

2021

### Lowell Mason And The Meaning of Life

Manny Brand

*Southwest Texas State University*

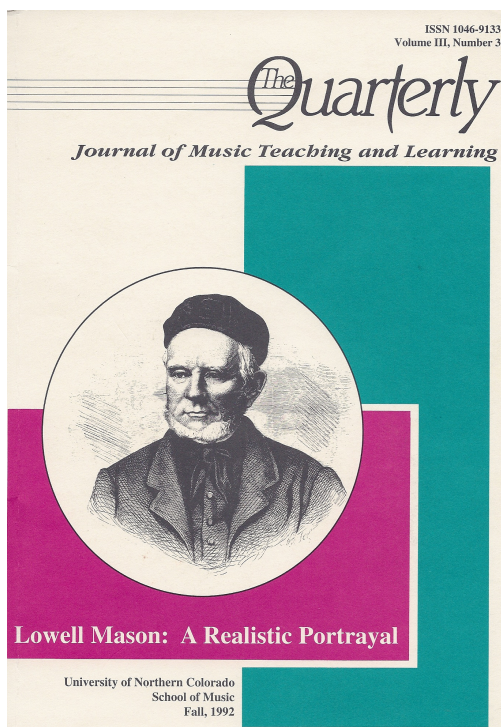
Follow this and additional works at: <https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Brand, Manny (2021) "Lowell Mason And The Meaning of Life," *Visions of Research in Music Education*: Vol. 16 , Article 22.

Available at: <https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme/vol16/iss3/22>



**Title:** Lowell Mason and the Meaning of Life

**Author(s):** Manny Brand

**Source:** Brand, M. (1992, Fall). Lowell Mason and the meaning of life. *The Quarterly*, 3(3), p. 3. (Reprinted with permission in *Visions of Research in Music Education*, 16(3), Autumn, 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.*

# Lowell Mason And The Meaning Of Life

**Editorial by Manny Brand**

*Southwest Texas State University*

**I**t used to be that one would buy a car for transportation and, of course, to create an image, bring a little “style” into one’s life, and even make a statement. Nowadays car makers offer a great deal more. In return for a “test drive,” Mazda will tell you the meaning of life. Gee, what a deal. I get a chance to drive a car that I can’t afford, but in return I receive what all of us are seeking—insight into the meaning of our existence. This is an opportunity not to be missed.

Of course I selected the most expensive car for my test drive. If you are going to dream--dream big. So I drove the car that I loved, but couldn’t possibly afford; the monthly payments almost exceeded my monthly mortgage payment. And, as promised, I received a 213-page book: *The Meaning of Life*. The book contains statements from 173 individuals, from all facets of life, offering their personal revelations on the meaning of life.

Some views are ordinary. Armand Hammer, for instance, believes that “we are here to do good.” Other statements are bleak. “We may yearn for a ‘higher answer’--but none exists,” says Stephen Jay Gould, and another contributor states that “We are nothing but a short-lived species on the overall scale of things.” John Cage offers the fewest words to capture the meaning of life: “No why. Just here.” Jesse Jackson speaks of being here “to do God’s will,” and Theodore

Hesburgh sees the meaning of life as “faith, hope, and love.”

What does the meaning of life have to do with Lowell Mason and this special issue? For many music educators, Lowell Mason is an icon for the meaning of life. For this nineteenth-century figure defined for himself and others a meaning of life through music and education. We know of his generosity and philanthropy,

abilities to seize political and economic opportunities, teaching prowess, missionary character, sexist views toward women, desire to shape the musical life of America, zeal for a universal music education, belief in music as a “hand-maiden” of religious redemption, and success in building upon what had gone before. Such attributes continue to shape us and our profession.

Lowell Mason’s meaning of life is our heritage; he is

“What does the meaning of life have to do with Lowell Mason and this special issue? For many music educators, Lowell Mason is an icon for the meaning of life.”

forever a significant part of our roots.

As shown through these pages, here is an individual of significant musicality, untiring industry, and great concern for and expertise in the musical education of children. As late twentieth-century music educators search for meanings to their lives, might they turn to this pioneer of American music education? Mason offers us a professional heritage, a basis from which to look ahead, and insights to the meaning of our lives in our work in music education. All that is more important than an RX 7 twin-turbo anyway. 