

Music in Schools Committee Meeting Spring 2012

Present from '57: Tom Chittenden, Rod Correll, Bern Kosto, Morris Raker, Jan Wohlberg, Bob Smith, Nick Tingley, Steve Wittenberg

Present from YSM: Michael Yaffe, Ruben Martinez

Present from New Haven Public Schools: Ellen Maust- Music Supervisor

The meeting opened with a welcome from Dean Robert Blocker who then left for Poland and China!

I. Recent Outside Review of Music in Schools Program

Reviewers: Mark Churchill- Former Dean of Extension Programs at New England Conservatory of Music and person who introduced El Sistema to the USA.

Dante Rameau- recent YSM graduate who has created a very successful music education program for public school students in Atlanta Georgia with funding from, among others, the Atlanta Symphony and Coca Cola.

In their report, the evaluators expressed 'deep admiration for the atmosphere of trust between YSM and the New Haven Public Schools'. They said, "rarely have we seen such a flourishing partnership." While lauding many aspects of the program, they also made some suggestions all of which will be implemented.

- (1) More formal training for our teaching artists (YSM students working several hours/week in NH middle schools)
- (2) More formal feedback system from the involved public schools, as well as more detailed record of our activities in the different schools.
- (3) Institution of an all-city honors orchestra to join the already extant all-city chorus and band (both collaborations between Yale and the public schools)
- (4) Instituting systematic research directed to the **Overall** wellbeing of urban children involved in the program utilizing the resources of some of the other Yale Schools such as Public Health and Management.

- (5) Visiting a few successful music outreach programs around the country, e.g. Orchkids in Baltimore and LA Phi program led by Gustavo Dudamel.
- (6) Instituting a multiyear strategic planning process.

II. New Haven Program

We had presentations by Ruben Rodriguez (manager of community programs) and Ellen Maust (New Haven Public School Music Supervisor).

Clearly, Music in Schools has created an atmosphere of excitement about music in the New Haven School System as well as deeply affecting the lives of many students and their families. One evidence of the excitement the fact that virually all the New Haven middle schools have taken the necessary steps and now receive VH1 funding to start band programs, (VH1- cable channel spearheading a national Save the Music program and funding startup programs *on a selective basis*).

While Music in Schools continues to be most intense in 2 middle schools, John Daniels and Lincoln Bassett, it touches, in one way or another, over 20 schools. At John Daniels the focus is on band instruments and at Lincoln Bassett on string instruments. In other schools activities range from music lessons to interactive ensemble concerts. Currently, in addition to Ruben Rodriguez (our community lead person) and Brian Lewis ('57 Visiting Professor) there are 8 'teaching artists' (YSM students working more intensively in the schools). As mentioned earlier plans are afoot to more formally mentor and supervise these teaching artists. In addition, all 15 YSM students taking Brian Lewis's Community Outreach course will do end of semester projects in various schools. Other students participate in the interactive ensembles that go to the schools. Attendance at lessons and rehearsals has been very high and there are wait lists of children interested in participating should others drop out.

Whereas at the start of the program there was some resistance on the part of NH public school teachers, there is now enthusiastic acceptance of the program and very rewarding collaboration between YSM teaching artists ant the public school music teachers. An intense effort by YSM is underway to increase in depth involvement that can effect real change. More scientific metrics to document the changes are on the agenda as we go forward.

III Collaboration with Outside Organizations

Both the Yale School of Music and the New Haven public schools have noticed that outside organizations (New Haven Symphony, Neighborhood Music School, New Haven International Music Festival and Music Haven) often ask YSM or the NH public schools to support grants devoted to music education. Many times one organization is doing something very similar to another organization, yet the grants are separate. The Yale School of Music, (represented by Michael Yaffe and Rubin Rodriguez), together with NH public schools, (represented by Ellen Maust), have invited all these organizations to sit down together in order to look at the music needs of public school children and plan collaborative programs to advance the cause of public school music education. The strong relationship between YSM and the public schools makes a good platform for drawing the others into collaborative efforts.

IV Continuing Contact with Symposium Attendees

The absence of serious efforts to begin interchange among symposium attendees and between attendees and YSM has been a source of frustration for all. We had an honest and open discussion of this with several ideas floated. At the suggestion of the two people most in touch with the mind set of public school music teachers, (Rubin Rodreguiz and Ellen Maust), we decided to try and launch an electronic newsletter, using the already existent list/serve. Ruben and Ellen suggested that teachers be asked to submit relatively brief, non esoteric contributions on subjects of importance to them, e.g. encountered problems, innovative programs, interesting experiences. These will be distributed with a request for comments. The newsletter will be kick started by a Symposium attendee who has continued to work with Michael Yaffe. She already has an essay of this type which Michael has seen. The hope is that this will stimulate responses and that others will begin to contribute. Optimately the newsletter would be published 3-4 times/year. We realize that this may or may not work but all present felt it was worth a try and remain committed to continue working on this aspect of Music in Schools.

V Visiting Professorship

Brian Lewis has been an excellent visiting professor for 2 years. He has spent every other week in New Haven while continuing to hold a full professorship in string and pedagogy at the U. of Texas. The tentative plan for 2012-2013 is to once again have approximately four visiting guest professors, each spending about a week at the Yale School of Music. Implementing the 'professorship' part of the indenture has been a work in progress. Since there are a limited number of people who really fit the role of 'professor devoted to public school music education', it has seemed prudent to expose the program to different people who are at the same time accomplished musicians, have significant experience in community outreach and a track record of innovative programming. Whereas YSM may eventually settle on a specific person, Music in Schools is getting to know a number of potential players in this field.

VI Music in Schools as Part of the Reunion

The current plan is to have Michael Yaffe give a talk at the Friday class luncheon to be followed by some music from a student brass ensemble. We are also talking about an opportunity to see the children at work at John Daniels middle school. Friday afternoon is free until the memorial service at 4PM and it may be possible to arrange transportation from JE to John Daniels, and back, between the luncheon and the memorial service. Ruben and Ellen can arrange to have a group of the children rehearse at this time.

VII Fund Raising for Music in Schools as Part of the 55th Reunion Gift

Tom Perkins could not be at this meeting but called me with an update. To date \$410,000 have been pledged and his goal remains \$1,000,000.

VIII Summary

In summary, we had a very productive meeting and came away with the feeling that Music in Schools is already an integral part of both the Yale School of Music and the New Haven Public Schools. The unique collaboration between the two is receiving a good bit of interest both regionally and nationally. All involved feel the program has had significant

impact on New Haven school children and through the work of YSM graduates as well as symposium attendees both of whom are spread throughout the US, on children nationally. If we can demonstrate the effect on the well being of urban children in a more scientific fashion this may stimulate more funding for programs of this type and perhaps even affect national arts policy.