

The Value of Music & Music Education

If any single value of music underlies my commitment and passion towards teaching music, it is likely the capacity of music to enhance human feelings. It is because of this, I have the desire to make this gift of music as richly available as possible. I have been transformed by the power of music; and I'm sure music has touched each and every one of our lives deeply and in many different ways.

Therefore, we share a devotion to share with others the emotional depths music uniquely makes available.

Human beings constantly feel. Feelings flood our minds and beings in a never-ending stream or torrent, overlapping, rushing ahead or slowing down, mixing together in countless blends, whirling around then shooting off in different directions. Internal feeling - subjectivity or affect - is not, in and of itself, linear and logical in its organization; it is more like a whirlpool in its dynamic structure.

If we want to "feel something through," or "get our feelings straight," or "get our feelings sorted out," we sit down in a quiet place and "get ourselves together." So we start to formulate logical, linear, ordered feelings. Unfortunately, as we do, the torrent of feeling continues, with all sorts of related and unrelated feelings flooding in and drowning those we're trying to separate out or interfering with them because they take us away from the particular feelings into a great many other streams of feeling going in different directions. And our feelings tend to evaporate - to disappear into thin air - as soon as we have them and focus on them. The fluid nature of inner feelings simply cannot be entirely controlled by the act of feeling inwardly.

What we need, to go beyond the dynamic flux of inner subjectivity, is some device to hold onto a feeling so it cannot wash away, a means to give it permanent embodiment. We need to "materialize" it, that is, make it into an entity so that it stays as it is. So what can we do? You guessed it: we can capture it in musical sounds - melodies, rhythms, tone colors, harmonies, textures, forms.

Music enables our feelings to be precise, accurate, detailed, meticulous, subtle, lucid, complex, discriminating, powerful, meaningful. (Reimer, Bennett. A philosophy on music education: Advancing the vision. Prentice Hall. 2003)

In short, performing, composing, and listening to music is a unique experience and unlike any other subject taught in school, music educates feeling.