recreational life were a cohesive whole. As a nine year old I was a member of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox church choir. I sang alto next to my mother from music that had been laboriously hand copied by the choir director. Some vivid memories remain: -- the Creed being sung by an exquisite tenor who farmed in the area -- the choir director's wife singing the most beautiful descant to Silent Night as the rest of the choir sang the carol in Ukrainian -- the spontaneous singing at gatherings such as weddings. This was the essence that shaped my love of singing.

The importance of singing in the musical development of children has been expressed by many writers such as Gordon (1971). Kodaly, whose methodology has been embraced by many North American music teachers, states " Singing without any instrument, free singing, is the really deep training of the child's musical faculties." (Choksy, 1981, p. 7) Kodaly suggests the natural voice is a way of internalizing musical

learning and a child, who has not learned how to sing, will be disadvantaged musically. The music specialist of the school researched shared a similar perspective on the importance of singing in the musical development of children.

Teacher: I think it (singing) is number one, crucial. First thing they can't develop a head tone, they can't hear pitches, they're going to be having trouble with hearing pitch in instrumentation as well. If children can sing in pitches and hear them, they'll do that much better I feel.

This teacher had studied the Kodaly pedagogy and it resounds throughout her philosophy both verbally and practically. This notion that singing is indicative of the inner hearing of pitch has been voiced before. I recall discussing the importance of singing with a successful junior high band teacher. He stated that he would never assign a French Horn to a student who could not sing. He felt that if a student could not sing then that student would never play the horn with any accuracy of pitch. In my experience as a consultant I became aware that many Junior high band teachers use sight singing exercises as a part of their program. As the teacher in the study suggests: "They know what they are going to play is supposed to sound like before they get to it ... and they can read the notes before, through singing, and hear what they are reading."

As well, a good case can be made for the teaching of the concept/skill of phrasing through singing. I can recall, on the recommendation of their teachers, many academy string and piano students registering in the children's choir to improve their instrumental phrasing.

The music teacher goes further to state: "I think its also really crucial to the development of a human being. And their wholeness. I think that's a really crucial point. I think each one of us has a good singing voice. And we each have to develop

that singing voice. So I really believe that the whole idea of learning to express yourself through singing is really important to children ... to people. And a lot of children who've never had the opportunity to do that are missing a really crucial part of their development ... just like learning to speak. It's just a developmental skill that they have to learn."

Elliott (1993) supports these views of singing in the educational terms of Donald Schon as "thinking-in-action" and "knowing in action". Elliott uses "thinking-in-action" and "procedural knowledge" synonymously. Thus he maintains that "when a student is singing musically, he or she is demonstrating a rich form of procedural knowledge called musicianship." (p.11) Through singing, Elliott suggests, humans gain the most important of all knowledge, and that is self knowledge. Esoteric language aside, Elliot does the most service to the importance of singing with the words of the Billy Henderson song "When I Sing"... "when I sing, its a funny thing, I just feel a lot better, feel a lot better ... when I sing." (p.16)

Perhaps this is all that should be said of the importance of singing; to this I can relate. I can recall feeling exhausted before choir rehearsal and coming out of rehearsal absolutely elated, totally recharged -- I just felt a lot better.

All of the above perceptions on the importance of singing creates an obligation on the part of music educators to ensure that every child is given the fullest opportunity to sing. What are the obstacles to engaging children in song? The concern of my research was to discern if there were gender differences in the subscription to singing as children matured in school. To do this I set about observing the children of a middle

class school participating in their music classes with a particular focus on singing. I felt if I observed a grade one class and a grade five class I could see if the attitudes to singing in the music classes changed through this process of schooling.

As I searched the literature for gender issues specific to music in public education I found very little. My orientation came from reading studies in other disciplines and deciding on their relevance to music education. However most of the bias in other disciplines was against females. Singing appeared to be the opposite, but appearances can be deceiving.

Construction of Gender; Construction of Self

Constructivists seek to stretch the outer boundaries of their consciousness - by making the unconscious conscious, by consulting and listening to the self, by voicing the unsaid, by listening to others and staying alert to all the currents and undercurrents of life about them, by imagining themselves inside the new poem or person or idea that they want to come to know and understand. (Belenky et al, 1986, p. 141)

Through various readings I have pieced together a map of how I began to understand gender construction. I have interspersed this map with personal and professional locations that identified for me the relevance of the literature. Simply, there were readings that resonated and helped me make sense of my childhood as a female child in a patriarchal home, as well as my life as a music educator. The map provides the melodic themes and my personal narrative serves as a development of these themes to make the knowledge in the readings a part of my own personal knowledge.

Definitions establish reference points for future discussion. This is the case with the two words: sex and gender. Gender denotes a difference of socialization within a culture. (Tong, 1989, p. 3). One can be born genetically female, but it is the society

in which one lives that defines what actions and behaviours are female and what actions and behaviours are male. Tong suggests that in this way "women's experiences differ across class, racial, and cultural lines" (p.7). Gilligan suggests that gender identity is "established for both sexes by the time a child is around three" (p.7). This would imply that even before children enter institutions of public education they have a concept of what their gender is, defined by their experience in their homes.

In reflection, I experienced gender delineation in my home. Although it was not called anything, it was very pronounced. My childhood recollections of gender delineation are plentiful as my siblings and I matured. Gender was especially evident when summer holidays came around. My sister and I stayed at home with our mother and did household tasks, while my brother went off to the shop (farm machinery dealership) with my father. I can recall "unusual" times when my mother would go to the shop because my father had to go to the city to pick up parts or new machinery. I can remember my mother restructuring her week to manage the shop for a day, but I do not remember my dad restructuring his day to accommodate my mother's work at home.

There were definitions of gender that were unique to the cultural composition of the community of my childhood. My brother excelled at Ukrainian dancing, my sister excelled as a pitcher for the girls' slow pitch team, and I became the pianist. All this was acceptable in my small community, where men danced and women could and did excel at sports. Playing the piano, however, was definitely feminine.

Children then seek out in the schools ways of affirming themselves as masculine or feminine. This suggests that in one classroom there would be a multiplicity of

perceptions, emanating from the home, of what it means to be masculine or what it means to be feminine. As children leave their homes and begin their public education, according to Apple (1979, p. 6), they enter a major agency for the transmission of the dominant culture. The dominant culture may resemble that of the home or be quite different.

The vision of the bicycle race track (complete with a jump ramp) my brother created around my mother's garden comes to mind. Me? I was making a mess on the dresser at my friends' house as we applied heavy layers of face powder. As he developed his masculinity and his motor skills, I was doing the feminine thing of trying to make myself more beautiful -- already subscribing to the beauty myth.

And as my brother dreamed of becoming a dentist, I was told repeatedly that being a teacher or a nurse was appropriate for girls. Girls were only to have careers to fall back on in case something happened to their husbands. This view of my role in the world began in my home and was reinforced at school.

Paley (1986) observed gender differences in the play environments created by nursery school children. She noted that the male block corner was harsh and competitive as contrasted with quiet gentleness of the female doll corner. Whereas the females showed little interest in entering the block corner, the males play often entered the doll corner. Girls are expected to maintain this quiet gentleness as they continue in school. Thus, the aggressive, competitive processes of schooling, which are appealing to the boys, are very harmful to young girls who come to school far ahead of their brothers in verbal, social and physical skills. (Sadker and Sadker, 1982) Frequently the girls are

asked to remain passive as teachers focus on enticing their brothers into this thing called school.

When I entered school I was a grade behind my brother who was eighteen months older. Split grades were a reality in our little rural school. Every second year we would be in the same class. Sadker and Sadker, Shakeshaft and Paley gave me insight into why a very intense sibling rivalry developed between my brother and I. How terrible it must have been for my brother to have his younger sister in the same class, nipping at his heels, academically and physically. I recall a picture of the two of us at ages thirteen and fifteen, my brother, dwarfed by my size, stretching himself to look taller. Men were supposed to be smarter and taller.

Vaulting into my professional life, when I read this passage from Sadker and Sadker I realized that my research would have to include children early in their school careers and children later in their school careers. This would help identify any processes of schooling that would shed light on the negation of singing as the students matured.

Paley (1986) also describes how, because of these gender differences, young boys in nursery school got into trouble when the music teacher tried to engage the class in singing. Paley relates the frustrations of young boys when they had to alternate between moving and sitting still in the music room; girls on the other hand had no difficulty with this. Girls seemed to be more in sync with the teacher's pace and therefore did not find it difficult to focus in the music room.

I think of a grade one class that arrived at my music room at 2:50 p.m. every second day. How awful this was for the active little boys to sit through the music class;

how tedious for the mature little girls as they waited for the boys to figure out this thing called school. Interestingly the male Physical Education teacher complained of this problem too.

A recent study of junior high school classes, conducted by Eyre (1991), gave crucial observations of control and attempted control of the classroom on the part of young males at a later stage of their school life. Eyre states that schools are environments which "encourage hegemonic heterosexual relationships as the norm and where misogyny and homophobia are serious problems." (p. 215). This creates a very difficult environment for our young female children. Robertson (1991) suggests that even though females begin school ahead of the boys, when they graduate, girls are equal or, in many cases, behind their brothers. According to Shakeshaft (1986) "two messages emerge repeatedly from the research on gender and schooling. First, what is good for the males is not necessarily good for females. Second, if a choice must be made, the educational establishment will base policy and instruction on what is good for males." (p. 50)

Last year, as I experienced much of what Eyre described, I had a new appreciation of the true strength of some students in my music classes. How brave it was of Alexis to state how she wished the boys would quit being so immature so we could get on with the music class. How brave it was of Fred to wear beads to class and risk being labelled effeminate.

Struggling for power and identity can lead to peer pressure. Diamond and Witmer (1994) suggest first, that in shared social identities for children or young adults,

"age is an extremely important means of defining one's community of associates and the musical tastes or activities they share", second, "the ever changing communities of age and the constantly renegotiated definitions of gender remind us that social identity is not static and fixed but dynamic." (p. 303). Although, as Gilligan suggests, gender identity may be established as early as three years of age, when children come to school they come with a definition of what it means to be female/male created in their home environments. In school they meet other definitions of gender and societal values. With the existence of peer pressure, the child may decide to change and redefine these definitions of gender for social acceptance in a peer group. If a child changes to another school environment this redefinition may have to begin again. Peer pressure is affected by the size of community in which the students reside. It is important to note that Holmes and Silverman (1992) suggest that peer pressure is stronger in urban centres than in rural areas. The dynamics of a small community appear to keep peer pressure to a minimum. Since my research was conducted in a large urban centre, this would suggest that the students researched would be subjected to more peer pressure than if the study had been conducted among rural students.

The Holmes and Silverman statement resonated with me. Most of my teaching experience and observations were in a large urban setting but I was raised in a small rural setting. If my siblings and I did anything that was not approved by my parents, my parents were apt to find out. In a small town everyone who knew you were and soon word got back to your parents. When I compared notes with my friends who were raised in larger urban centres they felt it was easier for them to get out from under the watchful

eye of parents in the city than that in my rural setting. Later as I taught music in rural Alberta in the summer I can recall the refreshing innocence of the rural teenagers in their dress, make-up and behaviour. It would appear as though the sphere of parental influence lasted longer in the rural areas.

Peer pressure was quite different for my brother. In our community he could excel at Ukrainian dancing and singing but piano lessons were another matter. A piano was quite foreign to the Ukrainian culture and defined as feminine in the culture of small town Saskatchewan. My brother, although very talented, quit piano lessons. Later in life, with his first pay cheques, he purchased a trumpet and an electronic organ. What did remain with my brother was his love of music, he simply had to find a more masculine way of expressing it.

The struggle for acceptance in a group, that is peer pressure, can influence subscription to particular types of music. "On a day-to-day basis, we define who we are through the music we share either as listeners or music makers with our friends." (Diamond and Witmer, 1994) Although definitions of gender may vary according to class, race, and culture, the pop idiom has created a common culture amongst the youth of the world. Walker (1992) implies that the media has made the "pop idiom" into a form of "transcultural music" common all over the planet.

As I sat in a restaurant in Kiev this summer I was prepared to hear the violinist play some soulful Slavic melody. Instead I was to hear the melodies of Andrew Lloyd Weber and Michelle Legrand. The music of the Grateful Dead and Guns 'n Roses resounded through loudspeakers in the markets throughout the Ukraine, and I thought

of Walker's observations.

From a perspective of gender, the transcultural music influences males and females differently. Holmes and Silverman (1992) suggest that males identify directly with the rock performer whereas females see themselves as romantically linked to the rock performer. Male students see themselves as being the rock star with thousands fans, achieving the power connected with money and idolatry. The girls, on the other hand, see themselves in a state of relative powerlessness, wanting to be recognized and perhaps joining the male star, if one should be so lucky, as a lover or wife.

I do remember Elvis appearing live on the Ed Sullivan Show. Even in our remote Ukrainian community in Northern Saskatchewan, the duck-tail hairdo and draped pants became popular amongst the boys. The boys in our high school formed a rock and roll band while the girls swooned when Elvis appeared on television.

The pop idiom appears to impact gender and it is the music of the shared culture of the students. However the pop idiom is noticeably absent from the elementary music curriculum.

If the pop idiom is introduced into the curriculum there will be a need to examine the content closely. Do we seek to encourage power situations for young males and heightened femininity for young females through the medium of pop music?

Concern that gender identity is encouraged in the content and presentation of the curriculum has lead to a closer examination of teaching practices. Gilligan (1982) suggests that the policy and instruction in schools has been guided by a theory of human development which ignored females in its formation (p. 10). She points out that Piaget's

stages of human development and Kohlberg's stages of moral development do not take into account that females (53% of the population) will respond differently to conceptions of self and morality and therefore they will experience different moral conflicts and dilemma.

I wonder if music education is more geared to the female students in the area of motor skills and moral development. Curricular expectations ignore the lack of fine motor skills on the part of the boys as well as their propensity for activity and movement. Would the pop idiom address the needs of the boys at the expense of the girls?

This is where I see visions of separate classes -- girls in quiet sharing of song and boys in the band room. I recall a parent sharing a story of how her daughter's friends had gathered for a birthday party. The friends were all active in the school choir. As they sat in a circle painting Easter eggs, the girls broke into spontaneous singing of the repertoire of the school choir.

According to Belenky (1986) women construct knowledge and are tolerant of ambiguity; men receive knowledge and prefer logic (p. 38). She states further that women view connection, intimacy and inclusion as important. Men prefer distance, autonomy and exclusion. These differences, Belenky writes, are the major themes of feminist theorists such as Gilligan (1982), Chodorow (1974) and Baker Miller (1976).

Shakeshaft as well expresses the concern of educators that there is no accommodation to, or appreciation of how females learn in schools. She sees schools as competitive environments, accommodating only the learning styles of males. When teachers try to intervene and create gender equal environments. Teachers, who thought

they were fair and equal, were "spectacularly unsuccessful" usually favouring male children. (Huston, 1985)

At one point in my practice this past year I was ready to experiment with gender exclusive classes. I was tired of the boys disrupting the music classes if we tried to do something that didn't interest them. Try as hard as I could, I still feel that I failed the girls in my Division two classes. The struggle was intense. I remember on occasion the girls telling the boys to be quiet so we could get on with the class. We, the girls and I, did what ever the boys permitted. I could not provide an equal learning environment for the girls as they waited for the boys to quit fighting over who should have the larger handbell or who could answer the questions faster.

Even though teachers may attempt to create equal learning environments often the content of curricular materials have underlying gender messages. According to Baker (1985), language used in instruction, the textbooks, and the reading materials, all continue to cast children into gendered experiences. Lakoff (1975) contends, "women experience linguistic discrimination in two ways. In the way they are taught to use language and in the general way language uses them. Both tend to relegate women to subservient functions: that of sex object, or servant." (p. 4). An example of this would be the masculine "master" matched with the feminine "mistress" wherein the former is suggestive of power and the latter has a sexual connotation. Lakoff suggests that women tend to back away from strong statements whereas males, from a very early age are encouraged to use "rough talk."

Gender inclusive language is a whole area that I will have to improve upon as I

still am not good at it. My templates do not pick up on words such as "When every man joins in our song" from Oscar Peterson's "Hymn to Freedom." A friend helped me rewrite the words into gender inclusive language. How simple it was to change "every man " with "everyone" in preparation for a spring concert. I have become more aware of implied messages in the text of choral music. This fall, for example, while presenting Vaughn William's "Bushes and Briars" to a choir, we did read the text against the grain -- especially the part where the women states "if I show him my boldness, he'll love me no more." There is a subtlety to those words which casts the female into subservience. And what about all the male composers?

Robertson (1991) states that literacy is taught to students using, in many instances, only novels written by men. Thus in the act of becoming literate in today's schools, gender becomes an issue in the aspirations, the abilities, the opportunities and the cultural resources of the students, especially the females.

I can remember a time where I struggled as a reader. I cannot remember a female writer in my early education other than the writers of poetry. Then I discovered female writers such as Drabble, Atwood, Laurence and Lessing. The voice was different -- the content as well. My mind kept arching to the parallels in music education. Take for example Robertson's statement on language literacy. The same could be said for students in the act of becoming musically literate. Compositions of men are more likely to be studied than those of female composers. I studied music exclusively composed by males. I am just beginning to explore the repertoire of female composers. However the whole concept of 'great' music in my mind remains the music of males. I wonder now

how this effected my aspirations. Composing was never an option to me. To be a music teacher was about all I aspired to -- a concert career, simply, was male domain.

Implications of Addressing Gender Issues

The most difficult part of this immersion into gender was in the beginning, permitting another way of knowing to enter my person. The experience of exploring gender bias was a profound questioning of my whole way of life. Initially I felt alienated and distended; my first reaction was to ask "Is androgyny the answer"?

It is necessary to speak of this distension and alienation if gender is to be addressed in our schools. Some of the most vociferous opposition will come from female colleagues who suffer from what I now call the Jan Brown MP syndrome. Women who suffer from this syndrome are observed to have the following symptoms: they are married (usually to someone well paid), are active politically because they look good in pictures and can be used as pawns in the male establishment because they have first, no concept of poverty and second, a deep-rooted fear of being a poor single mother.

The labelling of the Jan Brown syndrome came from watching a debate between Brown (Reform Party MP) and Sonera Thobani (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women) on CBC the day the Reform Party refused to meet with Thobani. It was apparent that these two women were in different worlds. There sat the "we must be cheerful for the camera" Brown, earrings, manicure and current style in place. This was contrasted with Thobani's ethnic dress and hairstyle speaking of a seriousness that a large group of women were turned away from a visit with the leader of the Reform party. Brown continually treated Thobani in a patronizing, condescending manner, and

yet it was Brown's ignorance that was so evident.

As I watched this debate it occurred to me that there are women like Brown who deny their true selves everyday to be something someone else the hegemonic patriarchy has decided they should be. Brown fits the mold; they will accept her into their fold; Thobani they will not. How do I know? Simply, I have been there. I have done that. Part of my shedding of the music specialist role is the voicing of all the ways that I have felt controlled professionally, which stems from being controlled personally. My chances of submitting to domination was greater, I feel, because I was a Ukrainian female in a WASP patriarchal society. I have repeatedly voiced in my mind, the line from Muriel Rukeyser's "What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open." (Rukeyser, 1973, p. 73) It is precisely the avoidance of their world splitting open that prevents women, many of whom are in our teaching force, from approaching issues such as gender bias. Having had the experience of incongruence has made me realize that, in addressing these issues with staff members, tact is paramount to success.

A dilemma of tact presented itself this spring when I was assisting teachers prepare for a concert. One teacher, a strong feminist, was working with another teacher who was not attuned to feminist issues. Part of the concert had an item which included cheerleaders. After offering the roles to all the students, only girls volunteered. To motivate the girls, one teacher related her experiences as a cheerleader dating back some twenty years. She told the students how cheerleaders used their short skirts to attract the attentions of the football stars, encouraging the students to do the same for the

performance. I felt a compounded issue of sexuality, gender roles and personal knowledge existed here. When the incident was brought to my attention by the teacher who was attuned to gender issues, I simply felt paralysed. How do you tactfully approach someone's life construction to address these issues? I did nothing. I simply could not begin to unravel someone. I feel strongly that recognition of gender bias is so personal. It is a most private journey of self that can not be willed on someone. It is a way of being requiring re-learning. Even as I write this I know my own knowledge base and practice has yet to grow in this area. Again Rukeyser's "What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open." comes to mind repeatedly. Who am I to wilfully demand that women split open their lives?

I did not want to control the teacher's life but I was painfully aware that I wanted to intervene, to present alternatives to the young girls who were presented with this story. I wanted to control the message these young minds were receiving. Heilbrun (1988) writes "Women of accomplishment, in unconsciously writing their future lived lives, or more recently, in trying honestly to deal in written form with past lived lives, have had to confront power and control. Because this has been declared unwomanly, and because women would prefer (or think they would prefer) a world without evident power or control, women have been deprived of the narratives, or texts, plots, or examples by which they might assume power over or take control of -- their own lives." (p.17)

Gender and Music Education

According to the curricula intent, as stated, singing is used as a major activity in the early education of all students. However as children progress through school, it becomes a pronounced feminine activity. As I visited the classroom and observed the students in the first and fifth years of schooling, I began to think that the decline of singing among boys was a socially conditioned phenomena and that the boys were instrumental in ensuring and enforcing this decline.

The phenomena begins at a very early age. There are two British studies that did find gender differences in the ability of children to sing in tune. Davies and Roberts (1975, pp. 24-25) found at the 7 to 8 year old age, 18.2% of the girls were inaccurate singers as opposed to 36.7% of the boys. Similar findings are presented by Bently (1968). Goetze (1985/1986), Jordan-DeCarbo (1982), Joyner (1971), and Stauffer (1985/1986) all observed that girls sing more accurately (Goetze, Cooper, Brown, 1990).

However, Gould (1969) observes that although equal numbers of girls and boys have difficulty in singing accurately in the first two grades, by the time the children reach the third grade, the boys encountering difficulty outnumber the girls 12:1. Gould suggests many reasons for inaccurate singing by teachers: boys are inattentive to pitch and fail to notice pitch change; they appear to have a psychological inhibition toward singing and an inability to coordinate their vocal mechanisms. The boys demonstrate a low speaking voice, seem to lack practice and are not interested in singing. It would appear they have not been exposed to singing in the home.

I was reminded that for many years as we sang in our home we (my mother,

sister and I) always thought my brother was a poor singer -- quite possibly a 'monotone'. Yet as he matured he sang with an extremely deep basso voice in the Greystone Singers at university. In retrospect I don't think my brother was a monotone at all. But how else is a boy to retain his masculine identity in a room full of females other than use a deep voice?

Interestingly Gould's study shows that as the boys mature in school, their singing ability decreases still further, which suggests the possibility that something happens in the school situation which negates a development of a skill. Could it be that the construction of activities in the music classroom disenfranchise the boys? More can be learned from reading research from other countries and other cultures.

Obviously the culture of my childhood affected my brother as well because he continued to sing. Come to think of it, many of the male singers at university were either Mennonite or Ukrainian, both cultures affirming that males do, and can, sing.

Roger Buckton (1983) from New Zealand found that children of Polynesian descent sang with far greater vocal accuracy than European children. He suggests that the "effect of cultural background transcends that of structured music teaching." (p. 27) Given this cultural focus, Buckton's statement gives insight into how singing and gender construction emanate from the same source. Returning to Gould's study, one can identify cultural background permeating the list of the reasons for inaccurate singing. Atterbury (1992) suggests that psychological inhibition and lack of singing in the home is compounded by North American music educators who feel that singing is considered feminine and playing an instrument masculine.

That singing is feminine and instrumental is masculine has a ring of familiarity. I can remember that as a consultant, I was approached by the supervisor and asked if the music team of our board should consider hiring a bus to enable the music teachers from our board to travel to a music conference. My response was that we would have to hire one bus for the choral people and one for the band people. I can't think of a place in music where hegemonic masculinity shows through more than in a group of band teachers. Loud sounds and physical dexterity seem to be associated more often with the band that appears at an athletic event or a military occasion. As well, one only has to recall that many of the early band directors in Canadian schools were military men retrained as educators after the Second World War.

How does this genderization of singing occur? Several themes must be interwoven and played again within different contexts in an attempt to explain this phenomena. Masculine, feminine, nature, culture, elitist, populist, folk art, high art, singing, and instrumental playing are the recurring themes.

Buckton's observation of the importance of culture transcending that which we teach, combined with the knowledge we have on the construction of gender may hold some answers. If a child decides its gender early, as suggested by Tong, then a child will seek out in the culture that which strengthens its gender identity. As young males seek out that which is masculine in one culture, as for example in the Welsh culture, they find that singing is accepted as masculine. If a child is feminine, and singing, in its culture is considered to be feminine, it would follow that singing also becomes feminine for the child. It would appear that singing has evolved as a feminine activity in the

North American culture.

The evolution of singing as feminine in North American culture can be traced through the thesis set forth by Ortner (1974) in her article "Is Female to Nature as Male is to Culture"? Ortner suggests that culture is equated with "products of human consciousness (i.e., systems of thought and technology) by means of which humanity attempts to assert control over nature." (p. 72). Culture also asserts superiority over nature because of its ability to transform nature into societies. Ortner goes further to state that, in this way, women have assumed a lesser role in culture because of the perception that a woman's body and its function is closer to nature. Instruments are a product of human consciousness invented to imitate nature whereas singing has remained a very natural expression, a means of musical expression for those who could not pursue studies in instrumentation. One could take Ortner's statement one step further and state "Is instrumentation to culture as singing is to nature"? Nochlin (1991) suggests that historically, the music literacy required to become instrumentalists was not available to women because, in many cases it required the woman to leave her home for instruction and women were not permitted to do so. Thus if women achieved any music literacy it was often as wives or daughters of famous male musicians. An example of this would be Clara Schumann. Reich (1991) observed that in the nineteenth century the largest number of professional women performers were singers. Reich also notes that women instrumentalists were denied entry into orchestras. Women proceeded to form their own all female orchestras which were rarely taken as seriously as their male counterparts. Women assumed the lesser role in music of Western culture. Instrumentation, of a

professional nature, appeared to be in the domain of the male.

Perhaps the act of singing itself encourages concepts of feminine and masculine. Singing as a blend of music and language should be examined closely for the messages "conforming to certain beliefs about human development and social order." (Baker, 1985, p. 395) The folk song repertoire used in choral programs and music series is permeated with examples of woman as servant and woman as quiet and demure.

"Vreneli" (Musicana 5, p. 44) tells of a lovesick maiden with no alternative but to stay at home and pine; whereas, "Labrador" (p. 82) speaks of forefathers without a fear, exploring new frontiers. Often I have had my choristers read the text of choral music against the grain. The texts of choral repertoire is comparable to the language of textbooks in the stereotyping of the gender roles. (Baker, 1985, p. 395). Even opera, the highest form of singing, has been described as the "undoing of women" (Lamb, 1991, p. 309). Lamb observes that the only course open for weak women in many opera plots is death whereas strong women are portrayed as evil. This falls into what Lakoff describes as how language (in music) uses women.

A problem of referential language arises, when the music of the "great men in music" is studied. When language is used to describe metaphorical sound patterns, it is, again, laden with gender connotation. (Lamb, 1991) Lamb uses the example of Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring" portraying violence against women. This is an overt example but it is the more subtle use of masculine terms like "authoritative", "definitive", "conclusive" used to describe the music of the giant Beethoven whereas the music of a some what lesser composer Chopin is described in the feminine terms of

"gentle", "lyrical", "sensuous", and "inconclusive." (Pendle, 1991, p. 333).

Kosa (1992) suggests that the message of choral as feminine is imparted through music materials in more a more subtle way. In a study of the illustrations in music texts, Kosa observes strong gender bias in the portrayal of choral and instrumental conductors. She notes that four-fifths of the pictures of conductors are males. The pictures of the males connote strength, activity, prestige and authority through the formal attire, serious facial expression, a blacked-out background and the positioning of the conductor's hands in authoritative conducting gestures. The photographs of the masculine hands include wedding bands as a statement of, Koza implies, heterosexuality. In the accompanying biographical statements, Koza notes that under a picture of Robert Shaw, noted for his choral expertise, the statement that he also conducts orchestras is included. This would suggest that the orchestra provides Shaw with more credibility than the choral experience or that it is some liability to Shaw should he be considered as just a choral conductor. Comparatively, Koza finds the photographs of female conductors quite contrasting. In front of children or in other scenes of domesticity, the female conductor is portrayed as someone doing less important work with small or amateur groups. Casually attired, in a relaxed manner, with conducting gestures that are open, female conductors frequently remain anonymous in the textbooks. Koza refers to the content of the music series she studied as the 'great man' approach to music history, whereby representative historic figures were honoured with a formal portrait and biographical sketch. However Koza noted the absence of women in this elite gallery.

As I entered the music room where I was to conduct my study I immediately

noticed the large pictures of the great composers, all male. I notice that in the grade five text book the "listening sections" had the music of male composers such as Grieg and Stravinsky.

This concurs with the observations of Lamb (1991), who suggests that the music curriculum suffers from "women's absence and misrepresentation within the traditional curriculum." (p. 687). According to critics there are no "great" women composers.

However, as stated earlier, the iconography required to participate fully in music was, historically, not accessible to women. Those who did attempt to compose were judged on male standards and never did achieve critical acclaim. (Atterbury, 1992; Nochlin, 1991) There are many books about female composers and female performers published recently. These books should not only be available but taken up seriously, narrowing the knowledge gap that needs to be addressed in faculties preparing students for performance and teaching.

I would like to see a time when pictures of Hildegard of Bingen, Clara Schumann and Maria Theresa van Paradis take their rightful place on the walls of music rooms and their music is listened to and performed by all students.

Furthermore, words like talented and giftedness (Tellstrom, 1971) appear as prized qualities in the music of Western culture. In other cultures social acceptability is more important and everyone performs as an essential part of everyday life. (Walker, 1987) High culture could be defined as that which is operated by the dominant culture or elite, and to which critical standards are applied which are independent of the characteristics of the consumer. In other cultures the consumer is the participant, the

performer and music is a part of the natural flow of life. The High culture is suggestive of competitiveness, talent, and exclusion. This is where Western culture music is entrenched. (Walker, 1987)

And thus, "If authenticity is being true to ourselves, is recovering our own 'sentiment de l'existence,' then perhaps we can only achieve it integrally if we recognise that this sentiment connects us to a wider whole." (Taylor, 1991, p. 91)

I have come to recognise that the separation of nature and culture occurred with in my being at a very young age. It began the day my father surprised us by arriving home from Edmonton with a piano strapped to the back of a truck. Our house was very tiny but this massive instrument took its place in the front room. This piano began for me the separation of music as a natural extension of life and music as formal training. The formal training began with a piano teacher who was outside my ethnic community. Through piano study I was to discover the music outside my ethnic background.

In retrospect I realize that the piano became my "niche." Until the age of ten, I was the younger, excluded child trying to keep up with two older siblings. At the age of ten I discovered that I was special. I won two classes at the music festival. The music festival and public acknowledgement became away of life, that is, I became a performer. The performer became a vital part of my being and was to resurface again in my teaching of choirs, moreover in my competitive approach to choirs.

Although my formal musical training was as a pianist, I have maintained a life long involvement in, and a passion for, singing. As I wrote this statement I realized that separation that still persists in my mind -- as Gouldner (1970) writes, " The persisting

split between what was thought of as the cognitive and what was considered the merely affective sustained and became continuous with the split between fact and value that had long defined the utilitarian tradition" (Greene, 1980, p. 20)

There are many memories of the struggle to master this instrument. I remember being viewed as unique, different -- being called on by my parents to perform for visitors to our home. The separation of "real" music from "folk" music was quite subtle initially. My mother, in her attempt to arrange practice time for three children, insisted that we play only that which was in our lesson. Playing by ear on our piano was often met with the call from the kitchen, "Is that in your lesson"?

Although I recognise her motive for this, I realize the implication of value here. My parents were paying tuition for these lessons and the money was not to be squandered by permitting piano practice time to playing by ear. Thus melodies which were in our folk singing repertoire which were in our minds never made it to the keyboard. Only that which was notated and studied in our lessons was worthwhile. A Beethoven Sonata was a very massive sounding piece when compared with folk songs. It suggested greater import. It was what the dominant culture considered as valued music -- real music. It was the music outside our folk community. This theme of valued music will be heard again, replayed in a similar manner in content of the curriculum of the classroom. It was this 'real' music that I, too, pursued, diligently, as many other prairie piano students, preparing for the exams of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto. This would make us accomplished on an instrument that was most impractical (large, not portable) but available in every school across Canada.

Upon graduating from high school, I left my small community and devoted one year exclusively to piano study. I was required to do six to seven hours of piano practice a day, private theory lessons and teaching a private piano class all day Saturday. It was to be the most difficult, lonely year of my young adult life. There was a realization that I could not continue in the solitude of piano study. As soon as I could, I registered in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. I returned to a community of singers by joining the non-auditioned Education Choir. This was to lead to an important experience as the accompanist for the auditioned Greystone Singers. I had wanted to join the auditioned choir but I was worried I would not make the vocal audition. Although I had sung for many years, I had no private lessons as a singer. Thus I auditioned for the accompanist's position because I felt that I had a better chance as a pianist than as a singer. In retrospect, it was at this moment when the elitist versus populist first entered my experience in a self evaluative sense. By doing this I felt I had joined a group of musicians. To paraphrase multi-media composer Libby Larsen, I succumbed to the "intellectual egotism and ambition" and became an alien in a society I wished to enrich. (Pendle, 1991, p. 241)

Elitist versus Populist

Goddard (1994) defines the elitist camp in the following manner: the experts who know what is good music; art exists for art's sake; aesthetics determine what music should be valued; what music people should be exposed to; and, that music can be objectified, studied and measured. On the other hand, the populists define good music as that which meets peoples needs, art exists for people's sake, music is subjective: it is

to be felt, experienced and expressed. Somewhere in all this is the performance at the school where parents sit and watch their children perform rather than participate with them in creating a musical experience. Somewhere in all this is art and music as a commodity rather than an experience.

How could a person who had sung harmonies since the age of nine lack the confidence to sing in this choir? I now understand. There was, on my part, a recognition that the Greystone Singers was an elitist choir. Whereas my piano training was elitist, my singing training was populist. I simply recognised the difference.

Professionally, it has been my experience that singing is the best activity through which one can involve a large group of children in the making and understanding of music. The song of the child begins early. I can remember my own daughter's vocal emittances from the crib as well as the way I used songs to soothe her. Now as I observe a two year old niece, I see the natural way she will sing, almost unconsciously as she plays suggesting that there is an inherent nature to singing, and that many children come to school with, if not the ability, the desire to sing. Although I have used this medium for many years, I did not think of singing in any other way than musical emittance, similar to the speech component of language learning. Singing could provide children with musical ideas. Using the spontaneous nature of song and its large group potential, it becomes a very good teaching medium, lending itself well to the teaching of music in the public education setting.

However, it was the formal piano lessons, not singing, that prepared many a teacher for school music responsibilities. Goddard (1994) suggests that "music students

often bring to teacher education more content knowledge and interest than students in other subjects, thereby fostering a greater predilection (whether or not they know it) about music and how to teach it." (p. 21)

I concur with Goddard. The formal training of my childhood affected my pedagogy. I was trained in the elitist mode in a private studio and I approached music teaching in schools in this same elitist way. I failed to recognise that the reality of music in a social setting is quite different from the music in a private music studio. There are limits to group instruction as other disciplines have acknowledged.

When I became a school music specialist, I continued the journey that was begun in my home. I continued to move further away from the populist camp to the elitist camp. I used many of the choral techniques I had learned by observing the choral director of the Greystone Singers from the vantage point of the piano. This whole concept of choral techniques was new because in my Ukrainian culture we simply sang - no warm ups, no head tone, just a pure throaty chest tone. (I just thought how strange it would have been to spoil one of the spontaneous singsongs of my childhood and impose vocal exercises on the group.) However, it was choral techniques that gave my school choirs the unique head tone so highly touted in the choral circles and competitions.

The music festival entered my life again as I entered my school choirs and received credibility for my work with children locally and provincially. When I entered an M.A. program in 1978, I was awarded a G.T.A. which required me to set up a practicum choir at The University of Calgary. This choir was the only children's (mixed boys and girls) choir in the city, at that time, which provided an alternative to an

established boy's choir. It was very successful in the competitive arena, competing provincially, nationally and internationally. I have just begun to understand how I managed to come under the influence of a choral sound different from the Slavic sound of my childhood.

The Major Theme is Developed With a Distinctive British Motif

The head tone had its origins in the cathedral choral sound from England which permeated the choral sound of colonial Canada. This was probably due to, as suggested by Canadian Composer R. Murray Schafer, "The dummy culture which then burdened this country, with a British organist in every cuckoo-nest." (Diamond and Witmer, 1994, p. 224) Schafer observes, "A colonial regime strengthens itself by pushing out from centre to margin. It takes raw material from the extremities and ejects finished products from the centre." And further, "A colonial regime can never adjust its sights to recognise valuable cultural assets in the margins of the empire. Either the margin is a wasteland, or it is full of impediments that must be exterminated- as the Indians were exterminated in North America by the European colonialists. To the extent that the culture in Canada is still colonial, we are concerned with the position of the victim. The extent that the victim is still alive, things can change." (p. 222)

That this statement should come from R. Murray Schafer is not surprising to me. There is a kind of gentle perceptiveness about the man that I came to appreciate when he visited Calgary a few years ago. I was responsible for arranging, in conjunction with the Calgary Catholic Board, several workshops with students of all ages with this eminent Canadian composer. Of benefit to me was the opportunity to spend conversational times

with him as we drove between various locations in the city. Schafer speaks of a simpler way of knowing music. His concern is that the children of today are losing their hearing to the electronic gadgetry in their ears. They have managed to use the "Walkman" as a way, ironically, to create a silent space of their own, not unlike the Muzak heard in the background of shopping centres. He is ultimately concerned that children need to learn how to listen and express themselves through sounds. Schafer compares Canadian school band programs to the simpler cultures in South America, a contrast of the elitist and the populist philosophies that has been brought about by Canadian affluence. He drew this comparison from his experiences teaching music educators in South America. As the music educators entered the class he noted the simplicity of their instruments fashioned from the environment. Schafer reflected how environmentally friendly and inexpensive these instruments were compared to the expensive brass instruments of Canadian school bands. The instruments from the environment lent themselves better as mediums of self expression than the band instruments simply because they are usually quieter. As well there appears, with band instruments, a preclusion that notation will be taught and that self expression in the band room has never been entertained as an alternative.

I watched with great interest as Schafer worked with an elementary school music specialist and school choir. The music specialist had radically altered her composition "Epitaph for Moonlight" and made it accessible to young choristers. What was fascinating was the intense interest and acceptability Schafer gave to the practice of this specialist. So often composers, architects, artists put their own egos before the practical

aspects of their works of art. It was as though Schafer, too, was a learner in this situation as he watched the children rehearse and perform an abridgement of his composition. This experience had a profound effect on me.

Thus Schafer's statement on the impact of colonialism had more credence for me because I felt that he had a perception of music education that concerned the masses and not the elitist training of the conservatory.

"If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of the roar which lies on the other side of silence." This quote of George Elliot introduces the book Women's Ways of Knowing.

This quote impacted me because there is something I have remained silent about all these years. The silence has become a roar because it is only recently that I recognized the import of everyday occurrences in my ordinary life. When I was a child another important aspect of my music education took place. It was led by my mother playing the guitar, as my siblings and I sang loudly from a collection entitled 200 Song Favourites. This was my mother's attempt to "Anglicize" us. As we sang songs "Whispering Hope" and "Flow Gently Sweet Afton" of the British tradition we were coached to speak without a Slavic accent. We were, in retrospect, being trained to leave our Ukrainian enclave and enter the outside world where discrimination against ethnic minorities was still a problem. We were caught in a dilemma. We were "raised by parents often intimidated by the authority of the Anglo-Saxon majority, parents who urged them (the children) not to complain or protest but to prove themselves as good as

the Englishman." (Kostash, 1987, p. 35)

In the Ukrainian community of my childhood I was unique. I had developed command over a massive instrument. I could "read" the real music of Bach, Beethoven, and the other "masters" of music. I was truly on the road to being Anglicized. This formal training enabled me to become the pianist for the Remembrance Day Services conducted by a bastion of British tradition -- the Canadian Legion. It was an honourable experience in the eyes of my parents as they sought to inculcate in their children the "British" value. However it was truly a division of heart and mind, the separation of roots and wings, to be steeped in a culture that you were also being groomed to leave and to deny. It formed one of those liquid transparencies of my life. As it comes to the surface I now see something as incidental as my birth name and given name as impacting my life. I viewed myself as luckier than most young Ukrainians because unlike my sister Sonia and my brother Orest, Rosemarie was a non-Slavic name. With a surname of Sherban my ethnicity was difficult to identify. Perhaps my name was to give me a boost in life as I propelled myself through the elitist camps. Perhaps, on the other hand it was to leave me vulnerable to elitist whims and in a state of constantly wanting to be instead of simply just being. Schafer's colonial mentality I knew of very well. I grew up aspiring to it and assisted in its continuance.

It was felt most heavily in the Western provinces, where the influx of European settlers on to the huge tracts of land began in the late 1800s. Green and Vogan (1991) document how music in Alberta schools came under the British influence. There existed a belief that music teachers from England were far better trained than Canadian teachers

and thus many music teachers were recruited from the British Isles to teach in Alberta schools. The "First Grade Music Methods" published in 1918 contains many phrases heard in the music classroom today. "Good tone" (a light head tone), "rote songs", "proper posture" were to be focused on if one's choir was to be successful. Inevitably the poor singers were encouraged not to sing and become "good listeners" instead. Green and Vogan (1991) also note the preponderance of British books recommended as reference books. (p. 122)

The British influence also brought with it the music festival in which school choruses were encouraged to participate. In a rural Alberta Music festival brochure the aims were stated as follows" cultivation of taste for the beautiful in tones, colour and form." It also endeavoured to bring the school and home closer together. An enthusiastic Welsh superintendent hoped it would be a "strong factor in Canadianizing people from other lands." (p. 124)

How far I had come from the music festival of my past when I competed in piano classes only. But it was the winning at these festivals that convinced me that I was good at something. My memory, however, also speaks as well of a another type of festival of a less competitive nature. Once a year, other Ukrainian youth groups from surrounding villages gathered in fields and stuffy small town halls to share dancing, and a form of rhythmic gymnastics done with beautifully embroidered scarves, mandolin playing, and of course singing -- some formal and some spontaneous. But the competitive festival pervaded my professional elitist being. Where I once competed against other pianists, I now competed with my choirs.

When I began to research the underpinnings of my practice I was concerned that things had not changed in music education for twenty-five years. I realized how naive I was. Music education hasn't changed since formalized education came to Alberta.

The Major Theme Begins to Modulate

Fortunately the "victim," as described by Schafer, is still alive and is now developing a voice. I have watched and listened with interest as a the variety of choral sounds have started appearing in Canada Choral Festivals. Indications of this willingness to subscribe to different choral sounds was when an international symposium on Choral singing in Vancouver in 1993 hosted The Throat Singers of Siberia, a group that emits a high whistling sound from its vocal chords. The manner in which these sounds are emitted is, perhaps, the most radical departure from the British sound ever entertained and given recognition in Canada.

On May 22, 1994, on CBC Choral Concert, I heard, for the first time, a choral sound reminiscent of the Eastern European sound of my childhood. This program was 'airing' finalists and winners of their choral competition. In the ethnic category, first place was given to a Croatian Choir. What was of interest to me were the remarks of the spokesperson for the adjudicators. He used some interesting words to describe the choral sounds these ethnic choirs emitted. He began, "we couldn't change our ears but we had to use our ears differently." He remarked how these ethnic choirs "took us away from the utmost control of the finely chiselled sounds of the youth and children's choir categories." The phrases of descriptors such as "boisterous exuberance, down to earth sounds, healthy exclamations lush with enthusiasm with phrasing and energy that would

be a lesson to a lot of us." (Adjudicator Louis Laviegood (Speaker) (May 22,1994) Choral Concert, (Cassette Recording) Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Radio).) The Croatian Choir placed first because of the adjudicators felt moved by the fact that this song reflected the pain and suffering of Croatians who had to leave their city which was destroyed in the current conflict in the former Yugoslavia. To me it was an interesting decision -- one based on emotion rather than technical skill. The second place choir was a Ukrainian women's choir who, from my training in the Canadian Choral tradition exhibited a better head tone, had a greater accuracy of pitch, never engaging in the vocal slides of the Croatian choir.

However the words of "finely chiselled" kept resonating in my head, suggesting a certain stone coldness of the children and youth choir contestants. There is a certain passivity on the part of the choristers implied. They are the stone to be chiselled and the conductor, the chiseller. How far removed the choral sounds would have to be from the heart to bring on these descriptors. "Finely chiselled" to "healthy exclamations lush with enthusiasm." What greater example of the split of mind and heart than this choral competition!

These are the observations and readings that have helped me comprehend my own submission to and immersion in the competitive choral milieu in Alberta. How easy it is for one who has been brought up to cloak their Slavic heritage to subscribe to this British sound and way of being.

As I sat in a concert in Kiev this summer, I listened to the passion of the chest tone of a choir from the Cherkassy region of the Ukraine. I was particularly moved when

they sang a song of the mother's pain on learning of her son's death while fighting for the U.S.S.R. in Afghanistan. The song spoke to the fact that because of the unpopular nature of the war, young men were sent to Afghanistan without their families' knowledge. Only when the young soldiers died were the parents made aware of their sons' whereabouts. The chest tone suggested emotional pain emitted from the heart. On the other end of the emotional spectrum this same chest tone was used with rhythmic clarity in the more joyous songs. There was a far greater ability of these choirs to reach the optimum sound with their "forte" contrasted with delicate "pianissimo." As I sat there with tears and joys ever present I thought "I hope this authentic sound is continued, that no one attempts to devalue it out of existence." Sadly, I was to learn that there is a colonialism already permeating the Ukraine. In a hotel in Ivan Frankiv'ske I heard a compact disc of an American Ukrainian folk singer with the white sound piped through the lobby and restaurant. The proprietress of the hotel, an American of Ukrainian extraction, had brought this disc from the United States.

Folk culture is that which existed in non-industrial societies. (Hargreaves, 1986)

Here the themes -- masculine, feminine, elitist, populist, singing, instrumental are heard again. The culturalization of music making through the playing of instruments was, as stated previously, inaccessible to women. Hargreaves (1986) refers to a study conducted by Fox and Wince (1975) that found that public membership in folk music was most strongly associated with sex (women rather than men). As well prescriptions against women playing certain instruments date back to the Renaissance and can be found in 19th century American music education texts. Atterbury (1992) suggests in the North

American culture girls were encouraged to participate as amateurs. However public performance, composing, and playing an instrument (requiring talent and giftedness) were considered "part of the masculine domain." (p. 30) Thus any women achieving fame in music were usually singers because it remained one of the few activities considered acceptable to women.

The Ukrainian community of my childhood was settled by people working the land; it was a farming community and more prone to folk art. Folk music was and is most often expressed through singing.

The attitude that males do not sing in American culture is rooted in the frontier mentality. (Phillips, 1988) On the other hand, Tellstrom (1971) suggests that singing, as a feminine pursuit, can be traced back to colonial America. At this time in American history, singing was a part of religious worship. Group rote instruction led by a musically literate person was considered important to improve the hymn singing in the church. The singers did not need any music literacy. This led to a lessening of the musical importance of singing. Gates (1985) suggested that the decline in the subscription to singing on the part of the males in America happened between the 1930s to the present day. This decline of male subscription to singing appears to be a more recent phenomena than Tellstrom suggests.

Castelli (1986) listed two reasons for boys dropping out of choral programs: sex role endorsement (the attitude that males do not sing) and peer pressure.

A few years ago I noticed at a family gathering that one of the teenaged boys could sing quite well. Since this boy played the French Horn in his school band I

thought it would be a natural connection for him to register for school chorus as well. His response was "No way"! It was really quite sad because there was a very fine choral teacher at the school and I felt it was a great opportunity missed. What was fascinating was that the boy's father is a piano teacher so one would think that all types of music making would be accepted in the home. But the father doesn't sing either, preferring to play the piano for family gatherings.

Robertson (1991), for example, suggests that male students appear to attribute academic success to their innate talents but attribute failure to external forces.

I have often wondered if the rise of instrumental programs in our schools was responsible for the decline in our vocal programs. Does the instrument provide an opportunity to blame failure on something external, something you can't really do with a voice? Is it safer then, for the males to play an instrument than to sing? If choral music is seen as predominantly female, perhaps males are simply not expected to achieve because singing is viewed as a talent that resides with females and is inaccessible to males. Implicated in this could be the fact that the majority of teachers in the younger grades are women.

Boys, as stated previously, establish their gender by separating from that which is female. "All opportunities to make oneself distinctly feminine or masculine are seized upon: If I am doing something only boys do, then I must be a boy." (Paley, 1986, p. 18) Thus if the female teacher sings then, if only to demonstrate their masculinity, the boys may not choose to sing. Paley also observed behavioral differences between girls and boys. By the age of four, boys got into trouble in music class more often than girls.

She attributed this difference to the girls' ability to sit and attend as opposed to the boys' need to be in motion and playing. Singing, requiring listening and attending would be, according to Paley's observations, more accessible to girls than to the boys. As well, May (1985) noted that, in a study of primary children, females, at an early age, showed preference for music with low dynamism while males exhibited a preference for music with high dynamism. Dynamics might be the reason that band music would be more appealing to boys where as singing would be more appealing to girls. Is loud music associated with superheroes and soft music associated with the doll's corner?

CHAPTER THREE

A Classroom Perspective

The research was a most profound experience, one that would force me into a decision to leave music teaching all together. The truth of seeing one's practice while observing another was difficult to ignore. The people, adults and children, of this school gave me much to think about. As I revisit the observations and their words, new meanings keep appearing.

The school I selected to visit was a large elementary school of approximately five hundred students located in a middle socio- economic area of the city. The community demonstrated support of the music program through attendance at assemblies and concerts.

The principal had been at this school since it opened in 1981 and was near retirement. She was raised and educated in the Cape Breton area which has a strong cultural tradition of singing, dancing and fiddling. I felt I knew the principal well. She had, many years ago, been my vice-principal and I remembered a basic honesty and directness. Since that time I had seen her at many cultural events in the city. This principal could be described as a patron of the Arts, with a particular interest in musical events. She attends symphony concerts, the opera and, at the time of this research, made reference to attending an international piano competition that had been held in the city recently. She had stated in her interview that she regards "music as something that's a lifelong skill and if children develop an attitude of interest toward it, it can reward them all their lives. So it's not just something that people have to learn but, hopefully,

a number of children will really enjoy it and pursue it in future years."

The principal believed in the specialist concept and stated that the quality of program is best when a music specialist is in charge. Thus there has been a music specialist since the school opened in 1981. Ms. George, the current music specialist, had complete responsibility for the music program in terms of what is outlined in the music curriculum. As well as classroom instruction, the music specialist conducted extra-curricular groups in choir and handbells. The classroom teachers were free to supplement the program in their own classroom if they so chose.

Ms. George received her early education in Saskatchewan. Her family encouraged music education. She received private music lessons on the accordion, an instrument of her parents choosing. Ms. George participated in accordion ensemble work which she feels was a very important aspect of her early musical experience. Ms. George related a school experience where she played, briefly, a clarinet in a band. Within two weeks, she played it fluently, was given an "A" by the instructor and told not to come back again. This experience was very disappointing for her because she yearned for the experience of ensemble playing. She emphasized the enjoyment she felt in doing things musically together, as musicians do in ensemble work and choral singing.

The music specialist went on to teach accordion privately in a studio setting before deciding to relocate and retrain as a school music teacher at The University of Calgary. Part of her formal teacher education included a course in the Kodaly Method of music literacy. Thus the specialist entered the classroom as a mature woman and the single parent of four daughters. At the time of the study, this teacher had been a public

school teacher for four years, all four as a specialist in the school where the research was conducted.

The music room was a large rectangular room on the second floor of the school. As one entered the door, the length of the room unfolded. Passing the specialist's desk I could see handbells set off to the right side. Boxes of notebooks and recorders were placed on the shelves to the left of the Ms. George's desk forming somewhat of an entry corridor within the classroom. Once past this area, the risers extended the length of the room with some space behind where the Orff instruments were located. An easel was set in front of the risers with a piano off to the far side. The walls had portraits of the great composers. The light shone in behind the risers from windows which overlooked the school playground.

Prior to selecting this school, I gave Ms. George and the principal a copy of the literature review that framed my thinking for the observations and research. This was an attempt to ensure that they were comfortable with gender bias as a possibility in their situation. Both women were very interested in this topic, neither expressing any discomfort with the concept of gender issues.

After collecting the data, the most difficult part was determining what should be included in the following discussions. My objective was to capture the essence of the music specialist's day as the different groups of children rotated through her classroom, thirty new students every thirty to forty five minutes, nearly four hundred students every two days. More importantly, I hoped to create a sense of what it is like to be a child in these classes where the forces of gender, music and curriculum come together in the

process of schooling.

Singing and the Choral Program

With this specific music program, there was an umbrella which cast a shadow over many activities in the music room. That umbrella was performance. I would suggest that this is the way of many music programs in the elementary schools, especially those taught by a music specialist.

Goddard (1994) suggests that it is the training of students outside the faculty of teacher education that sets performance as a goal. "Music students often bring to teacher education more content knowledge and interest than students in other subjects, thereby fostering greater predilection (whether or not they know it) about music and how to teach it." (p. 21) Many school music teachers are trained in the academies of private scholarship which has performance as its major focus. Walker implies (1992) this private scholarship makes teachers quite handicapped to teach school music. He implies that these performers can do little but entertain children whose musical experiences are confined to Much Music videos.

I suggest there is a connection between the aspirations of the specialist that knows music only in a public performance sense and the aspirations of the principal to bring the parents into the school. Both fall prey to enlightened notions of presence. Both further their own careers vis à vis presentability. In both cases the singing of children becomes the vehicle through which these performance expectations are met.

The school choir was a vital part of the performance aspect of this school's music program as well as the focus of many major events of celebration during the school year.

Parents in the community demonstrated support of the music program by attendance at these performances.

Principal: Any time we have an assembly, just an ordinary assembly, we get fifty to a hundred parents every time and when we have a special program, a hundred percent of them come.

For many parents attendance at these performances was the only contact they had with the music program at this school.

Specialist: Music is very important to this community, they are very supportive of the program. I have to tell you that it was a very major criteria for the teacher coming into this school. Parents are really concerned about the music program here. And I haven't got any negative feedback from the parents since I've been here. As far as choir rehearsals, extra time, they drive them in the morning for rehearsals, to give us time. They are supportive in sending me money to do field trips for choirs. That type of thing. They bought a class set of ukuleles last year. So they're really supportive in funding. As well as in attending performances -- if we have any performances we'll have a full house. So they're very supportive, I think all the way around. I haven't had a lot of parents come to me and talk to me at interview time. Very, very, few. I find that strange in a way. So they are supportive in many ways, but they never come and talk to me a lot; I really have to work at public relations with parents.

Performances and the school choir can take an enormous amount of time and energy from the director, usually the music specialist. I have had, personally, choirs as large as one hundred and twenty, and this is not an unusual number in schools today. Large group instruction with a pupil teacher ratio of 120:1 is the way most choirs are taught. Music for these choirs requires selection, preparation and planning. All this is done over and above the contractual teaching time, often at lunch time or before school. It is not unusual to find a specialist with four or five noon hours a week devoted to this activity.

In this school the choir appeared to be Ms. George's major link to the parents of the school community. Thus, who sang in the choir, as well as how skilfully the children sang, became significant because the choir performance was the specialist's prime opportunity to present herself to the community.

Not much has changed from the early days in Alberta as recorded by Green and Vogan (1991). They noted that musical performance was a way of connecting the home and the school as early as 1918. In my experience, I can recall an observation by a parent in the mid-seventies. He described me, a high profile choral teacher, as the best Public Relations asset the principal had with the school community. Whatever name is given to it, in Calgary, it has been a major factor in the rise of music specialists in the elementary school. Parents are very supportive of these performances and of the specialists who prepare them. It has also been my experience that parents will pressure administrators to hire replacements should the specialists decide to leave. As a music consultant I would receive many calls of panic from principals seeking help when their specialists were about to depart.

Principal: I think that the quality of the program is much better when there is one person in charge of the music program.

I: Quality indicators -- can you give me instances of indicators when there is a music specialist?

Principal: Well, one of the indicators is when they perform and you listen to how they are singing and to the handbell group and how well they play.

Given that the principal is a patron of the arts, this could be interpreted as an example of "the elitist" agenda, suggested by Goddard, pervading the practice of music education in our schools. This elitist agenda puts a heavy weight on the shoulders of the

specialist as she attempts to have children perform against adult standards. The "elitist agenda" is a very pervasive problem in all that we do with children and music is not unique. Hidden in this as well is teacher evaluation.

Singing and the Choral Program

When the choir is so well supported in the community, the specialist becomes very aware of the under representation of 48% of the children, that is, the boys. I was interested to see whether there was any difference, according to gender, in the subscription of the students in this activity in this school.

Interviewer: Do boys and girls participate equally in choirs in your school?

Specialist: Definitely not. The boys that I do have, I've worked on for the last three years ... to make them feel comfortable about their desire to sing ... first year I was here, particularly, I had three boys in my choir with really monotone ... I just took them aside and said, "You know, you could use some help with your singing." All three of them came to me for special help and we talked about things they could do to make their pitch rise.

Interviewer: Can you tell me, then, with your choir- its a mixed choir right now. And what would you say the proportion of girls to boys is?

Specialist: One quarter boys to three quarters girls

This choir with "one quarter boys" had more boys than most choirs in elementary school that I had visited in my tenure as music consultant. It was interesting to note how Ms. George attempted to entice boys into the choir:

The first thing I did was to talk to every single class, grade one and up, about boys' voices. And how special they were. And how boys could hit those wonderful high notes that girls couldn't hit, because the first thing they thought when they were singing for me is that they would sing low not high. They would always project to me the voice that their fathers had. Or some of them had heard a male singer. So when we talked about

high voices, and, well, they were the ones who could hit the high notes. And then I got a lot of squawky, high voices for awhile, because we were trying out for high voices and as they settled into it their own pitch and their own voice, we started talking about "special choirs" that accommodate only boys ... and actually, I'd get a lot of flack from the girls but it's really ... to make the boys stand up and say 'I can sing too.'

This passage is an example of a technique we all fall prey to in our teaching practice and that is to make one group of children feel special at the expense of others. This is an issue of gender, also known as equity and the drive for it. Of note is that the girls, in this case, felt comfortable enough with the teacher to voice an opposition to this practice. So often, in the Grade five classroom observations, the silence of the girls was more pervasive than their voice.

Annie G. Rogers (1993) speaks of the transgressive courage of that is required by girls to, in this instance, question the authority of the teacher's statement regarding the boys' voices as being better. Rogers suggests that transgressive courage requires one to go "beyond the strictures of forbidden knowledge of relationships, including cultural conspiracies of silence that surround women's knowledge." (p. 289) In this case the "relationship" the girls felt they could question was their relationship to the teacher. There was a questioning of the authority of the teacher to do such things as elevate the singing ability of the boys at the expense of the girls. These ten year old girls were entering into an important but critical time of their development. As Rogers (1993) suggests it is the time between childhood and adolescence that girls "show a tendency to be vulnerable to certain psychological losses as they move from childhood into adolescence: the loss of clarity, of self confidence, of voice ." (p. 284)

The "cultural darkness and psychological repression" of this quote can be juxtaposed onto, what for years in Canada, has been considered the good choral tone which I discussed earlier. Good choral tone is a concept that I have lacked the transgressive courage to question. However if a specialist's professional capability is being judged on her choir's performance then she would strive to achieve the best choral tone and the best performance possible subscribing to whichever theory would produce the best results. Ms. George was working on the myth that the boy's soprano sound would somehow improve the choir's sound. I know, I've been there, I've done that.

As well, my experience taught me that a good singing program in the classroom yields a better choir. Thus performance casts its shadow over the activities of the classroom. The classrooms I observed were no different. Performance was present in the intentions of Ms. George as she sought higher singing standards from the students.

Students and the Singing Program

The interviews of the students presented insights into what singing is like for them. I was anxious to see if some of the underpinnings of the importance of singing, as stated by the music specialist and other theorists was at all evident. The following framed the way I chose which students I would interview:

Interviewer: Can you describe, say, a child who is on task in singing?

Teacher: A good listener ... who follows instructions without having to be told more than once.

Interviewer: And a good listener is what?

Teacher: One who just is able to follow instructions -- is able to hear the

instructions and follow through.

Grade One Students

Russell is a large boy, well behaved and a good participant in music. He sings unabashedly and sings well. This excerpt of his interview is important to understand what singing is like for a young boy. Russell was asked what he would do if he, instead of the music teacher, could organize the music class.

Russell: I would make the whole class games.

I: Games? What kind of games? Which ones?

Russell: Music games and ummm, Lucy Locket and I don't know the rest.

I: What was the one where you had to jump around and you got another partner then you jumped around and got another partner, do you remember that one?

Russell: Bow wow wow.

I: Do you like that one? How come games are nice?

Russell: Because they take away all your energy that you don't need any more.

I: When do you find you have to control your energy? Which activity in music?

Russell: When you have to be sort of wild and stuff?

I: When you can't be wild?

Russell: When we're sitting on the risers.

I: What do you do when you're sitting on the risers?

Russell: Just sit with your hands folded. Sit straight.

I: And what type of activities does that mean you are usually doing then?

Russell: Quiet -- and cooperative.

I: Quiet and cooperative. Do you think singing is a wild activity or a quiet and cooperative activity?

Russell: Quiet and cooperative.

Here is a child who, by the end of grade one, has definitely learned the expectations of the teacher in the act of singing. Is singing, always "quiet and cooperative" or are there many ways of singing? I began to question if quiet and cooperative is more conducive to pitch accuracy than it is to singing for the pure simple joy of it. Pitch accuracy is a premise of music, a requirement of a high standard of performance. It can work in opposition to the spontaneity of singing if sitting still is a requirement of pitch accuracy. This excerpt from Russell's interview could also be interpreted as an example of the disembodied form of music that follows from a dominantly male attitude. If I am moving in music this is the way boys should be in music. To sit still would be feminine.

When I attempted to engage Alice, also in grade one, in a conversation about singing she seemed more interested in discussing her keyboard. A spunky, cheerful girl, Alice did indulge me with a few observations.

Alice: We get to sing a lot and we get sometimes to play musical games and have lots of fun ... oh I like singing too, because the songs are pretty funny and some are nice and some are sad.

I: Do you remember when you started to sing? How long have you been singing?

Alice: Since grade one.

Alice responded that she learned to sing at school. Although she uses the words

"happy" and "sad", she cannot name a happy or sad song that she learned at school.

The songs that are ingrained in her mind are the songs from her home.

Alice: Well my favourite songs are "Aruba Jamaica" and Just a Smile" one ... oh its from a lady and they also showed it on T.V. ... oh it's just that they're my favourite because I listen to them a lot. I know because my dad had the same disk on them and I say " Hey, dad put those two on for maybe twenty times so I listen to them a lot."

I: And what do you sing to him (baby brother)?

Alice: I usually sing those two favourite songs -- he really giggles.

I: What does your mom sing to him?

Alice: Oh she sings lullabies and things.

I: And your dad?

Alice: He kind of sings the same as my mom.

The songs she relates to are from the media selected for her by her parents. I find Alice's excerpt an interesting gender statement that both her mom and her dad sing lullabies to her brother. She exudes the "mother tongue" Kodaly (Choksy, 1981) speaks of, but that mother tongue bears little resemblance to that which happens in the school or perhaps in any other home in the city.

Bradley is a boy who engages in many physical confrontations in the class. I was surprised with the answer he gave about his favourite activity.

I: What do you like most in the music class?

Bradley: Playing -- I mean singing ... I am used to it. I don't know (how) but I just got used to it.

I: Is there something that you can describe what singing does for you? Something that other things don't do for you?

Bradley: Nope.

In a further portion of the interview, Bradley gives an indication that he prefers quiet activities. Bradley's statement that singing is something he "got used to" suggests that singing might just be contrary to his way of being. The following excerpt indicates that in Bradley's home, singing is related to quiet activities like lullabies.

I: Your little sister, does anyone sing to her, like your mom or your dad?

Bradley: I don't know what they're (lullabies) called though.

I: When do they sing to her?

Bradley: At bedtime. Or sometimes when she gets lonely I let her go into my room and I let her listen to my tapes.

Here is another boy that views singing as a quiet activity, an activity that can be used to pacify babies. In another passage Bradley expresses his preference for films because that is a time, as Bradley stated, "When everyone be's quiet." This reminded me of an observation of our electronic world made by R. Murray Schafer. He suggested that the reason people use "Walkman" is an attempt to create silence, and thus a space for themselves in a noisy world.

The following passage demonstrates the influence of the mother in these young children, but it is an influence of a different kind:

Russell: Yeah, we have lots of tapes.

I: Which tapes do you like?

Russell: Wilf Carter, Cattle call, Alabama, rock and roll.

I: Rock and Roll. What do you like about those? Why do you like them?

Russell: They have good music.

I: You know when you say "good music", can you tell what it sounds

like? What does good music sound like?

Russell: Really neat and

I: What are some of the sounds you hear on it ?

Russell: Loud sounds, low sounds, medium sounds.

I: Do you listen to Wilf Carter sing a lot then do you?

Russell: Yeah.

I: What's a favourite song of his, do you have a favourite?

Russell: "Cattle Call."

I: How does that go? Can you sing a little for me?

Russell: I can't because I can't sing it all.

I: Is this the type of music your mom and dad listen to too?

Russell: My mom loves it. She wanted it since she was a little girl and finally she found it.

Crystal, in grade one, gets a strong gender message when she and her mom listen to music.

Crystal: Umm, like Cinderella. Me and my mom listen to Cinderella music when we were baking cookies. And what else? Um, Disney-- Walt Disney. Book songs and stuff like that.

The girls speak of singing in terms of enjoyment, the boys in terms of it being a quiet activity. Thinking about these differences brings to mind Paley's (1986) observations in her nursery situation. Little boys seem to have to make a point of sitting still to sing, making singing somewhat against their nature.

Grade Five Students

Tania is a serious student, very attentive to all that happens in the class. Tania

could be described as quiet, content to be a part of the whole class, never bringing overt attention to herself. I noticed Tania because of her dexterity and excellent rhythm abilities when she engaged in the sol-feg hand signals. Compared with the year one students, she was very shy in the interview. Since she spoke of playing the piano I thought it would be interesting to ask her the following question:

I: Do you ever see a connection between the singing and the piano lessons?

Tania: No.

A very definite "no" I might add. The music of her home seems quite disconnected from the school music program. She does not see the connection between singing and instrument playing. Is this because the piano has a pitch set by certain keys and the player does not have to correct its pitch in any way? Or is it because of the definitions of music the teacher gives to the class? In this excerpt from the grade one class the teacher makes a distinction between that which happens in the classroom and the formal private music lesson.

At the end of the class (Grade one June 7)

Specialist: We have an important something before you go, Freddy. I promised you could play a piano song. Would you do that now? We have to be very good listeners when we're listening.

(Other children are asking to play as well.)

Specialist: No. Not today. We will another day. Freddy started taking piano lessons. Show us your piano book. Look at that! He's got his very own piano book and he's going to play the song he's been practising at home. So he knows how to play real songs on the piano already.

This was very reminiscent of my childhood experiences with the piano. The

whole idea of "real" music and its connectedness to the iconography and an instrument negates singing, devalues singing. There is a subtle hint of the elitist versus the populist in this classroom. It is not very surprising then when Tania expressed her feelings about singing as though it was not a really terribly important skill.

Tania: Well, I like hearing my voice.

I: How does it make you feel that sort of, hear your voice?

Tania: It feels fine.

I: Have you ever felt better, sometime after singing? Or worse?

Tania: Sort of in between.

I: Do you like the hand signals?

Tania: No.

I: You don't? You do them very well, did you know that? That's one of the reasons that I was interviewing you was because, when you sing with them (sol-feg hand signals), you have a very strong rhythmic sense. It really shows in your hand signals.

Tania: I never knew that.

Again there is a disconnection between the singing and expression while at the same time a comfortable feeling pervading the act of singing. Tania is unaware of her ability to connect singing with the motor skill of hand movement.

I: But you sing in the choir?

Tania: No.

I: You don't? That's interesting. How come?

Tania: I don't know..I just didn't feel like it this year.

I: Tell me what didn't you like about it?

Tania: I had to get up too early ...on Fridays. I didn't like staying at lunch.

I: What do you like to do at lunch instead?

Tania: I like to jump on the trampoline, listen to music, watch T.V.

I: Do you have the music channel at home?

Tania: Yeah.

I: Do you watch it a lot?

Tania: Um Hum.

Thus to entice the students into the choir it would appear the teacher has to compete with the media. Of a greater concern is the manner in which we will watch performers sing and dance on television, entertaining us. Yet we do little to entertain ourselves by actively singing and dancing. There are writers that have expressed concern with this subscription to the media and its influence on the students in today's classroom. As Maxine Greene (1986) states "no population has ever been so deliberately entertained, amused, and soothed into avoidance, denial and neglect". (p. 246) Charles Taylor (1991) addresses "the culture of narcissism, the spread of an outlook that makes self-fulfilment the major value in life and that seems to recognise few external moral demands or serious commitments to others." (p. 55) Choir is participatory and becoming a member means we make a commitment to the teacher and other members of the choir to attend rehearsal and be reliable choristers. Instead it would seem that Tania has decided to be amused by the media and not commit to others in the choral organization.

Jesslyn is a lively, energetic girl. In my notes I observed her as bubbly bordering on mischievous. (As I wrote this I suddenly caught myself using "spunky" for grade one

girls and "mischievous" for grade five girls.) She spoke of an enjoyment of playing baseball after school. Jesslyn participates well but has a part in a few disruptive acts in the classroom as later observations will show.

I: Tell me about singing -- do you like to sing?

Jesslyn: Yeah I guess.

I: What types of things do you like to sing?

Jesslyn: Well, I like to sing the songs on the radio. I know them. Um -- my mom wanted to put me in a singing course, but she couldn't find one for me. I like singing in the choir.

I: In the school choir?

Jesslyn: Yeah.Well my mom thought it would be fun for me to join so I joined. And I have fun ... you just get to do stuff and sometimes you get to play instruments. That's fun.

I: Do you remember when you first started to sing? Like, when you first learned to sing?

Jesslyn: No. Well, my mom likes music. She really likes it. Sometimes she's humming. We hardly ever have the radio on; we usually have the T.V. on. ... my mom's in a choir at church. But there's hardly any music at home.

Jesslyn likes to sing but her repertoire of songs is from the radio even though she sings in the school choir. She has fun with her singing. She indicates that singing is supported in her home. The fact that her mother sings in a choir and sought to have Jesslyn in a community choir is indicative that Jesslyn comes from a home with a higher than usual interest in choir.

Ted is a tall boy who sits at the periphery of the class and is constantly in motion. As well as being a good participant, he also does his part in being disruptive in the class.

When he sings he usually gives up on the sol-feg hand signs. He expressed concern about the interview with me and even gave it as an excuse for misbehaving in the class. For one who was concerned about the interview, Ted was remarkably talkative once the interview began.

I: Do you remember when you first started to sing? Like, when you first learned to sing?

Ted: No, not really -- it would have to be sort of around two.

I: And who, who did you think -- how did you learn to sing?

Ted: My parents just sang songs, and I eventually learned the words and sang along with them.

I: I see. Your mom and dad both sing?

Ted: Yeah, mainly my dad.

I: Does he like the Beach Boys too?

Ted: Yeah, well kind of, he isn't really into the tapes we have.

I: How do you feel about singing in school now?

Ted: Sometimes I don't really want to sing because I've had a bad day or my brother has been bugging me. I'll sing when I'm in a good mood and that ... Sometimes I'll just stay the same, sometimes, like if it's one of my favourite songs and it makes me real happy and I just want to go out and do something.

Ted has some singing modelled in his home by his father, who apparently sings more than Ted's mother. Ted sees his father sing at home, recognizes that his father is male therefore decides that males do sing. Ted speaks quite freely of the effect of singing on his emotions. I detect a boy who is caught in a dilemma: in his home, males sing but, in school, males do not sing. He therefore becomes a bit of an enigma when

he sings (because he likes it) and then misbehaves (to appear male to his peers).

Josh is a very mature boy in this grade five class. He exudes self confidence. He participates very well and demonstrates a good knowledge of music skills. If Josh does misbehave, he does it in a very surreptitious manner. Josh wants to appear cooperative in the eyes of the teacher and yet he is seeking approval from his peers. He began the interview by using the words "thesis and masters" very easily. Josh takes pride in academic posturing.

I: Do you like singing?

Josh: Well, it's okay ... It's not my favourite. I sing well, I guess. I have a pretty good voice for singing. But it's really not my favourite subject.

I: Can you tell me anything about the hand signals? The doh-re-mi? Do you they help you?

Josh: No. Not really. It, its just the teacher wants us to do that, so I do them.

I: Do you sing in the school choir?

Josh: Yes I do ... just to be around people.

Here is a boy who is very confident about his singing. He can do the hand signals but he seems to lack understanding of the relationship between the hand signals and pitch of his voice or pitch memory. Josh says he uses choir for social rather than musical reasons. During this interview, and in revisiting it since, I was left wondering if Josh is already male enough to hide his emotions and provide a male bravado attitude towards singing.

In summary what I found perplexing about these interviews was that I was totally

wrong in my expectations when I selected the grade five students. I thought I had chosen two students who were positive participants, who would accurately reflect the goals of the program and two students who would represent a more negative element in the class. My selection of these students was approved by the music specialist which indicated that she felt the same way about these students. However, I got responses opposite to my expectations based on the classroom observations. Tania, although well behaved and demonstrating good music skills in class, was quite indifferent to singing. Josh was good and he knew it, but singing was very academic to him. He did not speak passionately about it. Jesslyn and Ted, who were quite disruptive in class, had a greater interest in singing than either the music specialist and I would have thought. In class they hid their interest very well, masking it in, what is often interpreted as, misbehaviour.

After revisiting the observations I began to question whether the music specialist and I had defined singing as Russell (grade one) had, quiet and cooperative. Tania and Josh fit that description. Perhaps Jesslyn and Ted have shown us that singing is more than quiet and cooperative. As the adjudicator on CBC Choral Concert spoke of "using our ears differently," we as music educators should view our singers differently. If we set as our goals self expression and joy, we should permit students to exhibit these goals.

Again, does the "quiet and cooperative" lend itself better to pitch orientation and a better performance rather than spontaneous, emotive song? What are some of the curricular and institutional impediments to spontaneous emotive song? Is the school choir in existence for the joy of song or is it in existence only for performance?

The Culture of the Music Classroom.

What ever the children may say about singing in a personal interview, singing for them does occur in the social context of the classroom. It was necessary to identify what singing was like for children in their peer group, as well as identify factors that enhanced or inhibited participation in singing. The concern of my research was to identify gender differences, if any, in the subscription to singing in the grade one class as compared with the grade five class.

The specialist's observations of the characteristics of the boys in the first grade were as follows:

Teacher: And I noticed the grade one boys at the beginning of the year are very homogeneous -- you've got a pretty well rounded group -- everyone is very much the same. By the end of grade three you start to see some struggling with the boys for recognition. You'll have the occasional boy starting to be -- fooling around with another boy.

Is this "struggling for recognition" the teacher speaks of or is it the beginning of boys wrestling the power away from the teacher? This could be the beginning of a struggle for leadership among the boys as it seems the disruption begins with one or two.

Eyre (1991) noted in her study that when boys assumed power in the classroom that a "hierarchy existed among the boys: a few dominant boys intimidated and controlled other boys." (p. 215)

Teacher: Grade two, when I think of grade two boys ... doing an active activity doesn't necessarily settle them down. Where in grade one, if they were restless, you'd get up and do movement and go sit down, you've settled your group. By grade two, if they're restless and you move them around, they're even more restless by the time you've finished. I'm finding that the boys in a group activity who are participating together will tend to fool around twice as much, be physical, and bump into each other and get really carried away, and I hear a lot of comments from boys at

that age about things like "Shoot them," imitation little gun shots. We're listening to a film. And if there's any part about someone getting killed or shot, they're right in there, and really relate to that type of thing.

This passage might just as well have been from Superheroes in the Doll's Corner (Paley, 1986) Paley describes scenes such as these that she observed in her nursery school. Paley suggests that with the advent of television this superhero play begins at an earlier age than it did thirty years ago. It is the acting out of superhero plots that widens the gap between the girls and the boys.

I: And what of the girls in this class?

Teacher: Most girls will still keep quite under wraps at that age (grade one). By grade two, I find that the girls will sit very passively and the boys are very active, demanding a lot of attention. Grade two seems a real turn about year. A lot of the boys are the ones who are acting up. The girls will sit -- it astounds me how passive the girls become in that group. And how active the boys are becoming.

In my observations of this grade level, I found quite the opposite was true. I was intrigued by the energy, dominance and exuberance of the grade one girls. Are the observations of the teacher reflective of the perception we as educators have of how girls should be? It would appear this perception is so pervasive that we fail to see the reality of these girls. What role do we have in shaping the passivity of the girls?

The Grade One Music Classroom

The teacher gives them instruction on good singing posture. It is difficult to find anyone in this class that does not respond to the instruction. They try hard to please.

Teacher: And now you're all standing straight except for Judy -- shoulders back nicely.

This excerpt was difficult to ignore because of the remarkable similarity of the

teacher's instruction to a passage from 'The First Grade Methods' of 1918. "It is essential that the backs be straight and shoulders well settled down." (Green and Vogan, 1991, p. 120) And so the singing began.

"Rocky Mountain High" an action song, seems to be enjoyed by all the children. Alex emits a loud laugh, cry. On the "do, do ,do, do do remember me" the class shakes their fingers in a scolding fashion. Yuri shakes his finger at me, while Sally pounds her chest loudly. On "Hang your head and cry" the boys mimic crying more than the girls. Sally engages Brett in giggling during "stormy ocean".

The joy of this singing was wonderful to watch. The total involvement of the whole class, the sense of meaning portrayed in their action, and the total lack of inhibition were wonderful. This passage best illustrates Sally, the most unpretentious little girl, who sees the class as a safe place to release her emotions and share them with others in a very boisterous way. As I revisit this passage I can still recall the total involvement of her body in this song. The girls seemed so natural in their expression of crying. The message becomes apparent: Real girls can cry. The following excerpt suggests that perhaps real boys don't cry.

On "Hang your head and cry" the boys mimic crying more than the girls.

By exaggerating the crying, were the boys undermining the emotion, negating it? This could be interpreted as the boys displaying a disdain for emotion. In the next example, in contrast, is sincere joy in singing about the masculine activity of playing baseball.

As the teacher announces the name of the book "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," Russell shouts "Yay!" Some children sit close and the teacher definitely holds the attention of the whole class. Five girls choose to sit on the top riser. They are joined by Trevor. As the teacher sings, I am caught by the enthusiasm of the Russell. As the class sings "for it's one,

two three strikes your out," Russell shows the three strikes on his fingers as the umpire would in a real game. He also unabashedly swings with the bat as he sings.

Here Russell sings with feeling and movement. Earlier in the interview he described music as a quiet, cooperative activity. I asked him about his participation in this song and he related his interest in baseball. This suggests that music in the classroom that relates to life as lived may be more successful. This type of response was definitely missing when the teacher attempted to engage the children in the singing of "Harmonia Mundi."

Then the class reviews "Harmonia Mundi" The teacher doesn't use the sol-feg hand signals but shows the rise and fall of the melody with her hand instead. Many of the girls try to do the same whereas not one boy imitates this gesture.

For these young children the discussion of "distant souls to bind" was just too remote from their experience. What type of music would relate to the experience of the children of this class? Here are a few glimpses:

I: If you were to choose the one the very thing you wanted to do all the time.

Alice: That I get to play on the keyboard when I'm already in piano lessons ... Oh I know a few songs and I also know how to change from left to right and right to left and I also know how to do that, let the keyboard do a song for me but I have to press the keys to make a different song ... Well the best thing I like about music is that we get to play songs and also a little piano.

Keyboards are becoming very common in homes replacing the toy pianos of fifty years ago. In this classroom there is not an electronic keyboard to relate to Alice's experience. This passage had particular impact on me because of an experience I had as I sought out a keyboard for our Christmas Concert. Actually I wanted a harpsichord

for Rutter's "Blow. Blow Thou Winter's Wind" but realizing that this would be an impossibility, I opted for borrowing an electronic keyboard which could reproduce this sound. As I wandered into the piano shop, I felt as though I had entered the twentieth century for the first time. There was not a traditional instrument on the floor but instead a myriad of electronic devices that could produce a myriad of sounds. As I strolled up to an ornate baby grand I was startled to see, just above the keyboard, blinking lights indicating its electronic capabilities. How ordinary the piano must sound to the children who have access to these keyboards and own compact discs with a multitude of electronic sounds. This year I was to find that the students' knowledge far exceeds mine as they spoke of interfacing computers with their keyboards.

And then there's the Disney experience ...

Crystal

I: What kind of things do you do at home with music?

C: Like listen to the radio, sing songs, dance and stuff like that.

I: When you listen to music, what kind of music do you listen to?

C: Umm, Like Cinderella. Me and my mom listen to Cinderella when we were baking cookies. And, what else? Ummm, Disney -- Walt Disney. Book songs and stuff like that.

Bradley

I: Your little sister, does anyone sing to her, like your mom or your dad?

B: I don't know what they're called though.

I: When do they sing to her?

B: At bedtime or sometimes when she gets lonely I let her go into my room and I let her listen to my tapes ... I have Winnie the Pooh tapes ...

Yeah, that's what my sister likes most ... she likes to watch Bambi.

A common thread amongst young children today is the music of the Disney shows. The movie "Bambi" is a shared North American childhood experience spanning four decades. The availability of these movies on home videos has made this music very accessible as well as providing a common repertoire of songs for the children. I could not think of a more remote area musically for these children than some of the music used in schools today, music that has been selected and rewritten to fit the Kodaly context. I kept wondering if Kodaly knew about Disney, or The Cattle Call, or Aruba Jamaica? To return to the passage that precipitated the above discussion:

Then the class reviews "Harmonia Mundi." The teacher doesn't use the sol-feg hand signals but shows the rise and fall of the melody with her hand instead. Many of the girls try to do the same whereas not one boy imitates this gesture.

This can also be interpreted as an example of gender alignment at work. The girls view that what the female teacher does is "female" and the boys, especially the ones who are having trouble with hand coordination, view it as "not male" and therefore do not choose to imitate the teacher. Singing and hand signals associated with the Kodaly method appear to be intrusive, something foreign for the boys. Due to the competitive nature of the males, will they withdraw from situations where they feel incompetent and are these hand signals an example of this ?

As the teacher begins a body rhythm exercise -- patsch, clap, knee, knee, elbow -- the boys have difficulty with this while the girls appear to be enjoying the game.

These observations are an example of what I have frequently observed that, in music, where there is a need to combine rhythmic and motor skills, the girls are far more

dextrous. Girls bring with them to school a vast array of hand games of clapping and chanting and continue to share these on the playgrounds at recess. This passage is also an illustration that in a music class, as Sadker and Sadker (1982) noted, "the processes of schooling is very harmful to girls who come to school far ahead of the boys in verbal, social and physical skills." (p. 71) Gilligan (1982) suggests that instruction in schools has been guided by a theory of human development which ignored females in its formation. Perhaps of music the opposite is true. It is the little boys who struggle with the motor skills expected of them. Rather than put the girls on hold, we keep on going, causing the boys to decide that music is not a masculine activity.

Although I have observed that generally boys like to move, it has been my experience that they have difficulty with specified sequenced movement similar to the dance patterns. This is illustrated by Bradley in his interview. He stated that he that he found actions difficult especially when: "I'm doing actions with a partner". Doing actions with a partner requires a coordination of the body and synchronization of the beat. When boys move in activities such as running, they are quite independent of any restrictions of sequenced rhythmic movement determined by the beat of the music. A good example of that is in Bradley's interview when he stated that his favourite song was "Up on the Housetop".

I: That has actions, doesn't it?

Bradley: Those ones aren't difficult.

I: Why aren't they difficult?

Bradley: Because if I know a song really well and I know the actions as well.

"Up on the Housetop" is an action song where the words suggest the movement and the movement does not have to follow the beat of the song. The ability to coordinate the hands rhythmically is a preparation for instrumentation and, as mentioned before, the sol-feg hand signs of the Kodaly method which forms a major part of the instruction in this school. When the children are requested to engage in instrumentation, Bradley has trouble playing the xylophone and has to begin again.

Russell and Alice play (xylophones) well. Bradley has some trouble and has to start again. Alex and Crystal play well. Bradley engages Leona in conversation. Yuri seemed very un-focused and when it came his turn to play, had to be reminded of the notes.

Of interest here is Bradley's reaction to his inability to play the xylophone well. He engages Leona in conversation which in this class could be interpreted as misbehaviour. Why did Bradley not focus on other students' successes to try improve his own playing? Has Bradley decided that his failure is due to external forces beyond his control? Robertson (1991) suggests that male students view failure as something outside their control like bad luck. Successes on the other hand are viewed as being due to innate talent.

Here may be an example of what Walker (1987) meant when he suggested that modern Western elitist music emphasizes talent and giftedness. (see p. 36) It lends itself well to Bradley's perception of success and failure. This gives music to a talented few as opposed to music for all. When Bradley was asked to play the xylophone he had no opportunity to practice. He was suddenly thrust into performance in front of all his peers and had to call up all his musical knowledge and motor skills at once. Children are excellent observers and compare themselves to their peers constantly. Rather than

attempt to learn, Bradley may have decided that he was not talented. I wondered if the ability to sing is cast into this "gifted and talented" mode as well.

I would like to propose that the "talented and giftedness" idea can also lead to the genderization of certain activities. An example of this occurred this year in our spring concert preparation. A teacher attempted to do some Western line dancing with children in grades one, two and three. Girls far out numbered the boys in the ability to remember the sequence of the steps and to move rhythmically. In the public performance of the dance, there were only two boys in a group of eighteen performers. The boys observing the dance could decide that it must be a feminine activity because there are so few boys participating. " All opportunities to make oneself distinctly feminine or masculine are seized upon: *If I am doing something only boys do, then I must be a boy.*" (Paley, 1986, p. 18)

What was interesting in the grade one class I observed was that the girls were the dominant force in ways other than motor skills and coordination. It was easier to observe instances of girls being disruptive and assuming power. Here is an example of a boy who is being the "good cop."

As this is going on (the teacher is settling a dispute), Alex takes a book and places it on the teacher's chair. Crystal and Janelle each take six books and hand them out to the children as they find their places on the riser, Alex tries to tell the teacher what Crystal and Janelle are up to but the teacher is too busy with Zenia and Bradley's problem. Leona takes more books than she needs. Crystal stands in front of the class and announces: "Books for sale"! Crystal then gives the class instructions, posturing herself as a teacher would.

If I were to select a dominant child it would be difficult to decide between Crystal, Zenia and Sally. They are exuberant, outgoing and vocal. What happens to

these vocal exuberant girls? These next few passages are an example of how girls' voices are lost.

The passage begins as the teacher sets the rules:

T: You know when you go to Physical Education? There's always some people who have to go to the washroom after Physical Education. I want to make sure that you go (to the washroom) before you come up to music, Okay? Because you are already downstairs in the change rooms. Just run and take five. Don't worry about getting up here fast because then you have to stop our class.

(A little while later Zenia, politely, challenges the rule. Zenia asks again if she can leave the room.)

Zenia: Mrs. Smith can I go to the washroom?

T: No.

Z: Please?

T: You know our deal.

A boy receives permission to go to the washroom without verbalizing. Two minutes after the above discussion the teacher begins a so-mi exercise with hand signals. Trevor gets up and leaves the classroom with nodded permission from the teacher. Zenia, witnessing Trevor's success, gives it another try.

While this exercise is going on, Zenia comes over to the teacher and tries to get her attention. She fails in this attempt.

The question is: Why did Trevor get permission to go to the washroom and Zenia not? Here is a startling example of how boys and girls are treated differently. Do we expect the girls to follow the rules more than the boys? I recall the discrepancy between what the teacher thought the girls were like in this class ... "under wraps" as opposed to what really existed in this class. Boys do not assume power, they are

conceded to more easily. I thought of instances where I might have done the same thing, that is yield to the boys' requests. I can recall feeling more empathic towards little boys who were struggling with so many aspects of schooling. Their immaturity caused them to misbehave or fuss if their wishes weren't granted. They quickly recognised how they could disrupt large group instruction which did give them an element of power. This can, therefore, be interpreted as boys given concessions and power at an early age. Even when teachers make a conscious effort at gender fairness, inequality prevails, favouring the male children.

One area of concern with the concept of power was how the boys and girls interacted with each other, specifically the physical contact between students. In the grade one class there were few examples but the examples indicated a fair environment for all.

Example one:

(Zenía has a problem with Bradley hitting her.)

T: If you're (Sally) really good. Stop running though. Zenía, what's new with you? (Zenía tells Mrs. Smith that Bradley started hitting her.)

T: Is that true, Bradley? Come here. Were you hitting Zenía today?

Bradley: She was bothering me.

T: What did she do to bother you?

(There is too much noise in the background to hear his response.)

T: Is there a chance, that maybe, possibly, you (Zenía) did it by accident? Without knowing? Is that possible?

(Response is indiscernible.)

T: How can you tell? She said she didn't. How do you know she did it on purpose? How are we going to solve this problem now? Zenia, come back, we're not done yet. How are we going to solve this problem? Okay. You guys go and show me what happened, but how are you going to solve the problem? Are you mad now?

Bradley: I'm mad at her right now.

T: Well, what are you going to do about it? I want you to be friends. I think that's a better idea, and not be mad any more. I didn't hear whether or not that was solved.

Example two:

T: Oh, that was beautiful. Do you know what? I think the best way to put our feet is on that front trim. So take a baby step forward, otherwise you get too crowded.

(As the front row is asked to take a baby step, Crystal bounces a good two steps forward and hips Evan.)

In the first instance the teacher actively intervenes when the girl complains. The use second instance is an example of where a dominant girl (Crystal) takes some physical liberties that go unnoticed by the teacher. These were scenes that stuck with me. Of note to me was that the grade one girl (Zenia) complained. Would she have complained if she were in grade five? I would suggest not. Here is an example of how things will change in the process of schooling. By the time these children reach grade five the male will be the aggressor, the female will be silent.

The Grade Five Music Classroom

Specialist: I see the boys as being very physical ... They like to do every thing in a more physical way. They like to talk more -- show their presence more. They like to feel things, touch things, do things versus sit and listen and participate in things.

... I would like to tell you that probably the girls are going to handle more, quicker, because of the ease of handling the group.

The girls ... grade five ... a little bit, they start pushing a little bit, too, a little bit more interaction. A lot more giggling and tittering and talking. That goes on a bit more.

I look for, a lot of times, a lot less from a boy doing some activities than I do for a girl because of, developmentally I know what their (the boys) limitations are.

These excerpts are quite accurate when compared to the observations in the classroom. The boys are the dominant force. This specialist is well aware of the discipline of the girls in class. The grade five girls know what schooling is about and they have what Gardiner (1989) calls a "civility" to them. Gardner defines civility as: "how to be polite, to share, to listen, to follow reasonable instructions, to proceed by working things out rather than by intrusive acts." (p. 299) However this civility could also be interpreted as a lack of voice and confidence in a male dominated classroom.

In the following excerpt, the boys limitations are discussed further.

Specialist: Particularly I've seen very closely grade four students play ukulele, boys, with no difficulties. All of them are quite equal. My grade fives ... I have one or two boys who are experiencing quite a lot of difficulty; by the end of the year in grade six they're all having difficulty. So I find there's a real developmental difference in boys in grade four to grade six in fine motor coordination task.

... I think its growth. I remember Lucy (previous music teacher) explaining that to me because I was getting frustrated with the boys. And seeing such progress with the girls. And I thought good, if I got them right back in grade four and good rules established, and good techniques established, by grade six we'd overcome that but it doesn't seem to happen.

... I sit there and talk to them about it ... they want to quit. They say "I can't do this."

What is the underpinning of the boys stating "I can't do this"? The specialist seems to indicate that music abilities and skills decline as boys mature. Perhaps as the

boys mature their competitive nature increases and they simply do not want to appear incompetent in front of the girls. Perhaps it is a growing sense of self that causes a boy to say "I am not a girl" and shouldn't be expected to do this. By refusing to try to play the ukulele the boys re-assume power by negating the activity.

Specialist: Some boys liked ukulele and will say they want to play rock-type songs. So I'll do, say, "Wipe-out". So they think its cool to play it so they will try really hard. Others give up immediately, and say "I can't do it." Or will really have to struggle with it. I find that most times, um, after I've talked to them about their development, and how its a little more difficult, and they have to struggle through and not feel frustrated if the person beside them is doing wonderful and you're not, usually we overcome that. And we go on and we keep going.

The boys' response to the "wipe-out " idea ties in closely to the observations of Holmes and Silverman (1992). Entertainers generate a high level of interest among teens, but as noted previously, Holmes and Silverman suggest males "identify directly with them, young women imagine being in a romantic relationship with them." (p. 58) The teacher, in this instance, utilized this identification with rock stars as a means of encouraging the boys to persevere the ukulele lessons. The boys used the ukuleles as pseudo-guitars, pretending to be rock stars as they performed "wipe out". So the Super Dog and other superheroes Paley (1986) observed in her kindergarten class appear in this music room as rock superstars. As well, hints are given to the rock star's presence in this classroom when the boys sing "Hey Man!" in the pop idiom more loudly than "Harmonia Mundi."

The mention of rock stars brings up an important question of how the rock music shapes the definition the students ascribe to music. The individual interviews identified the source of what these students defined as "good" music.

Ted

I: When you listen to music, what kind of music do you listen to?

Ted: Music that, about, like, is fast and loud.

I: What kind of music don't you like?

Ted: Soft slow music.

I: Why?

Ted: Bore me.

I: When people talk about being "bored," or something "bores" them, can you tell me a little bit more about that?

Ted: Well it makes me just want to turn off the radio or turn off the tape and go listen to something else because I'm not interested in it.

I: I see, and what type of music do you like to listen to? Like if you could go to a library and pick out a tape and play it what would you play?

Ted: Something that is fast and loud, and that's pretty well it.

I: Do you have a favourite group?

Ted: The Beach Boys.

I: Beach Boys -- and what's your favourite piece?

Ted: "Catch a Wave."

I: If you were able to walk into the music room and say "Could we do this today"? which activity would you choose?

Ted: I'd say bring our own tapes and that, and listen to them, and if you know the words, sing along with them.

Josh

Josh: I like to listen to rap or hard rock.

I: When do you get to listen to your rock or rap?

Josh: Upstairs in my room, normally.

I: When you have say, rock or rap, do you have a particular group that you really like to listen to?

Josh: Kriss Kross.

Jesslyn

I: How does music make you feel?

Jesslyn: Well, some music makes me feel bored, like my grandma, she listens to, like, classic stuff and I don't really like that. I like the jazzy stuff. Jazz has, like lots of rhythm, and -- Classic is sort of plain. Jazz you'll hear, like drums and stuff. She (mom) took piano lessons when she was a little girl. She taught me some of the "Romeo and Juliet" love song.

I: Do you have any favourite groups that you listen to?

Jesslyn: I like Paula Abdul and Salt n' Pepa. *(The rock group Salt 'n Pepa will surface in future discussions.)

I: How did you find this music?

Jesslyn: Well, I used to go to the community centre, and they play lots of music. They mostly play music.

Tania

I: Do you ever go to concerts or anything with your family?

Tania: M-Hum. Well I went to the Snow concert.

I: With your mom and dad?

Tania: With my mom -- I don't go to very much concerts.

I: Do you listen to any music outside of school?

Tania: Yeah. Lots.

Well I like rap music...um.. that's about all. Well, I've just got one CD. I have tapes, I've the CD "Snow". I have Kris Kross, Snow, The Bodyguard -- and all these other people, I don't know their names.

I: How did you decide that this CD was the one you wanted, "Snow"?

Tania: Because I like the music.

I: What do you like about this "Snow"?

Tania: It's a good sound.

I: What sound do they.

Tania: Rap.

I: Now what is it about rap that you listen to?

Tania: Um, I just like rap. Well they just sort of talk it like music (Muffled sound as Tania taps out the rhythm)

I: Can you give me an example of your favourite rap piece?

Tania: "Informer"

I: What do they talk about in that?

Tania: I don't know 'cause they're not English.

I: Where did you hear it?

Tania: My friends.

I: But you sing in the choir

Tania: No.

I: You don't? That's interesting. How come?

Tania: I don't know..I just didn't feel like it this year.

I: Tell me what didn't you like about it?

Tania: I had to get up too early on Fridays ... I didn't like staying at

lunch.

I: What do you like to do at lunch instead?

Tania: I like to jump on the trampoline, listen to music, watch T.V.

I: Do you have the music channel at home?

Tania : Yeah.

I: Do you watch it a lot?

Tania: Um Hum

I: Any rock video you like particularly?

Tania: I like The Bodyguard video.

I: Do you ever go to concerts or anything with your family?

Tania: M-Hum. Well I went to the Snow concert.

I: With your mom and dad?

Tania: With my mom....I don't go to very much concerts.

The interviews demonstrated the jumble of rock groups vying for the attention and the cash of pre-teens and teenager group as they seek self-identification. I felt like a visitor in a strange land with the groups mentioned. With the exception of The Beach Boys, the groups had all changed since my daughter was a teenager eight years ago and I simply did not recognise the names. The pop culture is a force to be reckoned with not only in the context of music but, as I will discuss later, in the arena of gender as well. Every year there is a whole new set of names and passing fads. Every year the distance between the elitist culture and the pop idiom becomes more evident. Is this deliberate? Perhaps it is. A changing pop culture ensures that the recording industry, as fashion

designers, will continue to make money as fads and fashions change. However the subscription to the pop culture verifies the Diamond and Witmer (1994) statement that "on a day to day basis, we define who we are through the music we share either as listeners or music makers with our friends." (p. 304)

When we think of Tania's decision to abandon choir in the light of these interviews, it could be interpreted in another way. Perhaps it is because the music of her culture is at home, on television. Elliott (1990), writes about the decline of public group singing in the United States. He suggests that, due to technology, Americans are becoming music spectators rather than music participants. Is it the fault of the media or is it the fault of the music programs that do not address the rock culture?

From a gender perspective of note is Tania's favourite video *The Bodyguard*, a story of a female rock star and the bodyguard assigned to protect her. This movie is presents the image of the female in trouble with the knight in shining armour there to protect her. It is not only the definitions of music that the students receive from these rock groups. There are instances of definitions of behaviour related to gender that will surface in further discussions.

If I was to choose a low point in all the activities related to this research, it was visiting and revisiting the following excerpts from the grade five classroom. The feelings were of anger, frustration and simple exhaustion on my part. The participation in singing was so different than the grade one class it was difficult to believe we were in the same school and that many of these students had had this specialist for four years.

As the teacher begins a new exercise, a disruptive vocal slide is heard. This was produced by Curtis.

T: Don't do that! Don't do that and then slide down. Try to land on it.

During this exercise Ted was very uninvolved, shifting his posture, looking around the room. As well, Curtis, in the front row proceeded to engage the girl next to him in whispered conversation. Two boys peer down their recorders during the singing exercises.

This is one of nine examples where some of the boys attempted to deliberately sabotage singing. The use of the voice in an obnoxious manner was the most common way the boys subverted the act of singing. If the boys did not subvert the singing vocally, they exhibited a dislike of singing by not participating at all. The reason for this sabotage was an attempt to establish their identity as boys. When the students began to sing something that was closer to the pop idiom a change in participation by the boys was observed.

The boys change quite noticeably when an up beat song "Hey man" is sung to the clapping. The volume rises dramatically.

How did the boys decide that participation in the song "Hey Man" was "worth" it? This passage exudes the influence of the pop culture in the boys definition of valuable music. There was an affirmation of pop music through participation. Holmes and Silverman (1992) state that if adolescents (male and female) could choose whom they wanted to speak or visit the school they would prefer to have an entertainer and that the entertainer would most likely be male. Are the boys imagining themselves as the "rock star" as they did in the ukulele class? Is this, again, a form of the "superhero" play that Paley (1984) found amongst her four year olds? However Ms. George had chosen, for example, "Harmonia Mundi" from the Baroque repertoire for these students to sing.

Here again, as in grade one, the distance between the world as lived and the school curriculum as practised for these students is demonstrated. By the time the students are in their fifth year of schooling, they show their disapproval of the curriculum.

The boys were very vocal and active in showing their disapproval of various aspects of the music program. During the classroom observations, in contrast to the disruptive boys, I really had to focus to find a girl who was not participating well in singing. Most appeared cooperative and involved.

Samantha is only one girl who is not involved. She is some what hidden from the teacher's line of vision behind some larger students.

T: When I look straight into your eyes when you're doing this I get this wonderful response. You keep watching me and you get your notes right. And if you're looking somewhere else, chances are that you've missed it. So lets all get our eyes to the front please. If you don't see me, move over a bit, like Samantha, right now I don't see you. And I'll try not to move so much you can't see me. Samantha, I still can't see you. Ready begin.

A comparatively tiny girl, Samantha, tends to hide behind the larger children. She doesn't appear to be confident in her singing and hand signs.

The fact that I found Samantha hiding behind larger students speaks for the difficulty one would have locating girls with problems. The manner in which Samantha tended to hide, or mask her problems by remaining out of the teacher's view, suggests that "girls attribute success to luck and failure to personal inadequacy." (Robertson, 1991, p. 5).

The teacher returns to singing. Tania and Elizabeth are very confident in their hand signs. They do them with a good rhythmic bounce.

The girls participated well in singing as exhibited by Tania and Elizabeth. What

I found interesting was in the individual interview with Tania she was very hesitant to speak about singing. She seemed very surprised to hear that she had been identified as very competent in this area.

I: Do you like the hand signals?

Tania: No.

I: You don't? You do them very well, did you know that? That's one of the reasons I was interviewing you was because, when you sing with them (the sol/feg hand signals), you have a very strong rhythmic sense. It really shows in your hand signals.

Tania: I never knew that.

What a contrast to the girls in the first grade. Here was an example of how girls continually underestimate themselves. Shakeshaft (1986) and Robertson (1992) suggest that female students have their self esteem eroded by a school system that reinforces the societal message of female inferiority. The messages surrounded these girls in their music classroom. Portraits of the great musicians adorned the walls of this music room with the message that to be a great in music one had to be male. Kosa (1992) suggests that absence of women in music textbooks is just one example of how girls are denied power that comes from knowing their musical roots.

Again the boys who are participating show hesitancy towards the use of hand signals. Ted eventually does join in(singing) but does not attempt the hand signals.

Even though the boys have difficulties they do not hide them. There was a noticeable struggle for the boys to incorporate the hand signals with their singing in this age group. Ted, in his interview describes the hand signals as confusing. Does this perceived struggle with the sol-feg hand signals further inhibit the subscription to singing

on the part of the boys? This difficulty permeated the clapping games as well.

The teacher begins a sol-feg exercise with hand signals.

T: I know you're fine reading it, but unless you're looking, you won't be able to do it. Let's try again. Who cannot see? Raise your hands.

Again, the girls seem to be more at ease with singing and the hand (sol-feg) hand signals. There is a central core of boys who participate. However they watch the teacher more closely than the girls. The girls read (sight sing) the music which is written on large chart paper.

The girls' music reading skills and manual dexterity with the sol-feg hand signals far exceeded the boys.

T: We're going to start "My landlord". I want you to start with clap right.

The children then choose partners and sing a partner clapping game. Two girls proceed to do the pattern in double time.

The girls found the rhythmic game was so easy that they challenged themselves and played the games at twice the tempo of the boys. All this dexterity on the part of the girls was conducted in a manner of civility, never directing attention to themselves. Perhaps it was a silence of ignorance, the girls simply never realized how good they were. Moreover, the girls continually permitted the boys to dominate the answers even though the girls demonstrated a better knowledge of the sight singing exercise.

The teacher takes control of the class again (after an exchange with Curtis) and asks questions on rhythmic patterns. Noticeably the girls put up their hands (Jesslyn, Chyla) and wait to be asked to answer, whereas the boys put up their hands and shout their responses before they are asked. (Ted and Josh)

There were instances where the teacher made mistakes that the girls could have corrected. The girls sat silently, allowing Ms. George her mistakes. The boys were quick to point out the teacher's errors. Robertson (1992) states: "One can readily see

that more confidence flows to those who see themselves as authors of their own success than to those who feel that, so far, they've just been lucky." (p. 5)

This was a classroom where males constantly tested the teacher's authority and patience. The boys' disruptive behaviour formed the largest part of the data collected, so much so, that I wonder if I, too, fell victim to the power struggle in the classroom. While attempting to record these instances, I found my attention constantly drawn to the few boys who attempted to control the class. Of the sixteen examples, I selected this one because it was so powerful.

A loud "ahhh" was emitted by Monty. This was followed by a loud "ow" as Joshua strikes the girl next to him with his recorder. The girl, while emitting a loud sound, does not hit him physically but reprimands him verbally. The teacher scolds Joshua.

T: What did she do that made you hit her right now? Nothing?

Curtis (responding for Joshua): She got his recorder.

T: Next time you feel like doing that why don't you come and do it to me and see what would happen?

(Curtis, who continues to drop in on the conversation comments cheekily "ooh, okay.")

T: Right now I want to tell you this, only once. I didn't like the way I saw you walk in this room and your teacher didn't either. And I had to tell him to stay there and not worry about it. It's really important, we're really watching you to see who you really are. But when it comes time for class to start, the comments stop as well. Curtis, that means now!

(Curtis, in particular is reprimanded and responds by making facial gestures to the other students when the teacher is not watching.)

The teacher, in this instance, comes out as enforcer of physical safety and her position as such is undermined by a male student. This wrestling of power from the

teacher was not an isolated incident. It permeated the life of the classroom. Grand-standing and verbal abuse were combined with physical abuse as well, although the incidents of physical abuse were quite isolated. However, in a classroom with two adults present, these incidents were alarming. It was an open display of male aggression and hegemony. I questioned whether there would have been a similar display had the teacher been male. Perhaps it was a simple challenge to an authority figure.

Males and females appeared to react to physical abuse in different ways. In my reflections I wrote: If someone is struck and if the victim is a boy, he strikes back immediately; if the victim is a girl, she doesn't.

I wondered if this was why boys struck girls. The girls permit the domination, but the following excerpt tells me that some girls in the class had reached a saturation point:

At the end of the class, Ted hits a girl next to him several time before the girl strikes back. As the class leaves, another girl gives Ted a forceful shove.

This excerpt left me with the thought -- finally a girl does strike back -- eventually. Shocked, I found myself condoning physical violence as a way of evening the power which is indicative of the frustration I had observing all this. The excerpt illustrates that these girls do have a limit and, hidden within each class, are female enforcers who do attempt to even the score. However these instances were rarer than the placid acceptance, on the part of the girls, of the few dominant males.

The boys change quite noticeably when an up beat song "Hey man" is sung to the clapping. The volume rises dramatically.

This incident, although less confrontational, could be interpreted as a power

struggle. When the teacher entered the boys' definition of good music, she received cooperation. If the teacher made decisions such as the singing of Harmonia Mundi, which did not coincide with the boys' definition of good music, she received a lack of interest on their part.

These observations of the male postures of power in a grade five music classroom were similar to those made by Eyre (1991) in a junior high home economics class. Her study revealed that the boys in her study "clearly had more power". (p. 215) As well, Eyre makes a very powerful statement that the "hegemonic masculinity required that they take power away from women -- who happened in this (Eyre's) case to be their teachers." (p. 215)

In my reflections following observation on June 7, I wrote:

"In this class there is an unusual mixture of very focused boys and very disruptive boys - almost two distinct camps."

The disruptive boys constantly attempted to take away the music specialist's power by overt rude behaviour as well as leaping at any opportunity to point out errors the teacher had made. Quiet boys were ruled by these dominant boys as well. Eyre (1991) noted the existence of a hierarchy among the boys in her study in that "a few dominant boys intimidated and controlled other boys." (p. 215)

It was very difficult to find incidents of disruptive behaviour on the part of the girls. If they did misbehave it was usually participating in a secretive way such as a game of "Pass It On." This is an example of what misbehaviour on the part of the girls generally looked like:

The teacher moves to the class composition. As the students review the group is very focused. Natalie chats quietly to Tamara.

The girls simply never attempted to challenge the teacher's power. The girls would follow the music specialist's instructions and obey the rules. They seemed to have a better sense of large group instruction and cooperation:

On the riser there are eight girls and three boys who took the music teacher's suggestion of using the riser for a writing surface.

Perhaps it is simply that teachers expect that girls will behave better. In the following excerpt I wondered why the girls were called on this behaviour and Curtis was not.

At this point Curtis and two girls go over to the water fountain.

T: Sorry girls, we don't to the drinking fountain without permission.

Chyla: I'm sorry.

The girl apologizes, the boy gets the drink. As teachers, we continually expect more of the girls. It brings about a lot of unfairness. I suggest it permits the girls to be used as pawns by the dominant boys in the classroom, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

At this point the teacher had reached a frustration point and addressed the class on how they could cooperate more. Curtis emits a loud "yeah". He then proceeds to wrestle a recorder from a girl and pompously hands it over to Dillon only to take it from Dillon and return it to the girl.

I wondered why the girl remained passive as she was treated as the "side kick" in this comedian's routine. Again, is this how girls are expected to behave? Do we as teachers reinforce this? Had the girl raised issue with Curtis would she have risked reprimand from the teacher?

Another area that the boys sought to dominate was any discussion of emotions. Emotions are an integral part of the music experience. Walker (1987) states that "music is a product of man's unique intuitive and irrational imagination. The traditions of rationalism and empiricism and the artistic products of man's irrational imagination are in opposition. It is not possible, therefore to promote understanding of the latter from tenets of the former." (p.167) According to Belenky et al (1986) women construct knowledge and are tolerant of ambiguity, men receive knowledge and prefer logic. Women view connection, intimacy and inclusion as important. Men prefer distance, autonomy and exclusion. In the specific community researched what Belenky states appears to have some credence. Although I recognize that there are some that would see Belenky's statement as a form of stereo-typing males and females, I say this not in terms of judgement but rather in terms of balance. What happens should there be an imbalance of these forces?

Here is an example of these opposing male and female forces at work as the teacher attempts to connect the student's experiences to this Baroque song "Harmonia Mundi".

T: "We raise our voices ever, our distant souls to bind." Pretty hard to understand. Who thinks they might know what that means?

As the hands shot up in the air I noticed that the boys are far more anxious to answer. Derrick states that the words suggests a funeral. A boy pretends to weep. People are talking.

T: "Our distant souls" are their (former students) distant souls. We think about them and we remember that they were a part of our school. We're kind of bound together when we think about them. So, if you were to think back to when you were in ECS, Monty. Say you were back in ECS. You would probably remember your teacher, probably.

(Some say "yes;" some "no.")

T: You might remember one thing that happened in ECS and every time you think of it, it's sort of like being back in ECS because your mind can go back there. You can't go back there because you're grown up, but your mind can.

(John mimicked crying. The class becomes quite distracted with a lot of talk. Some of the talk suggests that John was back in ECS because of the crying. Someone yells "Ah, shut up"!)

The disruptive boys, who pride their masculinity, feel uncomfortable in this discussion of emotion. They attempt to disarm the teacher's female approach of connection and inclusion. This, as with the grade one boys, is a display of a disdain towards emotion, but the voice is louder. The male distance and logic surfaces. Judith Martin says, "Schooling has ignored the private sphere. Learning for family life and for the reproductive processes of the society have been relegated to the family. As a result, the ideal of the educated person has been based on the male stereotype -- objective, analytic, rational, interested in ideas and things, but not nurturing, empathic, intuitive, or supportive. Education has emphasized the development and application of reason and objective judgement; it has separated the mind from the body, thought from action, and reason from emotion." (Robertson, 1992, p. 6)

I've chosen to include the following excerpt because of the view it renders into the life of the children in the class and their interpretation of the emotion "love". The specialist, in her interview, shared observations similar Martin's that schooling ignores the private sphere of family life. The specialist and I were discussing the topic of love and the influence the media had on the children's conceptions of the word. She found that the children had separated the two. There was physical love and then there is one

that keeps families together. I use the word "children" very specifically because these are ten and eleven year olds and the issue is love and sexuality in the music classroom.

I thought, as a teacher and a parent, I had an accurate picture of the social dynamics of children today. These observations proved me wrong. I will preface these passages with the fact that this class was involved in "Human Sexuality" classes during the time of these observations which may have added to this conversation:

The children, erstwhile, settle down to work and the girls behind the piano can be heard making a loud clapping sound. Then Jesslyn goes over to the group of boys near the tape recorder and asks Nathan to come over to where she and Brenda are seated. Meanwhile Tania and Natalie, who have been on task, watch this with interest but say nothing. When Nathan returns, Jesslyn and Brenda continue the conversation with these boys across the room as follows:

Jesslyn: "She (Brenda) loves you (Nathan) and she wants to have you.

Banter between these groups continues then the boys return to their work. They put together indistinguishable words to the tune of the Barney show (... "I love you, you love me ...") What is heard is the singing of "you love me (so-mi-so). As the boys sing "with a great big ..." Curtis grinds his hips miming intercourse and the boys all giggle.

My first reaction to this incident was surprise that this would occur in a grade five class room. It also made me want to scratch beneath the surface to determine where the sexual awareness came from. Of many possible sources one, the rock music culture, kept resonating as I reviewed the interviews and observations of the students. Within rock music may not only exist connotations students ascribe to music, but social messages in the lyrics and the ideologies of the performers which influences student behaviour in the classroom.

For example, Jesslyn had stated, in her personal interview with me, that she

listens to Salt-N-Pepa, a female rock group notorious for objectifying men. (The Calgary Herald, May 12, 1994, D8) In the excerpt above, she appears to be very comfortable initiating the sexual discussion with the boys. The boys respond in a rude, jesting manner, attempting to demonstrate bravado and male dominance. The pressure on girls to subscribe to "emphasized femininity" seems to be happening at an earlier age but here the emphasized femineity takes on another twist as the female becomes the aggressor. In this instance, however, the boys countered with the hegemonic masculine posturing required of ten year old boys to reaffirm their power over the situation. Jesslyn's attempt as the sexual aggressor is laughed off by the boys. One may ask if this, contrary to Eyre's findings, is an instance of "hegemonic femininity" and "emphasized masculinity"? Power roles were reversed in this moment as the girl became the aggressor. What was alarming was that power posturing existed at all.

Whoever is the sexual object is unimportant. The death of childhood and innocence stood before me in these excerpts and I thought, "So, you want to teach them to sing?" These are the social under-currents that will determine their willingness to sing esoteric Baroque music in the school choir. The dropping away of the significance of singing occurred in the face of something much larger -- a force to be reckoned with - peer pressure.

These children in the grade five class had come a long way from the uniformity of the grade one class. The differences in the children according to gender were more apparent in the grade five class. Girls in their first year of school were spunky, confident and emotive in their singing. The grade five girls were cooperative and

subdued in their singing. They tended to hide if they were unsure of themselves whereas the grade one girls didn't seem too concerned with making mistakes.

The grade one boys were cooperative, so cooperative that there seemed to be a homogeneity to the class. If there was cooperation among the grade five boys they did it in a hidden manner. Grade one boys were involved in singing. They sang with emotion and feeling. The grade five boys were divided, some participated and some did everything they could to subvert singing as a class activity. However there was a noticeable increase in participation in both grades when the class sang songs that, in some way, related to the boys' experiences outside of the school environment. In grade one it took the form of sports, in grade five it was music that resembled the pop idiom. The girls, on the other hand, were consistent in their participation, no matter what the teacher presented to them.

The grade one girls were quite dextrous in motor skills and overt in demonstrating their abilities in rhythm games. Grade five girls were ahead of what is expected of the class in coordinating singing and rhythmic hand movements. They sought to demonstrate their expertise with each other rather than to the whole class.

The grade one boys had difficulty with coordinating singing and hand movement. Things really did not improve by the fifth grade. Many boys in grade five gave up completely when they were asked to sight sing and use hand signs. They indicated that they needed help with note reading as well. The few boys that did read well were quick to point out any error made by the teacher. These boys exhibited extraordinary confidence.

The grade one girls had no hesitation taking control of the situation, as demonstrated by Crystal when she plays teacher and assumes power when the teacher is busy with another problem. The grade five girls were quiet and subdued never assuming postures of power. They were, as a whole, "grey", never noticed or focused upon. They never corrected the teacher even when their demonstrated music skills would suggest they were well aware of the mistakes the teacher made. The grade five girls spent far more time in quiet observations than their grade one counterparts.

This repression of the grade five girls showed up in the interviews as well. The grade one girls were talkative. It was difficult to keep the interview in any prearranged format. They had much to say. On the other hand, the interviews with the grade five girls, especially Tania, were difficult because the older girls simply did not care to say much. By the time they reached grade five, the voices of these girls appeared to be lost.

In both the grade one and the grade five class there were recorded instances where the girls chose polite ways of addressing the teacher and lost power doing so where as the boys struggled and won power. Girls in the grade five classroom had a much greater chance of being used by the boys to demonstrate their (the boys) dominance.

In the grade one class there were no instances where the boys attempted to assume power but there were instances when they were given power by the teacher. There seemed to be different rules for the boys than for the girls. In the grade five class there was a nucleus of boys who constantly attempted to disempower the teacher. This took two forms: loud disruptive behaviour and participating but not following the rules of

order.

The grade five classroom was a much less safer environment for girls than the grade one classroom. Girls in grade one were just as capable and confident to bounce around the boys and vice versa. Grade five girls did not hit back. They hoped that the teacher would intervene on their behalf. The grade five boys were more apt to hit their peers than were the grade one boys. If the a grade five boy struck another boy he could count receiving a blow in return. I noticed the older boys used the singing games as an opportunity to strike harder and be more physical. In the grade one class a boy could just as easily be hit by a girl as by another boy.

The grade one girls seemed to enjoy a less violent atmosphere and apparently felt safe in expressing their emotions when they sing. By comparison the grade five girls were emotionally subdued and were beginning to encounter or instigate sexual banter. The grade one boys were more apt to display their emotions while singing than the grade five boys. "Quiet and cooperative" was quite acceptable in the grade one classroom and only a tinge of subversion would surface from time to time. The grade five boys (even the cooperative ones), on the other hand, were quite uncomfortable discussing feelings and tended to actively subvert these discussions. On sexual matters the grade one boys were less overt compared with the grade five boys. The grade one boys, sat with girls and helped them. Grade five boys had a greater awareness of their own sexuality, and set themselves apart from the girls.

The music specialist spoke about her attempts to address gender disparity:

Because they're doing things in the classroom. Everyday things. Little things -- like this is a male task and or, for me, an example, moving

risers and only picking boys. I mean, you really feel you treat everyone equally or you don't. When it became apparent to me, my first year here, boys would say, "That's not fair. You always give us detention and not the girls." And I started getting comments from the boys about what their feelings were about -- prejudiced between girls and boys. I had no idea that they felt that way. Most times, boys were getting D.T.s but they were the ones fooling around. It was quite funny but it made me very aware of this boy girl thing in the classroom. And I started to really try to be fair, in tasks I was asking them to do, more so. And in my expectations for them, so I was not seeing -- I guess I can't say that. No. I look for a lot of times, a lot less from a boy doing some activities than I do so from a girl because I know what their limitations are.

If this overt masculine dominance pervades a grade five classroom in a culture where singing is viewed as feminine, then the activity of singing would be difficult to promote. This indicates that music classrooms go the masculine way that Gilligan (1982), Chodorow and Baker, Miller (1976) suggest, and do not accommodate either a feminine way of learning, or a feminine way of being.

Singing and Peer Pressure

The overt masculine dominance between the grade one class and the grade five class would suggest that peer pressure is a very large force to be dealt with if boys are to subscribe to singing. When children come together in a large urban school, such as this, parents are unaware of what their child may encounter in their school day. For example, the sexual banter of the grade five class is one such incident that parents may never hear about. I managed to observe this incident because of my research. I was closely observing these particular students. The specialist was too busy with other students to notice it, and I doubt that the students would have volunteered the context of this incident to their parents. In a classroom in a large urban area school, parents find it difficult, if not impossible, to know who their children go to school with everyday let

alone know much about the values other parents in the school community hold. This permits peer pressure to be stronger in urban than rural areas. (Holmes and Silverman, 1992). In a small rural community things are quite different. A parent knows the children of the school and most often their parents as well. I grew up in a small rural community and well remember the pressure my parents placed on me if I was seen with the wrong crowd. There was an unspoken rule within my small community. That one should not bring disgrace on one's family was certainly one of them. I also felt as though, within my community, I had many parents to guide me -- the teachers, the church community, my parents' friends -- all took a collective interest in the youth of the community.

Peer pressure became the topic when the Ms. George and the principal discussed why boys do not subscribe to singing, most noticeably the school choir.

Teacher: Peer pressure. That's what I think, number one factor. I have boys in grade six come only once or twice and then drop out because they're getting flack from the rest of the kids.

Interviewer: But where? Would it occur in their classroom, or where?

Teacher: Outside.

This indicates that the boys' desire to belong to a social groups far out weighs the importance of belonging to a musical group.

Principal: More of the younger boys participate. By the time they get to grade six, there's a much smaller number of boys participating in music.

... I think it's peer pressure. If there were some children in grade six that were really keen to be in choir then I think a number of them would be, but if there's only one or two then they immediately drop out.

Interviewer: Do you think this affects the girls as well as the boys?

Principal: Sometimes it does. It doesn't always but it depends on the strength of the children that are seen by the peers as leaders.

Interviewer: When is that pressure exerted, do you think, like with a peer?

Principal: Mainly grade six -- oh, in the playground. You see the only factor that would override that would be a very strong inclination, or a very strong understanding on the part of the parents. And if the parents have very high expectations for their children in music, then those children would probably go into it and not be swayed by what their peers think. But for the most part, the peer pressure is a very strong element.

The influence of the parents versus the influence of peers becomes a major factor in the participation in choir. As children mature from grade one to grade five, the influence of the parents declines. In the grade one interviews the pop culture of Disney seemed to be a common denominator amongst the children. I would suggest that Disney has been a part of parenting for many years.

The mature children in this study were moving away from their parents' sphere of influence. In our society it is deemed as deliberate and necessary that children do this as a part of growing up. The "empty nest " is almost a right parents can look forward to as their children leave home. Thus movement away from the parents' sphere of influence can be, in many cases, precipitated by the parents. As children move away from this sphere they begin to make more decisions. The Grade Five students interests were in diverse rock groups; these interests were usually shared by their friends.

Contrasting images come to mind -- Crystal (grade one) listening to "Cinderella" with her mother as they bake cookies, Jesslyn (grade five) listening to Salt 'n Pepa; Russell sharing in his mother's enjoyment of "The Cattle Call", Josh (grade five) listening to hard rock in his room. These were real examples of children moving further and further

from their families' sphere of influence. As the principal indicated peer pressure is a very powerful force:

Interviewer: Is there anything you think a teacher can do to mitigate this?

Principal: No, I can't think of anything ... because there are children who have enormous leadership qualities and other children just follow them. And at that particular age it just seems the thing to do.

Teacher: We have two really negative boys, and negative only when they are getting attention for that negativeness. When everyone's working, then they work too. I have to give them the eye, though, to get them to work, so they're not really happy. They're not comfortable singing.

I find I spend about 99% of my time, I feel its 99% and I shouldn't say that but I guess I did, a lot of my choir time is spent disciplining the boys in class, in the choir.

If the leaders amongst the boys are negative towards singing then it would be difficult, if not impossible, to change this. How does a music specialist go about creating a community where singing is an acceptable activity for boys?

Attempts at Creating a Male Singing Environment

Teacher: I find their tone (boys) is different in tone quality. And, uh, I have some really fabulous singing girls. Um, and they (girls) are probably the ones I can depend on, that they are always there, the ones who have practised their whole parts, but the boys add a different flavour to the choir, in quality and tone.

There was, for a time and possibly still is, a belief that boys' voices sounded different, if not better, than girls' voices. This is one of those myths that I, at one time, subscribed to as well. However I have since learned that it a training technique that can create the white tone of the cathedral boys' choir sound with any group of girls. The question is how did this myth of "better" sound begin and what are the implications of

this history on the perceptions of choral music in Canada ?

The roots of this myth that the boys sound is better could be found in the historical banning of female singers from some religious ceremonies as still witnessed in the Anglican Cathedrals today. Aelwyn Pugh suggests the best singers in Italy in the seventeenth century came from the Italian convents. The change to male domination in the church ceremonies can be traced to the history of the Church of England insisting that only trained choirs perform at all worship services. This practice excluded women from the participation in the liturgy. (Robinson & Winold, 1976) Women were encouraged to stay at home and create an environment for their families. (Pugh, 1991) At the same time they were discouraged from singing publicly and thus did not have the opportunity to seek training in singing. Thus, one may ask, is it tone quality or access to training which made the boys of a choir school more acceptable than female singers?

As I noted previously, the cathedral choral sound from England permeated the choral sound of colonial Canada. As I observed this specialist, I was aware that many of the techniques that she used showed this same subscription to the light head tone sound mentioned in Green and Vogan (1991).

When we teach children how to sing, we want to do it passionately and involve their hearts and minds. We appear to be working very hard on the "minds" of the children, but we appear to do little for their "hearts". High cultural standards and their proponents seek to silence this by relegating folk music to the trite, emotion filled and worthless category of music. High cultural standards suggest that the music have intellectual worth, be objectified. To engage in music simply because it makes one feel

better is not a valued activity. Although there are changes afoot, elitism is still present in musical circles in Canada. This surfaced in an encounter I had with the Canadian Music Centre. I had heard a beautiful composition "The Mennonite Concerto" on CBC radio and sought to find a recording of it at the Centre. I was angered and appalled to hear the concerto (based on Mennonite hymn tunes) referred to, negatively, as the "Mennonite Menopause." And yet it was this recording which permitted me to "cross cultures" (as Diamond and Winter suggest happens in Canada) and participate spontaneously with some Mennonite friends in the singing of their hymns. When I think of this incident, Ortner's female to nature as male to culture, Bantock's high culture and elitism, and Tellstrom's talented and giftedness of the Western music culture comes reeling into my mind. This person at the Canadian Music Centre would not understand the emotion of spontaneous song.

If folk music, expressed most often through singing, as Fox and Wince (1975) have suggested, is most strongly associated with gender, (that is women more than men), then what is it in the nature of singing that boys would find difficult to subscribe to? This can be explored in this passage of the interview with the specialist:

Teacher: I have some really fabulous singing girls. Um, and they (girls) are probably the ones I can depend on, that they are always there, the ones who have practised their whole parts, but the boys add a different flavour to the choir, in quality and tone ... And actually, I'd get a lot of flack from the girls but it's really to make the boys stand up and say 'I can sing too'.

This focus on the boys can be interpreted two ways. First, the teacher has identified a need for the boys to be able to stand up and say "I can sing too." Is there an emotional bravado that boys seek to maintain and thus are afraid to enter into situations

that will threaten this? Is this the Cartesian separation of intellect and emotion come to us via the British choral tradition?

I can recall many instances of emotional responses to singing in my choirs, but none involve boys. I remember one instance when a child, a grade six girl, actually responded to the experience of singing three part harmony for the first time. The response was a welling of tears in her eyes as the harmony of a triad swirled around her. This is where the silence of the boys is deafening.

The second interpretation of this passage is, what Shakeshaft describes, as that which happens too frequently in education and that is putting the female children on hold while waiting for the male children to catch up. We, as music teachers, devote much of our time and energies to enticing and cajoling the boys into participating, while the girls are ignored or made to feel inferior. As I revisited this passage, I was angry when I recalled that even in my own most recent teaching, I fell victim to this practice.

Is there a deeper question here, one of societal values negating the feminine? Why do we think our choirs are incomplete unless they have male singers?

... What I am planning for next year is a boys' choir to meet once a week. And a girls' choir to meet once a week. Then putting them together on the third practice ... I have a lot of grade five singers, boy singers, that are fabulous ... I'd love to see a whole group of grade six boys modelling for younger kids "its okay to sing." And showing them their pride in what they've done.

The setting up of a boys' choir is an attempt to create a culture that will make singing more palatable for boys, thus create a desire for boys to sing. This is reminiscent of two situations I created in elementary schools in the past. In both cases the boys and girls had one rehearsal separately and then had a combined rehearsal. The

action met with great success in getting boys to sing. The first experience in gender separate choirs was in an affluent area where the parents strongly subscribed to the arts.

Recently I met a former male member of this choir. Now a practising lawyer, he was very animated as he described how wonderful that boys' choir had been. He expressed sadness that he never sang again after he left elementary school. He used two descriptors as he described the boys' choir situation. First, "it was cool" for boys to sing at this school and second he enjoyed the "camaraderie" of the boys' choir. He never did find these two ingredients again. This is indicative that this choir created a culture of acceptance. If there was peer pressure, it was that you had to belong to the choir.

The second experience of gender specific choirs was in the North East where there was, at the time I taught there, middle class with an influx of an East Indian and East Asian immigrant population. In this instance I had the assistance of a male vice-principal, especially where the boys were concerned. His assistance was, in retrospect, bordering on mystical. All he would do is sit in on the rehearsals. He simply gave his presence, as if to say that rehearsals were a place for males to be.

Interviewer: Do you think you will be able to do different repertoire with the two groups (male/female)?

Teacher: I don't want to leave -- to have a closed mind about it so I guess I'm going to start with quite equal repertoire and see where I go.

My predictions -- I would like to tell you that probably the girls are going to handle more, quicker, because of the ease of handling the group. I would think probably we'll get through a lot more and more two-part. But I do have some really strong boys that can handle two-part. And if they're (the boys) cooperative, then I say yes. If we get work done, productive work in that choir (the boys' choir) ... it's a matter of on task behaviour.

The excerpt is interesting because of the suggestion that it is not the singing

abilities that will impede the equal development of the choirs but rather the behaviour. The girls get on with the task and understand large group dynamics. This is evident not only in the choral situation but in the music classroom as well. The theme of boys acting out when they're uncomfortable in an activity is a common occurrence.

Some experiences with these gender specific groups look very different when seen now through the template of gender bias. Now, as I reflect on the concept of a boys' choir within the school, I recall the alarming repression of females that happened because of this action. First I remember the recognition that was given, not only to the boys choir but the full choir as well, because of the male representation. Second, I recall the number of places the boys were invited to sing compared with the girls even though the girls' choir and the mixed choir, musically, were more accomplished. The boys' choir concept in schools was such a novelty. This is reminiscent of a quote from the conductor Antonia Brico: "A woman must be five times better than a male if she is to succeed." (Pugh, 1991, p. 22)

Of the studies that have found gender differences in the ability of children to sing in tune, Gould's (1968) should be revisited. He observes that although equal numbers of girls and boys have difficulty in singing accurately in the first two grades, by the time the children reach the third grade, the boys encountering difficulty outnumber the girls 12:1. Do they really become worse or do they simply give up trying? I strongly suggest that they not only give up trying but they try to subvert the activity of singing completely.

However I have had a successful choir where the boys and the girls subscribed

equally without the necessity of setting up a special boys' group. This was in a small school where I taught Language Arts to the division two children as well as music to the whole school. I believe it was the rapport and trust I established through the Language Arts program that lead to the subscription in music on the part of the boys. Put simply, I knew them and they knew me and we did wonderful things together.

Last year, as a music specialist, I met with disaster when I attempted to set up a boys' choir. Peer pressure was very strong and it was "not cool" for boys to sing. Another factor was that there were too many extra curricular activities, activities that changed every month. These activities touched the surface of many topics. The children would subscribe to one activity only to give it up in a few weeks when the novelty wore off. The children had so many choices with new activities being added through the year, that to subscribe to choir, for a full year was too much of a commitment for them.

Perhaps this does relate back to the quotes I used previously. First Taylor's (1991) Malaise of Modernity when he expresses concern about the lack of commitment from the youth of today; second, Maxine Greene's (1986) quote "no population has ever been so deliberately entertained, amused and soothed into avoidance, denial and neglect." The extra-curricular activities became noon hour entertainment. When I juxtapose this experience on previous experience I, as a specialist, did not have the time to develop rapport and trust to entice the students into the choir room. As a classroom teacher I may have had a better chance. There would have been depth to the teacher/student relationship, perhaps more respect for me as a 'real' teacher resulting in some commitment.

CHAPTER FOUR

Singing and the Alberta Music Curriculum Guide 1989

Their concern for ensuring the highest standards of music literacy and performance in their students falls like a lead balloon on the minds of children who see rock stars with a modicum of musical training doing simple things in a seductively simple way." (Walker, 1992, p. 7)

The scope and sequence charts of the Alberta Curriculum Guide for Elementary Music (1989) are heavily influenced by the music literacy program developed by Kodaly and subsequently adapted for American and Canadian Schools by Lois Choksy. There are many aspects of this program and its relevance for children, in an ethnically diverse Canadian culture, that can be questioned. First, it is difficult to name a Canadian folk song that is common from the Atlantic provinces through to the Pacific Ocean. (See Diamond and Witmer, 1993) Second, the program is locked into a sequence of intervals, rhythms and songs that mean little to children raised in a pop culture. Third, having observed the Kodaly programs in Calgary schools, I have yet to see any get to the expressive improvisational stage as the program does in Hungary. Too often composition by children in these programs is limited to the pentatonic and set rhythmic patterns. These are just a few factors that make the music specialists' task of enticing the children into this curriculum very difficult. I have affinity for the singing aspects of this program because it does place importance on singing. However many of these singing programs never get further than pentatonic drill. It reminds me of a language program based only on exercises in traditional grammar -- structuralist all the way.

In its country of origin, Hungary, the Kodaly method has come under criticism. Szemere, an Hungarian music educator quoted in Hargreaves, claims that the rigorous

training of formal skills, particularly in the early years, goes against the idea of intuitive musical understanding. As well Szmere suggests,

The formal aspects of the method have been unduly predominant in recent years, resulting in a somewhat elitist music pedagogy in Hungarian schools. She argues that this is quite a variance with the original aims of the method; the creative spirit and the richness of traditional folk singing which was a vital part of Kodaly's original conception, unfortunately seems to have got lost along the way. (Hargreaves, 1986, p. 222)

As I said at the beginning of the discussion of the research observations, to see ones' practice while viewing another is a profound experience. How often was I, like this music specialist, standing on one side of the street with music of highest artistic value beckoning to the children with their musical experiences of the pop-culture on the other side. "An underlying metaphor for teaching suggests that, in order to come to school and learn new things, students need to cross barriers (for example, a street) to get over to the teacher's side (the school). But a teacher who is closed to the child's experience may not be aware that the student is still trying to understand things "from the other side of the street." Many teachers simply expect the students to come over to where the teacher stands." (van Manen, 1991, p. 155) van Manen uses this metaphor to emphasize the need for teachers to reach across to students' realities to entice them into the curriculum. It is not enough to say to the students this music curriculum is good for you. Leave all that you know in your world of pop music. Establishing a place where children can cross over may require a teacher to live in the pop culture before the students can be lead into the realm of what has been deemed music with artistic value.

I vividly remember teaching into two neighbouring communities; the boundaries were divided only by a roadway. Thinking the communities were similar, I sought to

use the same choral repertoire in both schools. I soon realized that the communities were not only separated by a roadway but by experience and values as well. Whereas in one community the children had had exposure to choral techniques and classical repertoire, the other had not. Thus when I proceeded to use a composition by Bach with both communities I met with positive subscription in only one. I went back to the choral files and selected a piece of music from the pop idiom for the children in the community with less exposure to the classical repertoire. As their interest in choral singing grew so did their willingness to sing whatever music was presented to them. That was my practice in 1974 guided by instinct and not the mandates of the curriculum. Twenty years later and I sensed this distance between student's lives as lived and the music curriculum in the classroom observations.

Perhaps we are, in music education, still seeking what Clifford and Friesen (1993) describe as "a curriculum that acknowledges the importance of the lived experience of children and teachers; that understands growth as more than an interior, private individual matter of unfolding development; that situates teaching and learning within the context of an educative community." (p. 341)

One of the proponents of a music curriculum that would radically change how music is taught in our schools is British Educator Keith Swanwick. Swanwick (1988) identifies "three central pillars" of music education as: "concern for musical traditions; sensitivity to (individual) students; and awareness of social context and community." (p. 19)

With the first pillar he sees the Kodaly tradition as a method of focusing on the

musical traditions. Swanwick does identify problems with this approach in that it first," sits uncomfortably in compulsory education where there is great cultural diversity." (p. 12) Of band programs he suggests that in learning to play an instrument students often become "bogged down in a morass of notation or manipulative difficulties and (students) either give up altogether or carry on playing in a mechanical and uncommitted way." (p. 13) Could the same be said of singing with sol-feg hand signals? Swanwick's second pillar has the focus on the student as enjoyer, discoverer, explorer. The teacher facilitates student exploration of the expressive elements of sound through composition. The third pillar acknowledges that the students come from "an electronic folk culture, orally transmitted and aurally received, woven into the fabric of our everyday lives." (p. 15)

Walker (1987), a Canadian music educator, argues against the musical traditions of Swanwick's first pillar. He sees this gap between the curriculum as taught and curriculum as lived persisting in music because "There seems to be an assumption on the part of researchers that the diatonic scale and metrical patterns constitute a kind of *Lingua Franca* of music." (p. 168) This assumption makes music literacy the goal of Kodaly disciples because it is this literacy that connects us to music of highest artistic value. Hargreaves (1986) defines high culture as "that which is legitimated by the dominant culture group or elite and to which critical standards are applied which are independent of the characteristics of the consumer. Folk culture is that which traditionally exists in non-industrial societies; mass culture or popular culture is that which is specifically manufactured for the industrial mass market." (p. 45) The fact

remains that we are attempting to impose upon children a system that "has become inhuman, lacking humus, lacking any sense of direct presence in or relevance to our lives as lived." (Jardine, 1990, p. 181) Jardine speaks of mathematics in this manner and I would suggest that the same could be said of music. It would do music educators well to become apprised of educational thought and theory outside their own discipline. Perhaps this would lead out of this diatonic scale circle and into a more enlightened curriculum of organised sound.

Hamblen (1990) criticizes advocates of cultural literacy as presenting only one pre-selected aesthetic and giving it preferred status. The "great books", "great works" and "great ideas" primarily emanated from dead European white male culture which is a cash culture maintained by the educated elite. The "cash culture" is a culture maintained by those who can pay for the concerts, the million dollar paintings. The educated elite will set aside money for these purchases and soon status, not aesthetic appreciation, becomes the reason for attendance at certain functions and/or the purchase of art objects. Thus Hamblen maintains that this cash culture is distributed by class lines. Elitism permeated our education system because of its efficiency, predictability, and standardization. The cash culture ignores "folk, domestic, hiddenstream, popular, and multi-cultural aesthetics to mention a few." (p. 223) This ties in directly with Szemere's criticism of the direction the Kodaly methodology has taken in Hungary.

As for the Alberta curriculum, is the scope and sequence chart, following the Kodaly method, an attempt to justify music's place in the mass education system of Alberta? Music education for the masses must address the fact that it is mass instruction

and that it should have some relevance to the culture as students experience in their life world, especially where singing is involved.

Recently I came across an article that suggests that technology is beginning to address some of my concerns about music education and its focus on the Western notational system. By the end of 1994 or mid-1995 there will be a CD ROM with instant access to most of the musical cultures of the world. "The whole world sings and dances in the Global Jukebox, but in its own cultural context ... so you can evaluate the importance of all these grand human traditions -- there are 5,000 to 6,000 of them in the whole world. "(Calgary Herald, Sunday, July 24, 1994, B10) There are also interactive performances where by the audience and actors will collaborate in the performance of the play.

These ideas are taking hold and it would appear that the Western notational system is, perhaps, not as essential as was once thought. Hidden in the above excerpt is the statement "so you can evaluate the importance of all these grand human traditions" -- an interesting statement considering the article was titled "High technology: the boon or bane of the arts"? It is too bad that the technologists got the jump on audience participation. Technology lacks the human voice. But perhaps it is deserving for the elitist who made the art of music so inaccessible to the masses. It will force the elitist into closer scrutiny of the forces which drove the practice in music education. However as I watched two boys on a somewhat down-scaled version of this type of CD ROM whereby you could call up most of the instruments of the world, I could see that music education has to enter the twentieth century -- it's almost over you know.

Anyon (1982) states that the critical theorist "will go beyond appearances and beyond dominant ideologies, and will attempt to identify and challenge underlying causes. Because these causes are seen to be fundamental, the critical theory is seen as leading to transformative changes." (p. 36) We, in music education, are still locked into the empirical/analytical paradigm that gave music its place with other academic subjects. "The practical orientation sees curriculum as evolving from the educational situation rather than being predesigned and subsequently delivered to those situations." (Schubert, 1986, p. 314). For it is into the classroom where music is carried by all concerned, the student, the teacher, that the curriculum begins. Human beings actively create knowledge and look for assumptions and meanings beneath the texture of life. "This is the sense in which hermeneutics (the interpretation of texts) is interpreted metaphorically as a continuous "rewriting" of one's own sense of direction while one 'reads' the consequences of action and assesses the contribution one makes." (Schubert, 1986, p. 315) Music educators would do well to examine this approach more closely. If one could take hermeneutics and place it in conversation with the critical praxis perspective with its call for emancipatory education, transcending the constraints of socio-economics, exposing the oppressive and the dominant, sensitive to false consciousness then we may truly begin to see changes in music education. (Schubert, 1986)

Music is, at the very least, "an analogue of culture, we cannot avoid teaching music as a product of particularly cultural ways of thinking" (Walker, 1990, p. 7) It can also be used to change particular ways of thinking in a culture. As I look to the future

I see the global culture of music with musical idioms outside of the ones we are still pursuing. The "Eurocentric bias" is one that will, as Walker (1990) suggests, ghettoize Arts education. Perhaps it already has.

CHAPTER FIVE

When All is Said and Done

Instead, we should make use of our security, our seniority, to take risks, to make noise, to be courageous, to become unpopular. (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 131)

I realize that I have four and a half years of teaching left before I can make a decision for a career change and leave the classroom and make room for some young aspiring teacher. Thus many of us leave the profession just at an age when we are truly in our prime because we can take risks and be courageous to speak out on what experience has taught us. We no longer have to be concerned with career patterns, we are where we want to be. I chose to be a hybrid in music and I now find myself somewhat of a stranger amongst my own friends and peers who can not understand what has become of this high performer in music. The singing I was and continue to be so passionate about and pursued as a high performer came from my childhood experiences; singing was an integral part of a shared life in my small community. As well, I recognise that the uniqueness of that experience is no longer available -- a fact of time and space. I now ask: what type of musical experience is available in the lives of students in 1995?

Diamond and Witmer (1993), in the preface to a chapter "Identities: Boundaries of Region, Class, Gender, and Ethnocultural Community" suggest, first, that in shared social identities for children or young adults, "age is an extremely important means of defining one's community of associates and the musical tastes or activities they share." (p. 303) Second, "the ever changing communities of age and the constantly renegotiated

definitions of gender remind us that social identity is not static and fixed but dynamic." (p. 305) Diamond and Winter go further to state that Canadian culture may be less defined by boundaries than by ways of "crossing the boundaries" of communities. They infer that Canada has a myriad of dynamic, powerful subcultural groupings and, that to attempt to glimpse a subculture, let alone define it, would be impossible.

Qureshi emphasizes that one can find musical repertoire of ethnic Canadians but it is difficult to find any music that is uniquely Canadian. "It is in this same sense that I see for ourselves the need for a shift in focus from the music to the relationship between those creating it, i.e., the people who make (compose and perform) the music, the people who listen to the music, and those who control its production." (Diamond and Witmer, 1993, p. 344)

This implies that music educators strike a balance between the product and the participants and the relationships they have with each other. Diamond (1993) implies that "music as object" is still biased towards print sources rather than recordings. An example is the Grass Dance of the Sarcee Nation written with time signatures and key signatures published recently in a Canadian music series. In attempting to teach it to a group of students, I found it difficult to read let alone communicate the different vocal sounds to the students. Why did it have to be notated to be acceptable for study in our schools? Could it not have been taped by the Sarcee Nation and presented in multi-media format to the students? Diamond asks: "To what extent is this bias an extension of the stereotypically academic mistrust of the potential commercial success of cassettes and other recorded media? To what extent does it cloud the understanding of the transmission

process, mass mediation, and urbanization?" (p. 51)

Popular music is transcultural and it becomes imbedded in the lives of the students at a much younger age. When children enter the classroom, Music educators cannot address students as though they have come from a musical vacuum. Walker (1992) implies that the immersion students have in the popular culture sets music apart from other subject areas. He uses mathematics as an example to make his point: "Who, after all, can argue with a simultaneous equation or a theorem as offending cultural beliefs? To deny the popular music is to deny that which youth can fall back on as something above culture, something apart from their daily problems, something which is there just for them". (Walker, 1992 p. 5)

Another change must come in the way we evaluate school music programs. There is a tendency to evaluate music programs and their teachers on performance rather than the engagement of the students in the elements of music. Performance was still on my mind when these words "*We judged the teacher by the Christmas Concert*" leapt out at me as I was perusing a book of Allan Shostak's (1991) art. (p. 168) These were the title words of a page depicting the Shostak painting of a one-roomed school house, brightly lit on a snowy evening, with people making their way to the school. I smiled as I read these words. I was right. Performances have been, and still are, evaluative situations. The reason these words impacted me was because just a few days before our own school had performed a concert. It had been a collaborative effort rather than the music specialist's show. This year, after a four year break from concert preparation, I decided that I was not going to carry the full responsibility of the concert on my shoulders. I

precipitated an alternative. Thus our "Wish for Peace on Earth" was a shared responsibility, a joint venture of six teachers rather than a specialist's solo act. Subsequently, it was six teachers, instead of one, who were judged by the concert. As a group we were aware that political correctness is also a part of the evaluation in 1994. If we addressed Christmas too much we could have been criticized by the other religions; if we included environmental themes and add a dimension of gender correctness, we could have been accused of New Age Religion. There was a collective sigh of relief when we heard that many parents thought it was the most universal, free-of-gender-bias presentation they had heard to date.

As well, after the concert there were some interesting statements from my collaborators that remained with me. One teacher expressed the satisfaction she had in the planning and active involvement in the performance itself. Another teacher in passing, said, "Well, we (the community of learners) are done with you (the music specialist), for now. We're ready to give you over to the other students and teachers in the school for the spring performance." Perhaps this statement hints that the definition of a "music specialist" should be one who has specialized knowledge in music and uses this knowledge to assist teachers in the production such as the school concert.

So powerful has been the thrust of performance in schools that Bennett Reimer (1987) suggested performance as a curricular program. Although David Elliott would argue the point, Reimer's setting out the various phases of performance in educationally acceptable terms such as problem solving, expressive synthesizing, does bear some resemblance to Elliott's notion of thinking in action and other educational ideals he set

out in the importance of singing. Although we may seek out esoteric words to make our practice appear educationally beneficial, reality is, often encapsulated in Shostak's simple phrase *"We judged the teacher by the Christmas Concert."*

I would suggest that any educational benefits are soon lost when teacher evaluation is connected to the performance. It has many specialists so focused on the product that the gifted and talented students continue to perform leaving the majority of students behind. In defence of the specialist, if one is to receive major evaluation on their students performances then, rest assured, the specialist will select the students who perform the best. As Walker (1987) noted ... in the Western music culture "giftedness" of a few musicians is touted over social acceptability and participation of the masses in music as an everyday occurrence. It is time that ... a new non-elitist humanism" be considered.

Any pedagogical intention needs to respect the child for what he or she is and what he or she can become. Pedagogical intent is aimed at strengthening as much as possible any positive intentions and qualities of the child. (van Manen, 1991, p. 17)

Of course, it is possible for the teacher to violate the pedagogical intent of the teaching-student relation, as in the case of a physical education teacher who begins to care more about a winning sports team than about the physical well-being and development of the young people the teacher coaches on the team. (van Manen, 1991, p. 21)

When I first read the above passages, I wrote in the margin "How the school concert got a bad name"! External evaluation has played its part. Prior to performances music specialists must step back and remind themselves, and the audience as well, that these are children with musical knowledge and a performance level unique to their age. Musical growth is to be noted. We do not expect elementary students to write at an adult

literary level. Similarly, if we always use the standards of high culture to judge student performances then we will continue to disenfranchise our students. Again the words of Libby Larsen come to mind ... "those, (the music specialists) who by succumbing to intellectual egotism and ambition, become aliens in a society they wish to enrich." For the music specialists it will mean giving up total control of performances, sharing the responsibilities with the classroom teachers who, may or may not welcome the responsibility and involvement. However the classroom teachers' knowledge of the children is an invaluable asset in the preparation of a performance. Classroom teachers know the strengths of the children and this permits the students more ownership in this decision making. One of the major differences I noticed in my collaborative effort was the unspoken understanding between the classroom teachers and their students, an understanding that develops between teachers and students who spend a lot of time together. As the specialist, I was the outsider.

My concern is that specialists may not give up these performances easily. For many specialists public performance is synonymous with music. And, with some, performance is a need bordering on addiction. There can be a lot of self worth tied into the applause of the audience or the winning of a festival class.

It is the teacher who sets the stage for the ritual. The teacher is the one who cultivates aesthetic attitudes through appropriate social behaviour, not the one who questions the potential violence behind the spectators' applause, that applause which can encourage, even demands, the musician's addiction to ever more perfect performance." (Lamb, 1994, p. 11)

This whole concept of star performers amongst children is paralleled by star performers amongst teachers as well. It plays an important role in how easily music

specialists will give up total control of performances and share the podium with others - teachers and students. The competitive, combative situations we set up for the children permeates the teaching force. The fact that promotions, in the school system I worked for, were, for many years, given to high achievers at the music festival speaks for itself. Even as I speak I know that my credibility with other specialists was established in this competitive milieu, the music festival.

The latest "teaching in excellence awards" are reminiscent of the music festival milieu. Recently I observed a gathering honouring two teachers who had achieved these awards. The back-biting and accusations whispered by their colleagues was not only unprofessional but damaging to staff morale. Competition works contrary to much of what we are trying to establish in a safe learning environment. Excellence should be an intrinsic part of teaching and the knowledge of one's achievement should come from within. If it does not and one is always seeking external validation, it can be as addictive as the need to perform for audience response. As well, competition can lead to coveting rather than collegiality amongst professionals.

For many years, because of the high profile of my teaching, I endured all the irrational jealousies of fellow staff members as well of system music teachers. I have a gift for teaching children how to find their singing voices, and most of the children in my classes simply learned how to sing. Thus the choirs, in the schools where I taught, had many children who could sing well. The petty jealousies amongst "professionals" led to accusations that I was auditioning children for the school choirs. Poor singers were encouraged to sing and taught how to sing. If children were behaviour problems

in large groups they were asked to leave because of this and not because of singing ability. I can think of a specific instance of a teacher who decided that my teaching practice was different. She came, she observed and now she, too, is successful at helping children find their singing voices

I have come to realize that performance is an overriding factor of the music curriculum, school organization for music teaching, and teaching practice in the music classroom. Much of the music reading in the curriculum is initiated in an attempt to achieve better performances more expeditiously. This creates a "catch 22" situation whereby the Western notational system is maintained in the material used for performance and the music specialist becomes a necessity because of the specialist's ability to read the Western notational system. The only way one can become literate in this symbol system is through the private studio route. The private studio focus is limited to performance in this notational system, and so the cycle goes on and on. It would appear that it becomes a question and a way of class (upper and lower) maintenance as access to private music lessons requires money.

The subscription to performance also raises questions of the perpetuation of a particular music iconography and its presentation of mainly male composers. There is a whole other voice expressed in this symbol system that is never heard -- the female composer. They simply do not exist in our music texts and resource material. Personally I have tremendous affinity for female authors. I have to explore if I have an affinity for female composers. Last year I displayed the biographies of several female composers, but I seemed to lack any recordings of their music. The lack of resources

appears to discourage this pursuit.

Again, appearances can be deceiving. Is it a lack of resource or is it again being a part of the elite crowd that has put blinders on me? For instance, do I know what music Loreena Mckennett has written? I did notice that there is now a CD of Hildegard von Bingen's music available but Loreena Mckennett's C.D.'s would have been easier to locate. Was I assessing Mckennett's music according to elite standards and therefore deeming it not valuable enough to share with my students?

And, if I am truly to address this issue of lack of female voice in music another issue comes to mind, the issue of time spent with students. This is a problem with the concept of specialist. Issues such as gender cannot and should not be "touched upon" in one hour a week with students you barely know. As a specialist, I have resented my own lack of knowledge and connectedness with a child's life. Had I not had experience with teaching Language Arts, I may never have known the benefits of rapport and trust that can be established with children when a teacher sees children for a longer period of time. As a specialist, I have had so many instances when I erred simply because I did not know the children well enough. Music specialists frequently teach in isolation. When teachers are in the staff room the specialist has numerous extra-curricular commitments; when the teachers are planning, it is the specialist who provides the planning time. Imagine not knowing when a child is hurting, or asking a child to do something that is totally incongruous with their being. In many instances this is the specialist's reality.

I often observe classroom teachers in action with their students. This year a

teacher came into the music room with her students as she set about to learn the ukuleles with the rest of the grade four class. As I watched her work with a very intelligent but stubborn child, I realized how much better she understood that child because she spent more time with him. I wondered if this boy would have been successful on the ukulele had she not been in the classroom.

I am beginning to suspect in some schools there exists a "specialist mentality" amongst the upper grade children. The specialist in the research sensed this when she wondered why their parents never came to talk to her. Students judge which teachers are important by which teachers the parents visit during parent-teacher interviews. Those are usually core subject teachers -- the "real" teachers. There are those who would argue that as a specialist you get to know the children throughout their years in an elementary school. The grade five children in the research had had the same music teacher for four years. It seemed to make little difference in their attitude. My best experience with boys singing, for instance, has been with students that I have been in my Language Arts classes. There is something about the rapport and bonding that happens when you spend time with students, as one would in a classroom, that is conducive to bridging the gap to all sorts of possibilities -- to do wonderful things together.

For this reason the life of the specialist as teacher can be very difficult. Waves of children passing through the music room in half hour intervals is exhausting. Added to the stress is that, frequently, specialists provide non-instructional time for the teachers in the school. There are teachers who are so vitally concerned with assuring they have every minute of this non-instructional time, they send the children early and unsupervised

to the music room. Subsequently, the music specialist is barely finished with, possibly, a grade six class and finds there are thirty-odd grade one students knocking at the door.

Administrators use the specialist as a timetabling convenience of non-instructional time for other teachers. An interesting study would be to compare the number of the music specialists in elementary schools prior to contractual non-instructional time for teachers compared with the number after this clause entered teacher contracts. Under the current budgetary cuts to schools, many music specialist positions will be evaluated. The administrators, who truly believe in music as a necessity in a child's education, will become visible as they try to timetable music instruction for all children. For many children the adult that will truly know them the best is their classroom teacher. Specialist teachers lose sight of the fact of a larger whole of the children's lives as lived in school. This is partly due to "isolation" of their specialist role.

And so the role of the specialist as some resident expert on performance continues with little thought on how to precipitate change. Perhaps the first change should occur with the word "performance." "Shared learning" comes to mind as a viable substitute. As I write this, so many images of performances, other than concerts, come to mind. One of these that remained indelibly etched in my mind featured performances of compositions by grade six students. The whole assembly of over four hundred students sat attentively and listened with respect to these presentations. The pride of the presenters was visible. The works of art had come from them, not written by some unknown and recreated for the audience. However I remember watching the audience and noticing that the children had less difficulty than the adults in accepting these

compositions as music. For adults, what constitutes "music" has to be redefined out of the elitist definition and into a populist definition. More ownership and decision-making on the part of the students would make the process far more palpable to all concerned.

Another direction to make performances more palpable would be the idea of an interactive performance as a part of school concerts in the future. As I watched the Concert of the Three Tenors this summer I noticed how, at the end of the concert they attempted to encourage the audience to sing with them. Many in the audience appeared too dumbfounded to participate. We seem to have become a nation of spectators of the arts. Perhaps if I had paid a thousand dollars for a ticket to hear these tenors then, singing with them may not have been money well spent. As a consumer, was I not entitled to hear the high paid tenors, not the audience, sing? A shared performance has always intrigued me since I first became aware of the "Proms concerts" at Royal Albert Hall. The enthusiasm and the passion that came through on the recordings of this event made me long for the day when I could be in London for this event. Although the elitists may look down their noses at this concept, perhaps it would help to raise the profile of singing if children could observe their parents participating in this act.

One major problem with performance is that once one permits themselves to become a high performer, they find it difficult to shed this image and be recognized simply for good teaching practice. To use a well worn phrase "goodness knows how I have tried"! In the past year I spent a considerable amount of time with children and composition. I was angered when a principal, who saw me as "the choir lady", brought visitors to the music room and requested the children "sing something" rather than have

the children demonstrate their own compositions. There are some mental sets about performance that will be difficult to change, one is thinking of music as organized sounds, sounds outside the Western tonal system. Rather than hoping to hear a choir sing in a performance, try to observe an individual child's interaction with sound, or a group of children playing and emitting melody.

Where to Now?

What began in this study as a quest to find out if and why boys choose to negate singing resulted in a questioning of some cherished notions in my practice as a music educator. The negation of singing is but a symptom of a larger problem of what and how we teach music in our schools today. The research and writing served as a pause in my career, a pause that gave me a chance to watch, to listen and see what directions other disciplines were moving towards.

The mirror that I referred to at the beginning of the discussion of the research reflected a practice that was not dissimilar from mine. I had once heard the eminent artist Robert Bateman say in an interview for television that if he wanted to identify what was wrong with his painting, he merely looked at the painting reflected in a mirror. To him it was like seeing his painting for the first time. This was, for me, a chance to see my work for the first time. This critical assessment has helped me identify why music teaching, especially in the role of a specialist, is incongruent with my being. If my friend and colleagues care to read this document, they, too, will understand.

There is only one history of importance and it is the history of what you once believed in and the history of what you came to believe in. Kay Boyle (Ferguson, 1980, p. 85)

It is not the importance of teaching music or the passion for singing that has been lost for me. Instead, it has been the desire to change my practice so radically that I felt I would be deceiving to any administrator who thought they were bringing Rosemarie Sherban, choir person, producer of school musicals, on staff. I have come to see that teaching music in this way has little to do with children, music and learning.

We women have lived too much with closure: "If he notices me, if I marry him, if I get into college, if I get this work accepted, if I get that job" -- there always seems to loom the possibility of something being over, settled, sweeping clear the way for contentment. This is the delusion of a passive life. When the hope for closure is abandoned, when there is an end to fantasy, adventure for women will begin. (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 130)

As I enter the Grades 8 and 9 classroom and prepare to engage the students in a whole spectrum of experiences, the adventure begins. But before that adventure continues I must address the journey to date for those who might be following, for they, too, may choose to change direction.

Journeys filled with "ifs" suggest a destination rather than a journey to be enjoyed. What I became had its roots in the desire and encouragement from my parents to become "British." I fell so deeply into this that I became a force in the maintenance and promotion of that which I now criticize. Through this whole experience what was bred in the bone, so to speak, has never left me. It does occasionally resonate with the hearing of Slavic music or visiting the Welsh (another people who were negated by the British). Perhaps I was always a stranger in a foreign land and it is only now that I am ready to honour my roots and declare myself.

Often our intuitions have their roots in our own personal life history. And so by narrating one's childhood experiences, and how one has become

what one has become, it is often possible to see how one's intuitions are related to particular family, communal, cultural, social, and educational experiences. (van Manen, 1992, p. 29)

When I think of my submission to my practice, I think of patriarchy and being female. I was raised in a very patriarchal home. I was raised to please others. One person who has known me throughout my rise in the choral area remarked on the difference she saw in my practice from that of others. If someone suggested an improvement for me, I took it and ran with it. What I recognize now is that this constant state of pleasing others lead me away from my culture and from my being. I lost my voice. This journey into gender has given me the courage to speak again. Perhaps it was seeing the joyous little girls of the first grade and the overwhelming silence of the older girls in the fifth grade that added to my courage. I feel an overwhelming obligation to speak for them.

Involving myself in this research has identified my conflict with the underlying premises of an outdated prescriptive curriculum, exterior forces that direct the music program and the manner in which many music specialists are expected to teach. I had the opportunity to remove myself from the role of teacher to the role of observer in a music classroom while at the same time reflecting on my own practice. A larger light over all this was created by an immersion into gender issues in the classroom. Gender bias is promoted in an approach to music education that leads to a disconnected way of knowing children -- a cool, masculine way of approaching music skills that leads into the band room rather than a quiet gentle sharing of song.

I have addressed the need for the curriculum to become more credible with the

children's lived experience. In a specialist situation, music is totally out of context of the children's lives in the school and their lives in the outside world as well. In the child's school life, "music" is a place they visit twice a week. It is also a place where male hegemony can prevail.

Within a music education class in a public school one finds not only finds a great spectrum of knowledge in music iconography, one also finds a great spectrum of interest in learning this iconography. Last year I had one class where there was one student in the academy studying grade ten cello, at least five students who were good instrumentalists, and many students who had no idea or interest in familiarizing themselves with music reading. Moreover I had my "grey" children, mainly girls dominated by overtly masculine, chauvinistic boys. How does one begin to address music literacy in a class with such diverse abilities and conflicts?

Literacy in music can be deceptive. Literacy is more than reading a symbolic code. It is understanding and creating in that code. Many students can go through years of music lessons and play an instrument very expertly -- they can perform. How literate are they? Can they hear a piece of music by simply looking at the score? Can they compose in this symbolic mode?

In an address to the B.C. Music Educators' Association this spring, I related the story of a young person who had received first class honours in her piano degree from the Royal Conservatory of Toronto. Although she passed the performer's test she had no idea of how to read rhythmic patterns. It was something she learned when she began to teach school children the Mary Helen Richards Charts, a basic rhythmic reading

program. As I revealed to the music educators in the audience, that person was me. What makes this story even more interesting is that during a panel discussion at that same conference, a nearly identical story was told by a male teacher. He, too, had walked in this illusion of musical literacy. Performers are dextrous on specific musical instruments and are trained to constantly recreate other people's music. Recreating music can be done easily without reading a music score. In my haste to make large sounds on the piano, I became very clever at cajoling my teacher into playing pieces for me then dashing home to play the piece before I forgot it, using the music score somewhat as a guide. I knew full well that the teacher would correct any minor mistakes at the following lesson. I always did poorly on sight reading tests but very high on ear training. I was taught by three teachers, none of whom realized my lack of knowledge of the rhythm system. I also found that the repertoire of my training completely ignored the pop idiom and its intricacies of syncopation. This left me quite inadequate to address these idioms with my students. Had I been required to think and make decisions that is to compose in this mode, I feel the discrepancy between my performance ability and my reading ability would have been identified.

In what other symbol system, except music, would we attempt to teach literacy in two thirty minute periods a week, knowing that the children would never, outside the music room, see billboards with the music symbolism blazoned across them, hear the intervals of the pentatonic in isolation or hear 4/4 rhythm patterns, to mention a few. I tend to side with Walker's use of the words *Lingua Franca* to describe this subscription to the western notational system. Who and what made this symbol system so sacred? I

am reminded of Reimer's (1987) experience in China when he watched the frustration of Chinese children who had abandoned a way they had of representing sound for this Western notational system.

There are those who maintain the Kodaly program encourages a high level of creativity -- even composing in the twentieth century mode. Every time I am told this, it is couched with "well in Hungary, this does happen." Well it may happen in Hungary, but I have yet to see it happen in Calgary. These are not beginning programs any more. Moreover, this is the here and now for students. We can't leave them in a process of becoming forever -- that someday they will be literate in this most difficult symbol system to create their own music. The process of becoming suggests that there are some goals, real or imaginable, that you must achieve before you are permitted to engage in certain activities. In the music curriculum it is the mastery of certain sol-feg and rhythmic patterns and these become the vocabulary of the composition. Children do not live in silent spaces outside the classroom where they hear only pentatonic melodies. It behooves us to create programs and spaces where they can bring their unique musical ideas and explore them further.

At a gathering of elementary music teachers I heard a teacher vent angrily that there must be a better way of evaluating students. The teacher went on to say that she had assumed a position in a school where there had been a Kodaly specialist for years and she was appalled that the children didn't "know a thing" meaning their music "literacy" was negligible. She was almost accusing her predecessor of incompetence. This teacher failed to realize that these children were at home for two months, many

would never see a quarter note or hear a pentatonic melody all summer. My response to her was that we didn't need better ways of evaluating, we needed better ways of thinking how and why we are attempting to teach music literacy.

Music teachers have, for too long, stood on one side of a street, with this notational system in hand, trying to beckon children across to their side, neither the teachers or students knowing how to build a bridge across this gap. When students arrive at the music room, they want to be engaged in sound. This is very difficult when you have thirty children at multiple levels of understanding and several boys who choose to dominate and subvert the class when ever possible.

Every time I would attempt to work on my thesis on Saturday I found I couldn't because listening to the tapes of the grade five class was exhausting and depressing. They bore too much resemblance of the struggle I was experiencing in the classroom all week. What happens, most frequently are very structured, teacher directed, large group activities which deny everything we know about how children learn. Or do we know much about how and what children learn in music? By the time they reach the division two level, revealing themselves in the arts becomes more and more difficult. The expression of emotions becomes a very private matter. This is where singing begins to encounter difficulty. The girls at this age hide rather than show incompetency, while the boys act out rather than appear incompetent or effeminate. If we further impose external value systems of great music and grammatical structures of western notation and rhythmic structure we defeat the very purpose of music and create silence.

I believe I would be quite satisfied to declare, if not a moratorium, then something of a de-emphasis on matters that have to do with the structure

of history, the structure of physics, the nature of mathematical consistency , and deal with it rather in the context of the problems that face us ... we might put vocation and intention back into the process of education, much more firmly than we had it before." (Bruner, as quoted by Aoki, 1980, p. 2)

The structure of music could be added to this list. Music can be enjoyed in many ways with very little, if any, knowledge. As one may enjoy a building without the knowledge of how many steel beams support its structure, so too can a symphony be enjoyed without the knowledge required to read a symphonic score.

Last year I explored with my music students alternate ways of symbolizing sound. The involvement of all the children was wonderful to observe. These children demonstrated a vast array of sounds and ideas for representing these sounds. More over I felt that, as in Paley's Superheroes in the Doll's Corner, I had to remain vigilant to make sure that the boys did not always seize the drums leaving the quieter instruments for the girls. In a classroom such as this no one had to be dominant. What I realized is that in this way of engaging the children there is no right or wrong to the extent that it paralyses students. Each child can enter at their own level of expertise. Growth can be identified by the manner in which the students incorporate new ideas gained from the presentations of other students and teachers. The evaluation of each child becomes much more focused on growth. I question whether the scope and sequence chart of the Alberta Elementary Music Curriculum Guide 1989 was created to be testable and credible and therefore a valid area of study. This curriculum turns music class into competitive, combative situations.

Rarely does a teacher question the content of the curriculum. Perhaps they

choose to ignore it totally. Those who do, risk criticism from administration and their peers because they dare to do the unconventional in their classroom. The teachers who challenge tradition assume that children come into the classroom with musical ideas from the massive amount of sounds that surround these children in the environment. They encourage the children to be children and approach the world of sound with a sense of exploration of discovery. Sound becomes a means of self expression. They encourage children to compose using symbolism outside the Western diatonic mode. They encourage the children to play instruments without the pressure of set rhythms and ensemble playing. Performances emanate from the students, truly shared experiences.

As I write this, so many images come to mind. One image is of two teachers in our system who dared to be different. These two I often think of kindly as "the odd couple" because on initial contact one would think that "the jazz musician" and the "kindly experienced matron" would have little in common. When these teachers met in a music evaluation task force, they shared a vast experience of composition and sound exploration with children. They had a much wider perspective of music in the classroom than most people in the task force, including myself. I feel it necessary to speak of the courage these two teachers demonstrated to fly in the face of tradition and risk censure from peers, and perhaps even forfeit promotion within the school system to work with children in this manner. To the un-focused eye their classrooms sounded like mayhem as small groups of children composed. Every nook and cranny of available space in the school had children making decisions about sound. On closer inspection there was a tremendous engagement with sound as decisions were being made about sound

organization. There was music -- music that was unique to the culture of their particular classroom.

There is a necessity to observe situations where teachers have flown in the face of curriculum and focused on the involvement of children. I am angered when teachers are assessed, as I was, only on the performance of their choirs. I see now that this continues the traditional and prevents changes in music education. But I am in a strange position now. Having received positive assessment from my colleagues in a strange way gives me the credibility to question the system that created my credibility. Credibility is a factor in voice. I can recall an argument with another music educator about the writings of Robert Walker. She discarded both his writing and that of Keith Swanwick because they failed to achieve "musically" with students. My observation is that Robert Walker was very perceptive. He did not have to teach for twenty-five years then reflect on his practice to arrive at these same conclusions.

A change in how music is taught in our schools must begin with the relationship between the teacher, the student and music. I remember a long time ago I was told a story by a friend that truly captured the human essence of teaching. Moira was a six year old child of a single parent. Her mom's friend, Gwen, was an educator who had known Moira since infancy. Gwen often assisted the mother by driving Moira to assorted lessons. Subsequently, Moira and Gwen had time to get into all sorts of discussions. One day Moira expressed the desire to someday have Gwen as her teacher. Gwen asked her why. Moira's reply was simple. She said to Gwen, "You know me and I know you. You like me and I like you and we could do wonderful things together."

And such is the essence of life as a classroom teacher, an essence for the most part inaccessible to the specialist. In the past year I had one particular group of contrary students quite like the grade five class researched. Finally, out of frustration, I took them back to their classroom to discuss their uncooperative behaviour in the music room as we prepared for a concert. As we entered their classroom we came across the classroom teachers planning. Suddenly the whole tone of the class changed. So what was different ? The students informed me that they were now in the presence of their real teachers.

It is far more interesting to explore education with children holistically. Goddard (1994) is so accurate in his assessment of student teachers in music and their conservatory training. This intense focus and training in music is not what their life as a music educator will be like. Their life and the lives of children are a myriad of experiences and knowing, music having only one place in that whole. The curricular subscription to the western notational system puts the teacher as the master not the fellow traveller. The tight control of which interval is to follow which, what music is the best for young children is simply not the way children should be in school. As whole language, reader response, and novel studies have been explored in Language Arts, the music curriculum should be examined for alternative engagements with children.

Where is singing in all this? In the classroom where there are knowledgeable teachers, where it should be. There it can be related to the child's life at school. There it can be spontaneous and a part of the child's whole day.

Then life beckoned to me and said, "follow me. We have tarried here too long.

And I replied, "Whither are we going, Life?"

And Life said, "We are going to the city of the Future."

And I said, "Have pity on me, Life. I am weary and my feet are bruised and my strength is gone out of me."

But life replied. "March on, my friend. Tarrying is cowardice. To remain forever gazing upon the City of the Past is Folly. Behold, the city of the future beckons ...

Kahlil Gibran. (p. 140 translated from the Arabic by Anthony Ferris, 1962)

And this is where I chose to leave singing as it is currently taught in the City of the Past. Although it is still my passion, there is so much of music to explore. This year I decided to learn more about computers and electronic synthesizers and traded my grand piano for a wonderful synthesizer which can be interfaced with my computer. These are symbolic gestures of shedding of an elitist image that is no longer part of me. Shedding of that elitist image opens up a whole different way of exploring music.

The Coda

Permit me just this once last refrain of a melody so beautiful from the city of the past that all should hear and enjoy. For it is in such melodies as this that the essence of hearts and minds and singing -- all that is teaching resonates.

Kristi walked into the language arts classroom and threw down her books loudly exclaiming, "I hate language arts"! It was a strong statement for a ten year old on her first day of classes with me in September. These words emanated from, what on the outside appeared to be, a diminutive girl with freckles and an elfin face. I was particularly sensitive to this outburst because I was about to teach Language Arts for the

first time in fifteen years. As I clutched a few examples of novel studies given to me by the Language Arts consultant, I tried to remember what the consultant had said ... "You're a good teacher. Follow one of these plans on your first go round and then your instinct will kick in." As soon I heard Kristi's words I thought , "Now what do I do"? Thankfully instinct did kick in and I began to try to unravel the mystery of why a very bright girl hated language arts.

I found Kristi was very adept in all subject areas. However, I was to learn, as the year went on, that she had never learned to sing. Caught in a family where her sisters sang like cherubs, the act of matching pitches with her vocal chords had eluded Kristi. As the year progressed we engaged in language arts; she seemed to enjoy that quite well. I remember Kristi latching on to the word "festooned" in C.S.Lewis The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. That word kept appearing in the most unusual places, especially her journal. Then she experimented with writing horror stories while engaged in reading The Book of Three. I think it was through the journal or perhaps it was from the time we spent in class together that Kristi and I developed a sense of trust.

During the music classes we spent a great amount of time finding our singing voices. Kristi became very interested and, because of trust in me ,asked for some extra help with her singing. By the year's end Kristi could sing! Moreover Kristi built up enough courage to audition for my children's choir that operated outside of the school. I remember this audition very vividly. When Kristi realized the audition was successful, she cried, I cried and my student conductor cried. I simply had no idea how important

singing had been to Kristi. Reports from her home were that she now participated in family singing and attempted to poke out singing repertoire on the piano.

At the end of the school year I was presented with a dish Kristi had made in a pottery class. To someone not knowing its import it would look rather heavy and crude. To me it is a beautiful reminder that I truly connected with this student. It still sits on my shelf. As I look at it I remember the dish came with a note saying that Kristi felt I was just the best language arts teacher she had ever had. I smiled and thought, "I don't think it was the language arts, Kristi, I think it was the singing."

Kristi is off to McGill this year. I noticed that she was chosen as her high school's top graduate in the local paper's "Class Act." The article said she indulges in music for relaxation. Kristi also listed "teachers" as important influences in her life. Her mother spoke with tears in her eyes when she told me I was one of those teachers and about the gift I gave to Kristi. I never have told Kristi of the gift she gave to me.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Schedules

School Administrator

This research is designed to investigate student's preferences in music activities in particular singing. Through observation of the classes at your school I will attempt to perceive whether these preferences change with age and gender. Thus I have observed the grade one class as well as the grade five class. As well I am interested in the support the parents have given the music program at the school. Also of interest to me is the socio-economic profile of the community.

Principal's Understanding

Teacher Role

1. What responsibilities does the music teacher have in this school?
2. What is the nature of the extra curricular programs offered in music?
3. Are there other teachers who assist with any music programs?

Parent Involvement

1. Are parents in your community involved with the school? If so, can you describe the nature of the involvement ?
2. How supportive of the music program are your parents? How do they express support for the program?
3. How do you think the parents would feel if the music program were to be eliminated?
4. Music lessons outside of school require tuition. Are there many parents in you school community whose socio-economic condition would permit private music tuition? Do you think many children actually take private lessons?
5. Are you aware of any support the parents give to the arts at the community level?
6. Is there anything else about the music program that you would like to add here?

Student Interview Schedule

Student's Understanding

1. You have noticed I've been spending time in your music classes. What do you know about why I have been spending this time in your class? I am going to ask you a few questions about what you enjoy doing at school and outside of school.
2. What were you doing in your class before you were called out to talk to me?
3. What do enjoy doing when you are not at school?
4. What do you like most about music class?
5. Can you tell me how you feel when you are doing your favourite activity?
6. Can you tell me how you feel about singing?
7. Tell me about music things you do outside of school.
8. What do you like to listen to?
9. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about music?

Teacher Interview Schedule

Teacher's Understanding

This research is designed to investigate children's preferences towards music activities, specifically singing.

1. How important do you think singing is to the development of music skills?
2. How much time do you allot to the activity of singing in your music classes?
3. Does this change from division one to division two? If so, why?
4. Is there equal representation from both boys and girls in the choirs?
5. If children are hesitant to sing, do you encourage their participation? If so how do you go about it?
6. How do you feel about a study of this nature?

APPENDIX B

Letters and Consent Forms**Letter of Entry to School Board**

Dear _____:

As a Masters student in Music Education at The University of Calgary, I am conducting a study of student perceptions towards music activities, specifically singing. To do this, I am proposing a qualitative study involving students in their first year of schooling as well as students in their fifth year. The methods for my study will involve observations of four music classes at each grade level as well as interviews with the principal, the music teacher, and selected students, four from each class.

In accordance with The University of Calgary guidelines, I will follow strict ethical procedures guaranteeing confidentiality to all participants. Pseudonyms for the school and the individual participants will be used to ensure the anonymity of the participants. The tapes will be stored in a secure place, accessible to the researcher only. They will be retained for a three year period and then destroyed.

I am presently a teacher with the Calgary Board of Education. I have twenty five years of experience with the board, having served as a Music consultant for six years. This study is one of age, gender and schooling and their effect on participation in singing. I look forward to your approval and cooperation in this venture after which I will contact principal, Rhoda De Vlaming at Beddington Heights Elementary School to study the music classes under the direction of the music specialist, Gerry Hill

If you have any questions or concerns regarding my proposal, please call me at 228-6538 or write to me at the address below.

Sincerely.

Rosemarie A. Sherban

Consent Form**For the Principal of the School**

Having read Rosemarie Sherban's research proposal entitled Meanings about singing and other musical activities in the elementary classroom: a study of gender, age and schooling, I agree to participate in this study in the awareness that a pseudonym and not my actual name will be used in this study. I am also aware that any tapes used in this study will be kept in a safe place, accessible only to the researcher, and then destroyed three years after the study is completed.

Name (Please print) _____

Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____

For the Participating Teacher

Having read Rosemarie Sherban's research proposal entitled "Meanings about singing and other musical activities in the elementary classroom: a study of gender, age and schooling," I agree to participate in this study in the awareness that a pseudonym and not my actual name will be used in this study. I am aware that any tapes used in this study will be kept in a safe place accessible only to the researcher, and then destroyed three years after the study is completed.

Name (Please print) _____

Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Letter to the Parents

May 10, 1993

Dear Parents:

As a part of a study on the meanings children attach to music activities, in particular singing, I am conducting observations of the music classes in which your child is a participant. I am interested in the effects of age, gender and schooling on these meanings.

Upon completion of the observations, I will be interviewing individually, a few students, the principal and the music teacher. Your child's views are of particular interest to me and would be useful in this study. I assure you that any involvement in this study is purely voluntary and that your child may withdraw at anytime during the study. Four music classes will be observed and if your child is selected for an individual interview, that interview will take approximately 30-40 minutes. The classroom observations and the interviews will be audio taped only.

In keeping with guidelines set by The University of Calgary and the Calgary Board of Education, strict ethical procedures will be observed. All of the information will be strictly confidential and pseudonyms will be used in my report. The tapes will be kept in a safe place, accessible only to the researcher. These tapes will be destroyed three years after the study is completed.

Please complete the attached form and have your child return it to the music teacher on or before May 25, 1993. I appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Rosemarie A. Sherban