

2021

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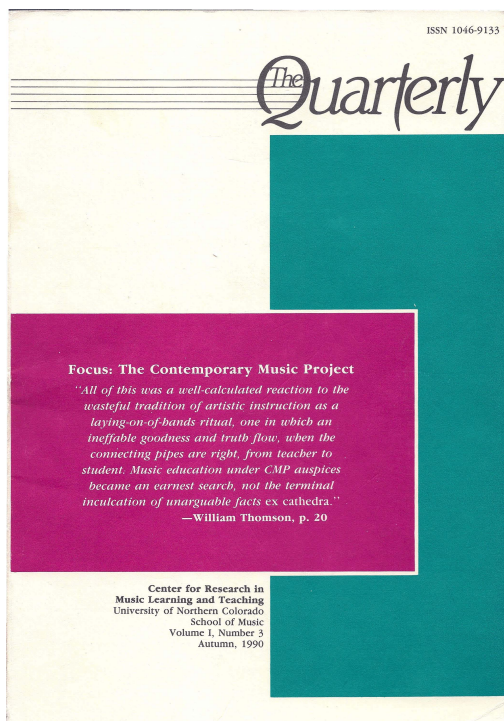
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Recommended Citation

McManus, John C. (2021) ""Rats in the Attic" and Other Musical Explorations," *Visions of Research in Music Education*: Vol. 16 , Article 30.

Available at: <https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme/vol16/iss1/30>



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Source: McManus, J. C. (1990, Autumn). “Rats in the Attic” and other musical explorations. *The Quarterly*, 1(3), pp. 51-54. (Reprinted with permission in *Visions of Research in Music Education*, 16(1), Summer, 2010). Retrieved from <http://www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme/>

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.

“Rats in the Attic” and Other Musical Explorations

By John C. McManus
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Once in a while it is worthwhile to stop and push the “pause” button in our lives—to take a short hiatus from “play” and “fast forward” and give a thoughtful backward glance at the landmarks we’ve passed. The request for a personalized account and retrospective view of the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Program (MMCP) and Contemporary Music Project (CMP) research projects caused me to reflect on an era that had an enormous impact on my life, and probably on the lives of many others. This, therefore, will be quite personal because my teaching style and the two projects were intertwined to the point that they were inseparable.

Let me begin in 1965 as my first-period band class at McMinnville (Oregon) High School ended its usual warm-up routine.

The strains of a student composition titled “Sonata for Two Clarinets and Regurgitated Reverberations” emerged from the band-room tape recorder, and I was wondering what the stranger sitting in the back of the room was thinking. This was supposed to be a high school band rehearsal, yet the students, all 90 of them, were listening to an electronically manipulated tape of a Bach duet being played backwards by two clarinetists. When the class finished discussing the elements and devices used in the piece, I was relieved to see that our guest had not yet left the room.

The sonata was followed by a Chopin piano “Nocturne” conducted by the student who had arranged it for full band. The unusual introduction consisted only of wood block and chimes; it was something the student arranger wanted to try. Another brief discussion followed, and the class agreed that the unusual introduction set the mood quite successfully.

And the stranger in the back of the room was still with us.

The rehearsal proceeded from there in more or less standard fashion, including a brief analysis of the scale patterns used in Shostakovich’s “Festive Overture.”

The visitor was Ronald Thomas, then recently appointed project director of the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Program. Sponsored by the United States

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Office of Education, the project’s purpose was to seek and test alternatives to the current music curricula in the schools. Was there a better way for students to learn and for teachers to teach? Of what should the learning process consist?

As a first step in the process of answering these questions, Thomas was touring the country seeking out unusual and experimental practices in music education. One of his objectives was to clarify, extend, combine, further develop, and test the ideas and experimental efforts of music educators throughout the country.

The McMinnville program most likely came under the heading of unusual or, as some described it, “crazy but fun.” The program evolved over a number of years and involved band students in projects dealing with the “inner workings” of music through creativity instruction, composing, arranging, freely experimenting with sounds, research, analysis, critical assessment, and conducting. The band class became a sound laboratory and a musical discussion center for at least 10 to 15

minutes a day (or the equivalent of one period a week). The rest of the rehearsal consisted of striving for technical and musical proficiency in developing a repertoire.

To those whose eyebrows just arched upward an inch or so and are asking “Where does one find the time for such a program?”, I must confess that I had to rearrange our curriculum priorities in order to achieve this, phasing out many athletic-support activities of the full band. Instead of the full band’s entertaining the crowd, a small, select, and very popular student-run “rally squad band” performed in front of the stands with the rally squad. Other community- and school-support activities were selected with care, phasing out those that were pure public relations and noneducational. By first garnering the support of the school administration and then keeping the public informed of our policies and the reasons for them, we escaped complaints and negative reactions.

The logic of a plan for a better and more relevant music education program seemed to be welcomed by parents as well as students. The equivalent of 29 rehearsals per year were gained from this practice, the elimination of football shows accounting for at least 24.

Students’ Major Projects

During the year, each junior and senior student was responsible for creating a major project—either arranging or composing a piece for band or ensemble—and conducting the work in class. A critical assessment by the class followed the first performance, usually regarding interesting discoveries made, musical concepts uncovered, and suggestions for improving writing skills. A second performance was scheduled later, allowing time for revisions or corrections.

The class members learned from each other during this process. One student composer’s idea would often kindle the spark of inquiry or experimentation in another student. The process snowballed as one student excited another and he or she another. In effect, students became so involved in the teaching process by presenting creative projects that all learned from each other in a continuous, stimu-

lating, inventive, and daring way. Usually one or two projects were heard each day. Whenever possible, students’ works were related to examples from the repertoire of all music, either through recordings or live performances. Here is a sampling of the projects students turned up with:

- Original progressive jazz numbers such as *Rats in the Attic*.
- An original 8-minute overture called *War Rhapsody*.
- Original melodies set to basic chords or chords the student liked and found at the piano, usually called *Adagio* or *Impressions*.
- A set of primitive improvisations for percussion and homemade flute based on the pentatonic scale.
- A setting of *Love is Blue* for strings and oboe.
- An arrangement for clarinet and band of Haydn’s *Cello Concerto* (2nd movement).
- *Fugue for Pi*, a setting of the formula 3.14159 etc. in fugue form for band. The theme, of course, was determined by the numbers.
- An aleatoric music composition for band using the Quaternion-8 multiplication table to determine pitch and chords.
- *SONATA 62.5* for tone generator.
- A band arrangement of Bakaleinikoff’s *March Eccentric* for bassoon and band.
- One student noticed that two marches, *The Sinfonians* (Clifton Williams) and *Pageantry* (Robert Washburn), had trios with intriguing similarities. She took the two trios and combined them into one composition for her project.

I burden you with this background because it led to an interesting relationship with the stranger in the band room, mentioned earlier, Ron Thomas.

Thomas bombarded me with a steady string of questions which I could not answer with much satisfaction. Why are you doing this? What goals have you set for this program? What sequence of learning activities have you set up? Have you sorted out the important compositional elements, and how are they being presented in a logical order? Where are your instructional objectives? How are you evaluating the program? He seemed excited about what we were doing and

wanted more information than I had to give. I was quite sure that learning was happening but had only a gut feeling that students' musicality, understanding, and interest were increasing on a daily basis.

Thomas came back for a second observational visit later, and we had many more discussions about the learning process. His acute mind traced for me some of the things that were happening in this band program. I relate this because his analysis allowed me to get an initial peek into the mind of an exciting thinker and philosopher, a man who was to head the MMCP project for the next five years. Thomas's observations were as follows:

- The students were not being trained first in "Theory" or "Band Arranging." They were left to their own devices, intuition, and experimentation. Ready references were always available, including a mimeographed arranger's helper that gave information on how to set up a C-score, ranges of instruments, a step-by-step approach to transposing parts, how to write percussion parts, and a few hints on transcribing piano parts. Students used their classmates as reference experts for how to write for instruments that were not their own. They used the music in their folders for notational models. Instead of training students in a skill with the hope they would find uses for it, the process was reversed. Students were given a problem to solve. Thus motivated, they poured their energies into developing the skills necessary to accomplish the task.
- Discovery, experimentation, and curiosity were given free rein. Standards and rules of composition were not imposed on students. They were free to try organizing sounds in any way they wished.
- The teacher was used as a resource person. The ingenuity and search for knowledge of the students seemed apparent. They learned much from each other. The role of the teacher was to guide, inspire, and stay out of the way.
- That portion of the band curriculum emphasizing creativity had no fixed structure of content. Instead, the students worked simultaneously at various levels on diverse problems—or on similar problems in different ways. Rather than follow an organized course of study in the fine arts which set music up as a separate study, involvement and experimentation were the basis for learn-

ing. Sophomores entered at their own level and left as seniors at their own level of understanding. During their three years in high school band, students touched base many times but always with more comprehension and complexity, which would be reflected in their compositions or arrangements and certainly in their ability to understand and talk about music.

- It was not necessarily the arrangements or compositions themselves that proved significant in this program, but rather the process of composing, arranging, performing, conducting, and evaluating. The process helped the students become more sensitive musicians and widened their perspectives. It seemed to whet their appetites for knowing more about music and the fine arts in general.

Thomas had a way of analyzing, organizing thoughts, and developing philosophies that continues to amaze me to this day. Up to this time, my main concern as a teacher was for the students to have as much fun as possible while delving into the inner workings of our art.

Thus began my association as a teacher/consultant with MMCP and, eventually, CMP. The summers of 1967 and 1968 were spent at Manhattanville College near Purchase, New York, in intense discussions with such great minds as Lionel Nowak, Charles Wuorinen, Robert Moog, Ronald Thomas, George Kyme, and the other 37 teacher/consultants. Composing and music-making were also given a high priority during those summer sessions.

The summer meetings brought us in touch with the teacher/consultants' experimental trials carried out during the previous school year. These experiments used composition as the core of the music curriculum. During the summer discussions, the MMCP Synthesis—A Structure for Music Education—began to take shape. Thomas, as project director, pulled the synthesis into shape and published it in 1970. It still represents an important music education philosophy statement.

After 17 years with the McMinnville school system, I left in 1967 to join the faculty of the University of Oregon. My role with the projects was to hold classes and workshops for teachers at the university. The class, originally called *The Changing Music Curriculum* and eventually

New Trends in Music Education, involved literally hundreds of teachers during the late 1960s and the 1970s. There seemed to be a great thirst among teachers and prospective teachers for knowledge about these new trends.

The Changing Music Curriculum

These were unsettling times, both in politics and in our art forms. The classes explored many of the current curriculum projects, including the Juilliard Repertory Program, the Comprehensive Musicianship Program (primarily through the Hawaii Project), and the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Program. Trends in contemporary music were examined, and students worked with electronic music synthesizers, including hands-on laboratory work with the Putney synthesizer which culminated with a public recital of creative works of all kinds, styles, and in diverse media by the class.

Many teachers of elementary and junior high school general music were not only receptive to the new philosophies, but embraced them wholeheartedly. Some were able to integrate some of the ideas into their curricula in one way or another. Others were reluctant to abandon tried and true lesson plans for something they considered quite difficult to teach. Their reasons were often legitimate, ranging from classes that were too large, or schedules that caused them to see students infrequently, to lack of proper facilities. (For example, one teacher's main concern was survival. She taught a large class once a week on the multipurpose room stage behind a thin curtain—while gym classes were in session.)

My greatest disappointment was my inability to influence most directors of large ensembles to touch base with creativity instruction. Tradition and status quo were clear winners in band and orchestra classes and were certainly easier for teachers.

The phenomenon of many school choirs disappearing, or practically disappearing, from school curricula during the 1960s and 1970s indicated that many directors had lost touch with students' needs. I believe the emergence of jazz choirs, swing choirs, show choirs, and ethnic choirs which allowed students to

create, improvise, arrange, and sing contemporary music has reversed that trend, leading the way for the resurrection of choirs.

Composing, improvising, arranging, and an understanding of theory are also alive and well in the instrumental jazz programs. CMP, MMCP, and the Tanglewood Symposium can claim credit for this movement, because these projects emphasized the necessity of accepting all musics in the school music curriculum. That this is even debatable will seem strange to young teachers, but older teachers well remember the days when jazz, rock, and pop were not welcomed in the schools.

Whatever Happened to CMP and MMCP?

I am still startled by the occasional question "What ever happened to MMCP or CMP? Does anyone ever use them?" I tend to forgive the questioners, realizing that they must have a total misunderstanding of both projects. A project begins and a project ends, yet it lives on through many different means. Both of these projects have infiltrated the teaching philosophies and activities of many who have never heard of CMP or MMCP. They have led to flexible sequential programs of music education through course outlines, publications, series textbooks, and curriculum studies. They have led to an increased use of the "discovery" approach in developing learning procedures espoused by Piaget and others. They have caused many programs to deal with the student as a total musician with opportunities to perform, conduct, make personal judgments about music, and develop his or her own creative talents. They have led to developments of a meaningful sequence of basic music concepts which promote continued musical growth. They have led to the judicious use of relevant analysis and theory at the level of the students' understanding. They have led to a greater understanding of the necessity of setting the proper atmosphere for learning in the classroom. They have led to the acceptance of all musics, broadening students' understanding and tolerance of the total art of music. □