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The Preparatory Program: An Effective Vehicle For Preparing Studio Teachers?

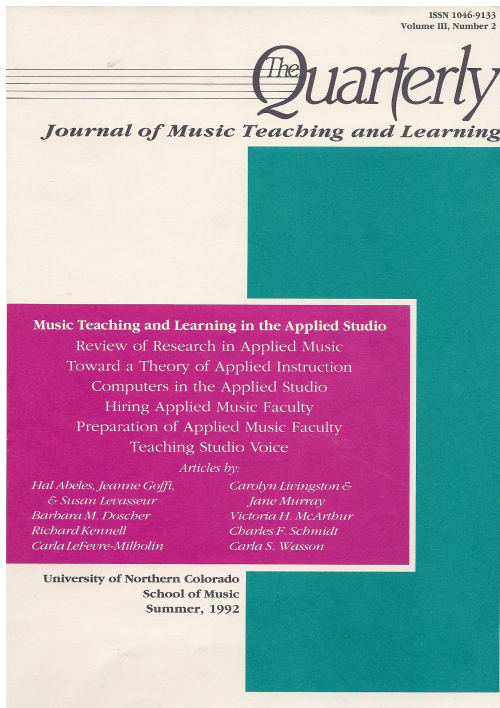
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It is with pleasure that we inaugurate the reprint of the entire seven volumes of The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning. The journal began in 1990 as The Quarterly. In 1992, with volume 3, the name changed to The Quarterly Journal of 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.

The Preparatory Program: An Effective Vehicle For Preparing Studio Teachers?

By Carolyn Livingston
and Jane Murray

University of Rhode Island

Preparatory programs exist in many college and university music departments as well as in conservatories throughout the United States. Whether such programs are called Preparatory Program, Precollege and Adult Music Education Division, or Community Division, for the most part their purpose is either to provide music lessons for members of the community or to serve as a feeder program for the sponsoring institution.

Music departments in institutions of higher learning are often able to provide facilities and faculties for lessons at a lower tuition rate than that of private studios. This makes such programs attractive to the general public. The university community is also a source of clientele for these programs, for members of faculty and staff often desire music lessons for themselves and/or their children. Another function of these programs (which we shall call "preparatory programs"), and the one

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on which this paper will focus, is the use of these programs as a training laboratory for applied studio teachers.

Teaching is an economic fact of life for many musicians. Some are blessed with the gift of teaching, some develop a love for teaching over time, and some teach to pay the bills. For many, the path to becoming a confident, successful applied teacher who enjoys teaching is long and fraught with trials and errors.

A well-organized college preparatory program can assist young musicians in developing a sound, effective teaching style. Many programs exist in which graduate students, music faculty members, and professional musicians serve as the teachers. Properly trained undergraduates can also be effective and enthusiastic teachers while simultaneously

gaining experience in studio teaching. Thus, in addition to providing music lessons for members of the community and funneling students into the sponsoring institution, an important function for the preparatory program is to prepare teachers to teach music.

Related Literature

Few publications have addressed in detail the role of preparatory programs. *The*

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Schirmer Guide to Schools of Music and Conservatories Throughout the World (Uscher, 1989) describes university music departments as well as music schools and conservatories. United States entries include those schools which offer at least a master's degree in music or have more than ten full-time faculty members in music above the instructor rank.

One or more institutions for each state in the United States is listed, for a total of approximately 200 entries. Elements of the main entry include Chief Administrator, Accreditation, Admission Procedure, Degrees Offered, Degree Requirements, General Program Areas, Music Library, Costs, and Special Programs. Under the Special Programs title, subcategories included are Featured Programs, Affiliated Programs, Foreign Programs, and Performing Groups. When preparatory programs are listed, they appear under the subcategory of Affiliated Programs.

A surprisingly small number of preparatory programs are mentioned as being sponsored by institutions included in *The Schirmer Guide*. The institutions are: Brooklyn College, Central Washington University, Converse College, Illinois Wesleyan University, Juilliard School, Memphis State University, Millikin University, Princeton University, Temple University, University of Louisville, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and Virginia Commonwealth University. It may be surmised that a number of administrators simply did not think to include a description of their institution's preparatory program under the Affiliated Programs subcategory when they provided information for *The Schirmer Guide*. Unfortunately, this omission may be indicative of a lack of commitment and sense of pride toward preparatory programs on the part of music department and conservatory administrators.

The descriptions given for these programs indicate that they differ widely in focus and clientele. For example, Illinois Wesleyan University accepts a limited number of piano and string students into its program to serve

as a laboratory group for students preparing to become music teachers (pp. 93-94). The description of the preparatory program at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is the longest such entry in *The Schirmer Guide*. Cadek Conservatory of Music, an auxiliary unit of the Cadek Department of Music, has as its mission the education of music students who are not enrolled at the university level. The comprehensive curriculum offers lessons on all instruments and voice, ensembles (including chamber music), theory, and a course designed to give precollege preparation to students intending to major in music at the college level. Suzuki training is offered in flute, harp, violin, and piano (p. 301).

Inferences about these and other preparatory programs can be drawn from Kreader's (1986) discussion of programs in piano pedagogy. Her article features interviews with four prize-winning beginning piano teachers and their pedagogy professors. The institutions at which the students received their training were Bob Jones University, Southern Methodist University, University of California at Santa Barbara, and University of Michigan. Although practical teaching experience is included in the pedagogy programs at each university, only Southern Methodist and Michigan are referred to in the article as sponsoring preparatory programs.

The beginning teacher who studied at Southern Methodist stated that a practicum teaching course was the most helpful class in her pedagogy program. During the five academic quarters she taught, planning meetings were held with her professors at which various teaching approaches were explored. Lessons were tape recorded, and students were expected to critique their own teaching in writing.

At the University of Michigan, a master's degree is awarded in piano pedagogy and performance. The program includes components in both pedagogical research and practical teaching experience. Teaching by the

students enrolled in the program is evaluated by peers and instructors. Self-evaluation is also part of the program. Video- and audio-taping are used in the evaluation procedure.

Without mentioning preparatory programs specifically, Maris (1991) details a four-level plan which would train performance majors to teach their instrument or voice. At the third level (junior and senior year and master's degree students) "emphasis would be placed on providing a balance of information about teaching, observation of model teaching, and supervision of student teaching" (p. 54). At Level Four in the Maris model (doctoral study), students would supervise the teaching being done by students in Level Three. Maris makes a strong case for formal training in performance pedagogy, stating that since we do not encourage learning to play an instrument by the trial-and-error method, neither should we expect teachers to learn to teach by trial and error. "Performing musicians need help in preparing to become effective teachers who will enrich their students' lives and cause no damage to them, physically or emotionally" (p. 55).

Studio Teacher Preparation

The entry into private teaching can be an intimidating experience for a person with no training for the profession. Without any other form of training, most beginning studio teachers will look to their own private teachers for guidance. Very often a new teacher will model the lesson on the methods of his or her most recent teacher. Especially with beginning students who have no previous musical training, this model will probably cause frustration on the part of teacher and student, for there also is no guarantee that one's mentor is indeed a good teacher. Many colleges hire renowned performers to teach in their departments, hoping to attract the highest caliber students. This is an effective policy for recruitment, but it does not assure that students will receive the best teaching.

What might a teacher training program include? Teaching techniques for both groups and individuals are at the top of the list. As Maris (1991, p. 31) maintains, teaching skill can be "refined and enhanced through teach-

ing, evaluation, practice, and observation of effective teaching models." The integration of theory into the studio lesson and the selection and presentation of appropriate materials would ideally be included. Nonmusical aspects of the curriculum such as studio management, business procedures and financial planning, information about professional organizations, and selection of instruments would greatly enhance the preparation of studio teachers. Such teachers also can benefit from training in the business aspects of establishing and maintaining a private studio. Resulting outcomes include self-confidence for the teacher, increased financial gain, and time savings which then can be spent, for example, in teaching additional students.

A college preparatory program can serve as a training laboratory to help college music majors learn how to be effective studio teachers. The unique situation provided by preparatory programs gives student teachers a chance to learn about themselves in a reversed role—that of teacher, rather than student. It provides supervised practical experience in studio teaching, something that is difficult to get any other way. In the field of private teaching, experience really has no equal as a teacher.

Participating in the Preparatory Program

College music majors who would like to participate in preparatory program training should have completed at least one year of a concentrated music curriculum including theory, history, and private lessons. They should also have the recommendation of their own private teacher, who can determine if the student's skills are at an appropriate level to begin teaching. Where possible, another benefit would be a semester of pedagogy seminar, taught by the preparatory program director, which would prepare students in the areas of teaching philosophy and practice in the private studio as well as in the business aspects of teaching.

Many preparatory programs hire local professional musicians as faculty. These teachers are needed to provide instruction for advanced students for whom a college-aged teacher would be inappropriate. Professional

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teachers can also serve as mentors for teachers-in-training.

Teachers-in-training must be evaluated on a regular basis. There are several ways to do this, and one of the best is through the use of videotape. Lessons are taped several times during a semester. The tape is then viewed by the program director, who makes comments and sets up an appointment to view the tape with the teacher-in-training and his or her mentor teacher or private teacher. This establishes an important dialogue among all parties concerned.

Also, a journal can be an effective means of evaluating a teacher-in-training. The teacher records the lesson plan, progress of the actual lesson, and personal thoughts and comments about each lesson. The journal is then shared with the director and mentor teacher or private teacher on a regular basis. Finally, the director can visit lessons for direct observation. This is the least recommended method of evaluation, however, because it can put unnecessary pressure on the teacher trainee as well as on the student.

Some consideration should be given as to the population to be served by a preparatory program. To attract and benefit the largest possible audience, a preparatory program can provide lessons to nonmusic majors at the sponsoring college or university as well as to children and adults from the surrounding community.

Teacher-student assignments should be made by the director of the program based on a personal or telephone interview, or, in the case of more advanced students, by audition. Usually students pay lesson fees based on the category of the teacher, with experienced graduate students and mentor teachers at higher rates than undergraduate teachers-in-training. Normally, preparatory program teachers are paid an hourly rate; teachers submit a time card outlining the number of lessons taught during a certain period. The program retains a percentage of the lesson fees to cover administrative costs, advertising,

printing, and postage. The director's salary may be subsidized by the sponsoring institution or may be paid from the proceeds of the program. Lessons generally correspond to the university calendar, with sessions typically running from September through December, January through May, and June through August.

A survey of the 20 teachers-in-training in the preparatory program sponsored by the University of Rhode Island's Department of Music sought their comments on the program. The students' experience ranged from one semester to three years in the program. The survey asked how the program had helped them to become better teachers, what specific skills had they learned by teaching in the program, whether the students planned to continue teaching after college, whether they would recommend the program to new music majors, and whether they had enjoyed teaching in the program?

Over half of the participating teachers answered the survey. All of the respondents reported that they enjoy teaching in the program, and would recommend it to a new music major. Many of them mentioned their appreciation of the requirement that all student teachers in the University of Rhode Island program present a student or students in at least one recital performance each semester. They reported that this gave them a firm objective toward which they could aim their students. The specific skills which were mentioned as having been gained through participation in the program included patience, communication (especially with different age levels), organization, time management, different approaches to teaching, and dealing with parents.

Many respondents felt that their participation in the program automatically made them a better teacher, while others reported that they learned to adapt their teaching style to different types and ages of students. One third-year violin teacher said that he benefited from his experiences in dealing with parents.


"The parents' knowledge of my being a novice teacher makes it a positive learning experience for myself and the student. There is such a varied spectrum of parental support. How does one deal with a parent who doesn't care, or one who is too meddlesome and bossy?" A first-year piano teacher stated, "Exposure to lots of beginners helps me to standardize my method of teaching and try out different techniques, since not everyone learns well by the same approach."

Students (or parents) enrolled in the University of Rhode Island program have the choice of an undergraduate teacher-in-training, a graduate student, or a faculty member. Many parents have expressed their delight with the enthusiasm of the younger, less-experienced teachers. The younger students feel less intimidated by these teachers because they are closer in age to their brothers and sisters or baby-sitters. This creates a teaching environment which is more comfortable for teacher and student. The teachers don't feel pressure to act as if they have years of experience, because the student (or parent) knows that they are "in training."

Summary

The literature concerning the role of preparatory programs in preparing studio teachers is sparse. A review of the material which does exist clearly indicates that preparatory programs in colleges, universities, and conservatories have differing roles and missions. Training skilled, self-confident studio teachers by providing practical teaching experience is a viable primary purpose for a preparatory program. Additional benefits of a such a program include the following: preparatory training for both future professional and amateur musicians, musical training for adult populations, increased enrollment for the sponsoring institution, and an enhanced relationship between the sponsor and the community in which it exists.

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