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### CM Reflections of a Band Director

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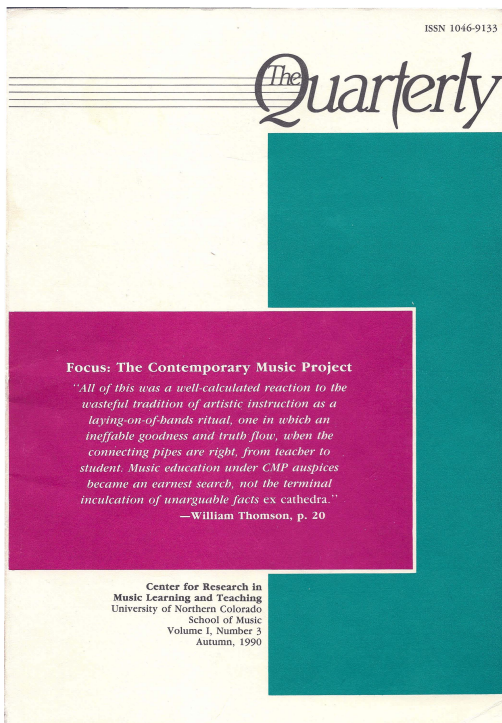
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*It is with pleasure that we inaugurate the reprint of the entire seven volumes of The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning. The journal began in 1990 as The Quarterly. In 1992, with volume 3, the name changed to The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning and continued until 1997. The journal contained articles on issues that were timely when they appeared and are now important for their historical relevance. For many authors, it was their first major publication. Visions of Research in Music Education will publish facsimiles of each issue as it originally appeared. Each article will be a separate pdf file. Jason D. Vodicka has accepted my invitation to serve as guest editor for the reprint project and will compose a new editorial to introduce each volume. Chad Keilman is the production manager. I express deepest thanks to Richard Colwell for granting VRME permission to re-publish The Quarterly in online format. He has graciously prepared an introduction to the reprint series.*

# CM Reflections of a Band Director

By Roger W. Warner

*University of North Texas*

**T**he first phase of my association with the Contemporary Music Project (CMP) began in 1962, when I was a young high school band director in University City, Missouri. Our school district was selected to participate in the Young Composers Project, and through good fortune I was able to be involved until 1964. In 1970, as the high school band director at University City, I again became involved with CMP as a recipient of a MENC Program II grant and the following year as a participant in the Symposium for Evaluation of Comprehensive Musicianship (SECM). From a perspective of personal involvement in CMP during two distinct time frames, I will attempt to share personal and professional insights as to the impact the program has had on my life and that of my students at a time when our school district experienced radical social, cultural, and economic changes not very different from those that exist in today's schools.

## A Fine Musical Tradition

In the era of the 1940s through the mid-1960s, University City enjoyed a high-quality band program of long standing which was complemented by equally fine choral and orchestral programs. The University City schools were highly regarded

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throughout the state for students' achievement in academics as well as in the arts. This was attributable in part to the unique socioeconomic situation of the community.

A suburb of approximately 50,000 bordering the city of St. Louis, University City was a residential community with a high percentage of Jewish families; the school district was the largest single enterprise within its boundaries. Education and community involvement were high priorities in University City throughout those decades.

In the spring of 1962, our music coordinator, Mary Kay Stamper, announced to the music faculty that our school district was the recipient of a one-year Ford Foundation Young Composers Project grant, with an option for a second-year renewal. The prospect of having a young composer in our schools, writing music for our performing groups and serving as a resource to our faculty and students, was greeted with mixed emotions. For some, this was viewed as an exciting opportunity. For others, this new program had threatening potential to disrupt the traditional musical activities and successes we then enjoyed.

When Dexter Morrill was appointed as our composer-in-residence that year, however, he soon became an integral part of the total music program. He wrote compositions for specific music organizations at the elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels, including two major works for the high school band. He conducted seminars for faculty and students and helped students with individual composition projects. Morrill's personal involvement in the rehearsal of his own music, along with his interest in assisting in the rehearsal of other works of more traditional nature, fostered a willingness on our part to work on "his" music without prejudging its merits.

At first, Morrill's compositions generated mixed reactions among students. Many liked his works, but others did not. Over the two-year period, however, we

saw the emergence of a changed attitude about contemporary music. The students' reticence about Morrill's work gave way to intellectual curiosity and then acceptance of nonfamiliar music idioms as valid modes of musical expression appropriate to the performance repertoire. Morrill's talent, enthusiasm, and humaneness in interacting with students served as a catalyst for bringing about positive change for faculty and students alike.

### Professional Development

My personal friendship with Morrill and our professional working relationship strongly influenced my development as a music educator. He contributed in the following ways:

- 1) I developed an intense interest in contemporary music and began a constant pursuit of contemporary band literature to program on our concerts;
- 2) I became cognizant of the fact that music-making, in an exploratory learning environment, is a powerful tool for guiding emotional and value decision-making processes in students. In this regard, I discovered that musical preferences are best shaped, not dictated, by the teacher. A most important role of a teacher in this process is to guide students in the exploration of music idioms that are representative of many styles and cultures.
- 3) As the project unfolded, it became apparent that my college music training was grossly inadequate in preparing me to teach musical styles outside of the common-practice period. My weaknesses in jazz and twentieth-century music became focus areas that I sought to strengthen in the ensuing years.
- 4) Finally, a germinating idea for teaching comprehensive musical skills and knowledge in a performance-based program began to take shape. This later was to become a primary focus in the second phase of my involvement with CMP, starting in 1970.

After the Young Composers Project grant expired in 1964, life at University City proceeded in a rather normal but active manner. At the Midwest National Band Clinic in Chicago in 1964, the band premiered Claude T. Smith's "Emperata Overture," the composition that launched his career into national prominence. Later, I initiated a visiting conductor/performer

program that brought in nationally prominent musicians to work with the bands. Guests included Fred Ebbs, Harry Began, Vaclav Nelhybel, Doc Severinsen, Clark Terry, the Don Ellis Orchestra, the Stan Kenton Orchestra, and others. On alternate years, the band took educational trips to university campuses to perform and be critiqued by resident applied-music faculty and directors. Additionally, we maintained close contacts with St. Louis Symphony musicians and music faculty at Washington University, who from time to time served as resources to the band program. The band continued to participate in the St. Louis Music Educators band festival each spring and consistently earned straight "A" performance ratings.

### The Revolution Arrives

As early as 1967, University City began to experience rapid demographic change. The social revolution of the 1960s that had stirred the social consciousness of the nation became an issue of local concern as a large influx of black residents began moving into the community, accompanied by an even faster flow of white families moving out. In the next several years, enrollments in band, orchestra, and choir began to drop dramatically throughout the system and the quality of performing groups at all levels deteriorated rapidly. The impact of integration upon the school district and specifically upon the music program served as a catalyst for re-evaluating the curriculum to accommodate a student population having a wide range of backgrounds, skills, and interests.

In 1969, I began experimenting with a multi-experiential rehearsal approach that could accommodate diverse levels of musical skills and understandings in a better manner than that of the traditional band program. There were few, if any, models available to indicate how to proceed. Other music curriculum projects were in the formative stages, the Hawaii Music Curriculum and CMP Program II: The Teaching of Comprehensive Musicianship being the most notable.

As these changes were occurring within the music program, our school district

was awarded a J. D. Rockefeller III three-year grant, beginning in 1968. The University City schools were to pilot an "Arts in General Education" program throughout the district. The infusion of an aesthetic education program created strong divisiveness within the district. For those of us attempting to maintain the integrity of our individual disciplines, the aesthetic education program was viewed as just another obstacle. At the operational level, there was strong evidence to suggest that resources for our performance programs would ultimately be diverted to the development of the aesthetic education component. A great amount of ferment besieged our music staff, and for some it was time to move on. For others who chose to stay, the new decade of the 1970s became a roller-coaster of change that made a permanent impact on our personal and professional lives.

### Meeting the Challenge of Change

With encouragement from my doctoral advisor, Dr. Lewis Hilton, and from my music supervisor, Mary Kay Stamper, I applied for a CMP Program II: The Teaching of Comprehensive Musicianship grant. I was awarded \$10,000 to implement a pilot program in the 1970-1971 school year. This amount, plus the financial backing of the school district, permitted me to devote full time to the development and implementation of the CM high school band project. In the summer of 1970, I participated in a two-week CM institute in San Jose, California. There, for the first time, I had the opportunity to meet and work with the leadership of CM. Vividly I remember Sam Adler, Leon Burton, Brent Heisinger, Bill Thomson, E. Thayne Tolle, Bob Werner, Vernon Read, and others, all of whom shared their unique insights about the music performing, analyzing, and creating process. These personal associations were most influential in shaping my vision of what could be. Indeed, it reaffirmed my commitment to the University City Project.

Limited space permits me to only briefly describe the goals and procedures used in the implementation of the CM program. There were two major goals:

1. To maintain the performance excellence of the band program.
2. To foster, within the performance setting, individualized development of student musical knowledge, skills, and sensitivities that can be used as tools for exploring music as a life-long pursuit.

Implementation procedures were drawn from the basic tenets of the CMP philosophy. They were used in the following manner:

1. Performing, analyzing, and creating music became an integrated part of the band instructional program.
2. The common-elements approach was used as a tool for investigating and describing the interaction of musical elements.
3. The curriculum of the band program was keyed to a specific repertoire of band literature. A careful selection process was observed in order to provide balance, representation of various styles, and sequential development of performance skills. From the selected repertoire, lesson units were developed and implemented within the rehearsal to provide systematic internalization and transfer of musical concepts and skills.
4. The band rehearsal became a learning laboratory that encouraged student interaction and decision-making about the music being rehearsed. The director's role was to serve as a facilitator who fostered independent musical decision-making as well as provided ample opportunity to reflect upon sociological, historical, and psychological implications pertinent to the past, present, and future.

### Creating New Structure

Structurally, the previous traditional band format was modified to accommodate the enhanced curriculum. Briefly, the structure was as follows:

1. There were two bands grouped according to students' proficiency. Each band met daily and was scheduled within the school day.
2. Before-school sectional rehearsals and an elective after-school, small-ensemble program remained in effect.
3. Composition classes were required of all students and were scheduled alternately with sectionals.
4. Marching band did not meet during the school day. It functioned as a volun-

teer show group that met after school three days a week. Membership was open to regular and nonband members.

5. Jazz Lab Band was offered as an elective and met two evenings a week.

6. Elective synthesizer classes were offered to students interested in electronic music.

The CM program of 1970–1971 generated a whirlwind of activity that brought about changes in three areas: performance process and results, student interest and involvement, and curriculum management.

Comprehensive teaching strategies employed in the band rehearsal became a vehicle through which individual musicianship skills and achievement of group performance goals were realized in a more efficient manner. Student involvement in musical decision making, analyzing and describing interaction of musical elements, and performing of musical literature representative of many style periods stimulated student initiative to pursue musical goals important to themselves and to the group. Students practiced more and employed more purposeful strategies to improve their performance skills. This reduced the need to devote so much time to repetitious drill of rhythm and technique in the full band rehearsal, thus providing opportunities to focus upon the more musical aspects of ensemble performance.

In this first year, the band program became a stimulus for generating an unparalleled diversity of musical interests in composition, jazz improvisation, chamber music performance, conducting, electronic music, and secondary instrument performance. This created a demand for more instructional time and resources—and we found ourselves without enough of either to meet student requests. Some needs were met by a peer-tutoring program, in which students who had specific skills and knowledge would help others who had a desire to learn them.

In addition, I called upon colleagues and friends to assist. Dale Hamilton and Ed Sweda from CEMREL Regional Aesthetic Education Lab and Tom Hamilton from Washington University volunteered their expertise and time to help with the

jazz and composition components. Many others, including my music teaching colleagues in University City, generously helped out when called upon. Although logistical problems were always frustrating, the enthusiasm of the students and encouragement of my colleagues provided the needed support to buoy me and the program forward.

## Beyond Funding

At the close of the school year, CMP Program II funding had run out. The school district, however, had agreed to carry on partial support of the project in the following year. In the summer of 1971, I attended two CMP workshops. One was held at East Michigan University. Three other University City music teachers, Curtis Duncan, David Shipman, and Larry Thomas, accompanied me. Thom Mason, James Standifer, and Vernon Klierer were principal CM workshop leaders. As with the other CM workshops of the past, new ideas and strategies for expanding our own musicianship and sharing it with our students were made available to us.

The other workshop, Symposium for Evaluation of Comprehensive Musicianship (SECM), was held in Washington, D.C. A total of twelve recipients of Project II grants were invited to the symposium and subsequently participated in an assessment of our CM programs starting fall semester of the 1971–1972 school year. At this symposium, I renewed professional friendships and established new ones with Rudy Radocy, David Boyle, David Willoughby, and Howard Dunn. The purpose of this volunteer program was to objectively evaluate the effects of CM programs upon development of students' musical knowledge and aural skills as measured by standardized and criterion-referenced testing devices. This was a challenging task, and in my case a difficult one. As a novice in writing program goals and objectives, I had set comprehensive and very challenging goals. Post-testing results showed that positive shifts had occurred in most criterion areas, but they were not at the level I had expected.

## But Can They Compete?

Performance-goal achievement was another major area that needed to be validated by a reliable, objective measure. The obvious vehicle for evaluating performance excellence was through the band-competition system. Prior to 1970, we had never felt the need to participate in competitive events, for we needed neither the recognition nor the competitive environment to motivate our students. For us, participation in the St. Louis Suburban Music Educators band festival and our own guest-artist program provided good evaluation and inspirational instructional input. The assumption that CM performance programs contributed to improved performing skill proficiency was called into question, however, and specifically there was a deep concern that taking away rehearsal time for analyzing and creating activities would seriously detract from the attainment of high-level performance goals.

For these reasons, I decided to enter our band into the competition arena. The first step was to apply for a performance spot at the 1972 Missouri Music Educators Convention. Selection for this honor was based upon performance-tape audition. We were chosen and performed commendably. It was a pleasant surprise to be presented the NBA "Citation of Excellence" award at the close of the concert. This was made even more meaningful by the fact that one of my most respected professional friends, Claude T. Smith, made the presentation.

As mentioned, University City bands had never participated in a contest where a single final rating was given. Interestingly, there had been a friendly but sometimes heated debate throughout the years as to which band or bands were the "best in the state." Directors on the Kansas City side appeared to have a greater zeal for this type of speculation than those on the St. Louis side.

A showdown was brewing, and in the spring of 1972, on a pleasant Saturday in April, the acknowledged "best bands" of the state (Class I schools) met in Columbia, Missouri, for the First State Band Contest. Three eminent college band directors, Harry Began, William Revelli,

and Don Marcoullier, served as judges. We performed the Bach "Toccata and Fugue in D minor" and the Shostakovich "Finale to Symphony #5." By unanimous decision of the judges, the University City band was selected as the first-place winner. Winning a contest of this magnitude was a significant emotional event for all of us. For me, it validated the CM approach as a viable process for achieving high-level performance excellence goals as part of a curriculum that engages students in many roles associated with musicianship.

Given our situation at University City, I surmise that a traditional band-instruction setting would not have produced nearly the results that were attained with CMP. For both the students and me, winning this contest was a much-needed psychological boost, particularly in context of all the negatives associated with our embattled school and community.

## New Horizons

At the close of the school year, I began to seriously assess my music career options. Fourteen years as a band director, and particularly my involvement with the CM program in the last two, had opened up horizons of interest beyond the band field. I sought a new responsibility that might have impact on a broader range of students and music teachers. After much deliberation, I accepted the Supervisor of Music position at University City for the 1972–1973 school year. In that position, I was able to assist in expanding the effects of the CM band program experience. The prototype had generated significant interest among other music teachers within the district, and a proposal to redesign the district-wide music curriculum was submitted and approved. In the summer of 1972, the music teachers wrote a K–12 music curriculum guide that translated CM principles into program goals for each instructional component within the district.

The CM band program continued under a new director, John Kuzmich. Again, the band competed in the Missouri State Band Contest and won the first-place trophy in the spring of 1973. John piloted a successful jazz combo program as part of the evening continuing education program, attracting high school students from University

City and neighboring schools as well adults within the metroplex.

In more recent years, my teaching career has continued at the college level. I served as the Director of Bands at Adams State College in Colorado for three years and concurrently completed a doctoral degree in music education at Washington University in St. Louis. After Adams State, I joined the music education faculty at the University of North Texas and currently teach instrumental methods and supervision courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, supervise student teachers in band, and coordinate a Teaching Excellence Fellowship Program in Music Education.

Over the years, I have given CM workshops and taught a graduate course in advanced instrumental techniques that emphasizes score study, unit lesson planning procedures, and comprehensive rehearsal strategies to involve students in the analysis and performance of music. These courses have been well attended, but there has been little opportunity to verify the extent to which directors apply these principles in their own rehearsals.

### **CMP and the Future of Music Education**

It is now 28 years since I first became involved in the Contemporary Music Project. In the turbulent years of the 1960s and early 1970s, CM grew naturally from the challenge of traditional value systems in nearly every arena. This social revolution served as a springboard for initiating a series of rapid changes that radically reshaped our society. We now live in an interdependent, global community of diverse cultures, value systems, and expectations that continue in a state of flux. In the 1980s, our educational system has been placed under close scrutiny and in the 1990s will enter a period of dramatic curricular changes to meet the challenges of a nation at risk.

I believe the place of music education within the educational mainstream is a fragile one. Music performance programs (band, choir, and orchestra) are even more vulnerable today than in the 1970s. Our educational system is driven by values, and the band tradition is rooted in a

value system that is different than and often in conflict with the values of our present times. This dilemma is reflected, I believe, in declining enrollments and in the proliferation of "motivation seminars" for band directors.

Nationally, CM has never been widely accepted by band directors. One can only speculate as to why this is so. Among the many probabilities, I believe the educational background of these directors—or lack of it—is the dominant issue. Despite their college classes and postsecondary experiences, band directors tend to teach the same way they were taught in their own school band programs. Most band directors lacked model teachers during their formative years, and their college-level instruction in theory, music history, and performance-program instruction was fragmented. They carry a slate that is void of valuable experience, but one that can be filled with useful and exciting possibilities.

I believe that the viability of performance-based programs can be retained and significantly strengthened if the principles of CM can be brought to serve as a philosophical foundation. Yet, even with an experiential base, CM is a risk-taking adventure that requires a strong support system of others who share the same goals and commonality of purpose. The Contemporary Music Project provided that for me. Today, in the absence of a funded agency, but with computer-driven communication technology, a network could be created to nurture and provide expertise to band directors who choose to redefine and redesign their band programs around more comprehensive goals.

For me, the discovery of CM while facing circumstances of a rapidly changing community and the opportunity to implement a program that fulfilled students' musical needs and interests will remain as one of my most treasured professional experiences. Perhaps as we speculate about how we might reshape our performance programs to meet the musical needs of our students into the twenty-first century, the spirit of CM will serve as a guiding beam of light that points the way. □