

# TRANSFORMATION THROUGH MUSIC

## Experiences in Music Education

by

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ALVINA A. KOSHY

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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EXPERIENCES IN MUSIC EDUCATION**

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**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba  
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## ABSTRACT

Students in grades one to grade six regularly have music education experiences in their music classrooms. In the literature however these experiences have not been given the attention they deserve. Their rich, complex and multilayered nature has been overlooked and the voices of the teachers and students in the music classroom are silent. This study examines the complexity of the teachers' and students' experiences in music education classrooms and their impact. In particular this study explores the music teachers' and students' narratives about their music classroom experience with regards to the transformative nature of music.

The purpose of the study was to understand the essence of the transformative experience of music for student and teacher in the music classroom. The data consisted of transcripts of two interviews with each of four teachers and of the writings of ninety students. A hermeneutic interpretation of the data was undertaken. Interpretation was corroborated with the teachers in the interviews as part of a seven step analysis. The approach of hermeneutic phenomenology was particularly sensitive to process, language, interpretation and getting at the essence of the experiences in music education.

In examining the data the complex, multilayered and relational nature of the experience of music in the classroom was seen. Transformation through music was seen to happen in many different ways. Music education experiences were supported and prompted by teacher practices. Teacher practices supported the transformations through a process of bringing out the voice: both in the vocal aural sense and the way in which the voice is the essence of our being. The data showed that music experiences in education have the potential to be significant and transforming in different ways.

The results of this study point to the relevance and significance of the reflections that teachers and students have about their music education experiences. The study shows the potential depth of the music experience and points to the value of music education.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This study originates from an effort to understand the experience of music education in greater depth and thereby understand its value with greater clarity.

In our everyday life we are inundated with music and music is part of our celebrative and memorable occasions in life. Within the education system we recognize the value of music as part of the expressive arts. In the past twenty years of music education, music teachers have developed programs which, due to economic constraints are now in danger of being cut. The value and worth of all programs are being questioned. It is disappointing to hear that music is once again being dismissed as a frill in the midst of discussions about back to basics and the three R's. In places where decisions to cut music programs are made it could be said that there is a lack of understanding of the importance and value of students' participation in making music. It has been shown that in a good educational climate only five percent of school week is spent on the fine arts (Eisner 1982). The limited time of the arts in the timetable could be reflecting the lack of understanding by the decision making bodies within the education system that the

arts represent one of the ways through which humans construct and convey meaning and that that the creation of art forms requires the use of judgment, perceptivity, ingenuity and purpose, in a word intelligence (Eisner 1982, 74).

The value of the arts and in particular music, in contributing to the development of the person and his/her intelligence would benefit from being given more time in the curriculum and being more carefully understood. Eisner has described experiencing music as developing different modes of knowing. These include including the aesthetic, the affective, the spiritual, the intuitive and as an experience of knowledge through the senses (Eisner, 1985). In all of these ways of experiencing music there is a change in the individual. It is this phenomenon of change or transformation through music which forms the basis of exploration for this study.

Throughout the ages music has been considered to have the power to heal those who are disturbed, distressed, and in pain. Music therapy is now a growing field directed at challenged or disadvantaged groups in society. We experience and witness through the media, the ways in which music changes many milieux in society. And yet, change through music as it happens everyday in the music education classroom is not a familiar topic in music teacher dialogue. Most of the discussion throughout the years at music education workshops, and conferences has focused on the content of teaching.

Although music teachers focus mainly on making music in their classroom activities, the classrooms are not immune to the stresses of society. Some children exhibit signs of inabilities to attend to learning and act out negative emotions in the classroom with their peers. Music teachers use music as a means to work with children who have difficulty in engaging in learning. As well they work with other children who are keenly interested in participating in different learning activities. In engaging in musical activities with all of the students in a school, music teachers are in a position to see many changes in their students as they participate in these musical activities.

Transformation is defined as a change in external form or inner nature (Webster's 1970). Transformation might include a change in awareness, self concept, physiology (Tomatis 1991), disposition, attitude, behavior, expressiveness, sensitivity, understanding and manner of performing, listening, playing and relating in the music education context. The experience of transformation as understood in this study is seen as spanning a whole spectrum of change from the participatory response of the challenged individual, to the therapeutic response by the emotionally distraught individual, to the the aesthetic experience (Broudy 1972, 36), the self actualization experience (Maslow 1970, 22) and the transcendant experience (Tate 1990). In all of these kinds of experiences there is a significant change in the individual.

The purpose of this study is to examine teachers' and students' experiences of change through music in the music classroom. The central question to be addressed in this study is: "What is the essence of the transformative experience of music for students in music classroom experiences?" The literature about the experiences of music teachers in the music classroom will be examined; teachers and students will be interviewed.

A discussion of transformation in the music education context raises questions about the connections of teachers and students in the experience of music in the classroom. What is the significance of the sound that is being made by student and teacher? Does music "move us" as Boardman (1991) says, do we have "insights" as Langer (1969) says, do we experience the transcendence as Tate (1991) has identified? These questions potentially point to the depth and the potential of the music education experience.

Experience has been described in the literature as including contextual, relational and temporal aspects (MacLeod 1990). The music classroom is the context, the teacher, student and music are in relationship within the music classroom; teachers and students experience

changes through their involvement with the music. In seeking to understand the essence of the transformative music experience, the contextual, relational and temporal aspects of experience are discussed.

Of relevance to this discussion of the essence of the transformative experience of music in the classroom are the teachers' inner dialogues, and understanding of the experiences of making music with children. The teachers' thoughts about the classroom experience and the teacher practices in these situations are key to the experiences in the classroom. The experiences of concerts, performances at the festival, playing a game in class, singing songs, making music ensembles and all the musical explorations of the music classroom impact the children and are examples of the context being considered. By listening to the stories of the teachers and students about these everyday music experiences there is the possibility that the everyday classroom experience and their transformative nature can be revealed.

From the interviews with teachers and the students' reports, this study seeks to describe the experience of music in the classroom; to illuminate the dynamics of the situation. Significant to this discussion is the teacher's knowledge and influence in classroom music experiences. In the discussion, the importance of the teachers experiential knowledge is brought to light. Experiential knowledge has, for the most part, received little attention in the music research literature. The study reveals the everyday life of the music teacher, and illuminates taken for granted meanings embedded in teaching skills, practices and language. This study also acknowledges how children experience transformation through music in the classroom through the writings of the children about a musical experience.

Within the music education literature three distinct foci are evident. Studies examine for the most part, student practices, student experiences and the music itself. Few studies explicitly

attend to connection between the three. Within the music education literature, there is little attention paid to understanding the experience of music itself. The literature that examines the transformative possibilities of music has shown how music affects us physiologically, psychologically, emotionally, and intellectually and spiritually. (Tomatis 1991, Clyne 1991, Eisner 1982, Tate 1991). There is little evidence of relating these transformative possibilities of music to the way in which we participate in experiences of music in the classroom.

The focus of most music education research is on the content of instruction. To date, content and teacher behaviours have been well developed through studies that employ quantitative methods. Lacking in these studies is a picture of the context of the music classroom experience. The transformational experience of music can be more successfully captured by an interpretative approach. Hermeneutic phenomenology has been successful in other fields at depicting the complexity of experience (MacLeod 1990). It appears that the phenomenological method is an appropriate approach and method to study transformative experiences in music education.

Phenomenological research is

the study of lived experience...the explication of phenomena as they present themselves to consciousness...the study of essences...the description of the experiential meanings we live as we live them...the human scientific study of phenomena...the attentive practise of thoughtfulness...a poetizing activity. (Van Manen 1990, 13-15)

Phenomenology seeks meaning and significance of certain phenomena. The knowledge of this approach is not a matter of intellect alone; it is "a matter of the depth of the soul, spirit,

embodied knowing and being" (Bollnow 1990, in Van Manen ed. 14). As such it is particularly well suited to the study of music education.

Thus the method is "interpretive research, which examines the conditions of meaning created by interactions of teacher, students, subject matters, and contexts of learning" (Reimer, 1992 30). Through a process of dialogue, interview, writing and collaboration, this thesis describes the experiences of transformation through music as told by the music teachers and their students. The aspects of the music experience in the classroom includes the transformations experienced through music, and the relevant teacher practices, the pedagogical connection in the transformative experience of music in the classroom.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. Chapter two is the review of the research literature with regards to how the experience of music in the music education classroom is depicted. The ways in which the literature talks more specifically about the experience of musical sound follows. The final section is a review of literature about how musical sound has been known to be transforming in many different contexts.

Chapter three begins with an introduction to phenomenology, the study of the essence of experience. The second section explores a hermeneutic phenomenological seven step analysis. The final section presents the way in which the data were collected in interviewing the teachers and asking their students to write about a musical experience.

The interviews have allowed the voices of the music educators to be heard as they relate and reflect on their experiences of music with children. The stories of the teachers have pointed to the taken for granted knowledge and practices in music teaching. Making visible the taken for granted, allowed for the possibility of insights into the nature of music experiences in the

music classroom. Furthermore these insights are relevant to the focus of the transformative music experience.

From the analysis of the interviews and students' writings, emerged the themes which became the points of discussion. In chapter four the themes inherent in the experience of music in the classroom are discussed. The transformations discussed in chapter five are those identified by teachers in their stories about the music classroom experience. In chapter six the teacher practices that are part of the transformative music experience are described.

In the final chapter the themes of chapters four through six are extended to a discussion of how these transformative experience in music education lead to opening up the voice, in the literal sense and what ultimately the voice signifies for children in music classrooms as that of the essence of the child's education.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

The many aspects of experience of music in the music education classroom have been addressed in music education literature. In the first section of this chapter, literature with respect to the experience of music in the education classroom is examined. The second section focuses on literature that addresses the way in which music is experienced. The third section reviews ways in which music transforms individuals. This review aims to show the relevance of this study on transformation through music in relation to music education experiences.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The value of music education has generally not been articulated in public discussions about education. The music advocacy movement began in the 1980's in North America, due to economic crisis, and cutbacks in education (The Report of the National Commission on Music Education 1991). The movement asks educators to articulate to the public the value of music education. This movement is a response to the public education reform of the 1980's in which declines in math and science scores were blamed for the "competitiveness gap" (National Commission on Music Education Report 1991). The ensuing discussions about children's education focused on math and science and were silent about the value of music education. This led music educators, musicians, composers, manufacturers, technicians and retailers in the music industry in the United States to sign a petition calling once and for all an end to the notion that music and the arts are mere "curricular icing". A National Commission of Music

Education was formed including leaders from education, government, business, and the arts. A music advocacy group has been organized in Canada (Coalition For Music Education In Canada, Music Education Coalition of Manitoba ) as well, with similar philosophy statements and with the similar intent of informing decision makers about the value of music education as the educational discussions in Canada are similar to those in the United States. The credo of the commission in the United States is:

Just as there can be no music without learning, no education is complete without music.

Music makes the difference (The Report of the National Commission on Music Education 1991)

The Commission held public hearings, a national symposium and then presented their report to politicians, arts groups, parent groups, advocacy groups, government agencies and individuals committed to the basic role of music and the other arts. The published report addresses in chapter one the assertion that music has "intrinsic value for the learner, and that a knowledge of music is essential to an educated human being." Chapter two explores the growing evidence that "music education is being pushed to the periphery in our schools." Chapter three points to "new, pathbreaking areas of research on the nature of intelligence and brain function that are linked to music." and secondly underscores the "significant contributions that music education can make to all of education beyond its intrinsic value."

In the opening of *Basic Concepts in Music Education* 11, Fowler calls for new concepts, new agenda and new modes of operation from the profession. "if music is ever to assume a significant role in the schools, our goal must be to make a case to include music education as part of an individual's basic education" (Colwell 1991). Fowler is criticizing the emphasis in

music education in spending energy on the select, gifted or talented students. This raises the question of what understanding of music and its experience would assist music in assuming a significant role in the schools? Before proposing change in the understanding of music and its experience, it is important to review what has been shown in the literature to be the understanding of the experience of music in the classroom.

A review of literature shows that most writers about the music education classroom have traditionally focused on educational practices dealing with teaching and learning, such as curriculum, instruction, assessment and evaluation. Ideas about these areas form the foundations on which the profession bases its educational practices. The literature shows how content is treated (Elliot 1991), what and how music is taught (Eisner 1985), what kind of musical experience is given priority (Cutieffa 1993), and what is emphasized (Schmidt & Zdzinski 1990).

## **THE EXPERIENCE OF THE MUSIC EDUCATION CLASSROOM**

The literature about the music education classroom has viewed different specific aspects of the experience. Schmitt & Zdzinski (1993) have done a review of the literature, based on five music education research journals between 1975 and 1990, in which they identified and have categorized the topics of the twenty five most cited quantitative research articles. These categories represent a significant emphasis in the literature over a period of time and are used as a framework in the next section. The literature examined is from 1990 to 1994 and the focus of the literature is consistent with the twenty five studies reviewed by Schmidt & Zdzinski.

Schmitt & Zdzinski found the five areas of research topics areas most frequently studied in music education literature to be:

- 1) Teacher behaviours
- 2) Learner behaviours
- 3) Interaction of teacher with learner
- 4) Content of instruction
- 5) Interaction of content of instruction and learner (Schmitt & Zdzinski 1993).

The following examples illustrate the type of research literature found in these general areas of study. Each type of study promises to reveal something of the experience in the music education classroom.

### **1)Teacher Behaviours**

Most studies focused on attention to teachers' attributes and characteristic behaviours in the classroom (Brand 1990, Kvet 1993). The glimpse these articles give us about the classroom experience is that outstanding teachers have many special qualities and their backgrounds have prepared and supported them in being what they are. The following studies have been chosen to show how the teacher is described in the music education classroom experience. In these studies aspects of teacher behaviour are identified as being significant to greater learning in the classroom.

A study of successful teaching attributes as identified by elementary education majors, were categorized into the following four areas: (Kvet 1993)

- a) understanding and organizing for individual differences in children
- b) musical ability and positive feelings for music
- c) proactive personality characteristics
- d) external factors affecting music teaching

There is some recent literature about excellent music teachers, including studies of effective teachers (Polachi 1987), and articles on the master teacher in music education (Brand 1990). Brand's study on the master music teacher gives insight into the making of a master music teacher, what makes them great, how they handle discipline, and how they motivate others. These aspects of the master teacher discussion give some important insights into the music education classroom experiences.

In looking at the significance of the music education experience it is relevant to understand (Baker 1992) how three music educators, who made significant contributions to the profession, identified experiences in their past as significant. The significant experiences in these educators' lives which influenced them included family support and mentors. These successful educators brought to their music classroom teaching the support they had experienced. As there is no mention of the student, we can not see the music classroom experience in this research.

Yet another study, (Aleg 1993), looked factors in the development of leading general music educators, three men and three women He proposed a theory that leading general music educators move from being beginning teachers to being recognized leaders in a three-phase developmental sequence.

The first phase, early childhood through completion of undergraduate degree, is characterized by ambition, hard work, extroversion, perseverance, energy, tenacity, creativity, success orientation, competitiveness and a love of music. The second phase, from beginning of teaching to completion of a doctorate, is characterized by creativity, individuality, missionary zeal, articulation of a teaching philosophy, metaphorical understanding of teaching and education. The third phase, in which there is recognition by the profession, is characterized by self confidence, risk taking, freedom to explore new ideas, a sense of urgency and a sense of accomplishment (Aleg 1993).

It is helpful to understand the change that leading music teachers move through. It can be assumed that teacher development such as identified by Aleg (1993) would impact on the students and on music programs. As teachers change in their personal and professional understandings, as in gaining greater freedom to explore new ideas they would most likely change their ways of teaching thereby impacting the experience of music in the education classroom.

Another list of attributes or behaviours describing the exemplary teacher emerged from a 1992 study by King of exemplary music educators. His use of observation, and ethnographic interviews, led to his identifying four major themes. These themes include the high degree of verbal and non verbal skills shown by exemplary teachers. Exemplary music teachers were seen as organized and had routines which provided the framework for artistry in teaching. Humour is essential to exemplary music teachers; they provided a quality environment conducive to quality teaching and learning (King 1992).

This kind of study points to qualities and behaviours that impact upon the classroom music experience. The studies leave the impression that with exemplary teachers, students would be part of a particular environment conducive to learning.

Although these studies show the qualities and characteristics of excellent teachers, what is missing in this literature is any reference to the learner in music education. We do not in fact see the students or hear the music.

## **2) The Learner In Music Education**

There are a number of recent studies that focus on the learners, their attributes, abilities and mostly, their cognitive responses to music activities. These offer a glimpse into the experience of music in the classroom as the studies show in classroom settings.

The research about the learner in music education includes examples that focused on the cognitive learning aspect such as the effect of age differences in learning ability given certain teaching techniques (Jones 1992), and student perception in music (Demorest 1992). Other studies focused on the emotional response of the learner to preferences for one type of instrument over another (Delzell & Leppla 1992). Another aspect of the learner examined in the research literature is that of the impact of student personality on preferences (Lewis & Schmidt 1991).

A number of studies examine the cognitive response to specific activities intended to teach a specific concept. One example (Jones 1992) looks at the effects of verbal and motor responses (such as conducting) on meter conceptualization. Older children were able to learn meter

through experiences with conducting patterns but the younger children did not benefit similarly. This is an example of the way in which studies about the music education experience focus on a specific aspect of the experience but fail to look at the whole of the experience.

Demorest (1992) in his study entitled, "Information Integration Theory: An Approach to the Study of Cognitive Development in Music", identified the type of educational experiences in music that might produce a more expert approach to musical perception. Demorest found that the most necessary skill in comprehending music is the ability of students to identify similarity or difference between two musical ideas. Demorest's study is useful as it illuminates an aspect of student learning that teachers deal with every day. On an ongoing basis in the classroom teachers have to identify how students respond to different ways of presenting musical ideas. Differences in the ways in which students comprehend is an important aspect of the music education experience.

Joyce Eastlund in her study of perceptual differences between expert and novice music listeners, used a multidimensional scaling analysis in which she examined listeners' perceptions of music. She says that what music is being taught is only slightly more important than the way it is taught (Eastlund 1992). This study points to the importance of the process in all education: that it is a process that assists the student in cognitive learning.

The following studies are examples of the types of studies that examine the emotional response of students to different aspects of the music education experience. A description and analysis of an Orff Schulwerk Program of Music (Martin 1992), identified through student responses that of all primary students studied, grade five boys responded most negatively about how they felt about the programs. Martin's study recognizes students' affective response to learning. We are not given any understanding of the context within their experience

happens or an understanding about the way in which they interpreted their experience. The study has not given us a feeling about the classroom experience.

Delzell and Leppla (1992), studied gender association of musical instruments. They identified high preferences for saxophone, drums and flute and lower preference for violin for fourth grade students. Such a study of preferences of pitch level could in fact be dependent on exposure and familiarity but nevertheless is an example of student response, and gives a glimpse into the emotional aspect of the music classroom experience for the student.

Kratz (1993) conducted a developmental study of children's interpretation of emotion in music and concluded that twelve year olds interpret emotion in music in similar ways to six year olds, implying that the interpretation of emotion in music does not need to be taught. This is interesting in view of the fact that emotional responses to instrument preferences and pitch preferences varied. Clyne's (1991) research on sentic forms would corroborate that everyone experiences emotional responses when they hear music. Both Kratz' and Clyne's research would suggest that emotion is intrinsic to experiencing the sound, a valuable point in understanding the music education experience.

Another study (Lewis & Schmidt 1991), linked personality and music preference. It showed that listeners respond to music in different ways, in relationship to their personality traits. Personality and music preferences are both very significant to the classroom dynamic. The connection between personality and preference would impact on how the teacher makes decisions about music activities. It is a part of the experience of music education, not the whole.

The learner response from these studies is shown to be largely the cognitive and emotional response to the teaching to the music, and to the means of making music. In all of these studies the student was objectified. The student interaction with the teacher and the music is not visible. In the following category of studies we see the interaction of the teacher with the learner.

### **3) Interaction Of Teacher With Learner**

There is somewhat less research on the teachers' interactions with the learner. The following study (Persellin 1992), is an example of interaction between student and teacher. It centred on childrens' learning responses to different teaching modalities. The study focused on children's responses to rhythm patterns taught through aural, visual and kinesthetic modalities. Persellin confirmed that children learn in a variety of modalities, and so learning could be improved if teaching included all these modalities.

It is of significance that examples of research on interactions of teacher and student were rare in the literature. The larger and greatest emphasis was on the content of instruction.

### **4) Content of Instruction**

The major focus of the literature in music education has been on the content of instruction. This corresponds with the view of learning that the cognitive aspect of knowing in experience is more significant than other forms of knowing. This view does not give adequate attention to the importance of understanding the interrelatedness of the teacher, the learner and the music in the experience of learning in the classroom.

Some examples of recent studies on the content of instruction focus on experiences of creativity in the classroom (Kratus 1990, Moore 1990, Balkin 1990). Other studies look at how to develop pitch (e.g. Vispoel 1992), and still others address the fundamentals of music curricula (Cutietta 1993). Music education journals have described successful ways of teaching the skills of music, and ways of structuring the curriculum for creative learning (Kratus 1990, Moore, 1990, Balkin 1990). All recommend that improvising and composing be developed at all levels of the curriculum as improvisation experiences in music can include the whole child. The experience of improvising has been described as requiring the greatest level of musicianship.

A recent study on measuring pitch with computerized testing (Vispoel 1992) shows the specificity of thought involved in teachers presenting phrases and intervals in particular sequences to develop student tonal memory. The ways in which teachers can develop pitch are an example of the specific kinds of discussion on content of instruction. The experience of music in the classroom includes this aspect but it is not the whole experience.

Questioning the traditional forms of teaching musical concepts, Cutietta (1993) has said that the actual processing of music is holistic, intuitive and non verbal. He calls into question the way in which music is taught as left brain subject matter of rhythm, melody, harmony, form and tone color. Studies have shown that there is confusion on the part of the students, even after teaching, in their ability to correctly identify the elements. Loud and soft seem relative and different to different listeners. Cutietta recommends a study of musical perception: motion, energy, flow, fabric and colour.

The literature on the content of instruction has given us information about aspects of the cognitive notions of the structure of music, and processes in presenting content. However, it

has isolated and objectified the teacher, the student and the music. Although the literature on creativity points to a more experiential view of the music classroom in which the learner interacts with the content of instruction, the study does not show the experience. These studies which focus on the content of instruction in music education have not allowed us to see the fullness of the experience of creativity in the classroom or the way in which motion, energy, flow, fabric and colour would be experienced in connection with the teacher, the student and the music. In the last category identified by Schmitt and Zdzinski we focus on the interaction of content of instruction with the learner.

### **5) Interaction Of Content Of Instruction With Learner**

The studies that focus on how students are impacted by the content of instruction show an aspect of relationship in the music education experience, in this case that of the student and the music.

A study of effects of repetition on tempo preference of elementary children (Moskovitz 1992) showed that repetition increased childrens' preference for slow art music, whereas initially they had preferred fast music. In becoming familiar with the music the students came to appreciate the slow music. Coming to appreciate a type of music could be considered to be a significant experience but this research does not give us insight into the experience itself.

A study on measuring musical originality using Information theory (Coffman 1992) demonstrated that originality in composition increased after time spent in a course on improvisation. This study hints at how students become more confident in composition through these experiences. Coffman demonstrated that engaging in creative experience allows

originality to increase. Despite this finding, this study has not allowed us to see the context of the experience. Invisible in this study is the teachers role and the music.

It appears the focus of studies on music experiences in education is been mainly on the cognitive learning of music skills. The predominant emphasis in music teacher education according to Bowman has long been the instructional method. He says the transmission of instructional skills must be grounded in philosophical habits of mind. "The traditional methodological base requires broadening." (Bowman 1992, 33).

The literature thus reviewed, does not get at the heart of the music experience in the classroom. The music education literature reviewed on the topic of the teacher, the student, the content of instruction, the interaction of the teacher with the learner and the interaction of the content of instruction with the learner has addressed the musical experience as it relates to learning skills, cognition, and perception of music. In such research we are not afforded a complete picture of the experience of the music in the classroom. The literature reviewed presents a fragmented picture of the classroom. Missing in this literature are the relationships of the classroom, the reflections of teachers and students and the stories of the music classroom. Discussion and analysis of the connection between teacher, student and music (ie. the total music experience of the music classroom) does not appear. There is also an absence of the importance role of reflection in teacher practice. The studies do not show the depth of experience: rather it is a superficial view of what really happens in the music classroom.

Thus the major gap in the literature is the richness of experience in the classroom. The way in which music happens in the classroom needs to receive greater attention. This is substantiated in the recent writings of Elliot (1991) in which he advises music education philosophers to help practitioners by paying more scholarly attention to the nature and value of 'musicing'.

Perhaps it is also time for music education philosophers to give more consideration to the kind of knowledge possessed by those music educators who already know how to induct students into the interplay of informed musical actions, understandings, practices and traditions through the development of individual musicianship. More fundamentally, perhaps it is time for music education philosophers to put forth alternatives to music education's official doctrine. (Elliot, 1991)

Approaches to research are needed that bring the full experience to light. Although conventional research approaches reveal useful aspects of experience, certain parts of the experience remain hidden. The research literature has been based on rational thought based on the "the dualistic conception of the world which originated in Greek thought" (Hanley 1990, 35). Her view is that a new understanding of music is emerging.

A new understanding of music, what it is, why it is valued, is being forged...What will emerge is yet unclear, but it is essential that the new model acknowledge that music does not exist by reason alone." (Hanley 1990, 45)

This calls for an understanding of music as a field of study in which music is created as being neither exclusively internal nor exclusively external to ourselves, in which we focus our attention on the connections and common living processes that exist (Golden 1992). In all disciplines a way of looking at life in a holistic way; to see the connections in experience has emerged. This view has been articulated by Capra, known for his thought and writing on the paradigm of a universe as a web of interrelationships in all disciplines. Capra contends that one is looking for patterns behind patterns and for processes beneath structures in which

relationship should be the basis of all definition. The aim is to discover the principles of organization in all phenomenon to see the pattern which connects (Capra 1989, 72).

Capra's thoughts are relevant in that they point to a way of looking at the experience of the classroom in which the relationships are recognized and understood. Micheal Golden.(1992) suggests that we need a humanistic music theory, one in which we recognize the spiritual aspect of music. This, according to Golden, is an understanding of the connection or fusion of the individual with the surrounding universe.

Beyond recognizing the connection within experience is that of recognizing the embodied aspect of experience. Eisner writes about the different forms of knowing involved in the arts. He says cognition has been narrowly conceived in the past in that it has excluded the affect. He says "There can be no cognitive activity that is not also affective." (Eisner 1982, 28). Furthermore he states that knowing depends on experience. It would appear that it would be most fruitfull to look at the classroom experience in order to understand the completeness of the experience which would include such aspects as the cognitive, the affective, the physical, the spiritual, and the relationships of the teacher, the student, and the music.

There is a need to address the question of the value the experience of music by looking at the classroom music experience. Since the literature does not deal with the depth of the classroom experience, there appears to be a need for a different type of research on classroom experience, a need to view the experience in its totality, to examine its essence by dialoguing with the educators and children in the classrooms.

Reimer, in writing about the emerging concept of educational research, as consisting of narrative story-telling says,

humans are, essentially, story-telling organisms who lead storied lives as individuals and as social groups. To understand human reality requires the study of the ways humans experience their world, and human experience can be grasped most truthfully by exploring the stories that tell about the truths being lived. (Reimer 1992, 32)

Reimer says we need research in which the voices of the teachers themselves are heard. Missing in research are "the questions that teachers ask, the interpretive frames that teachers use to understand and improve their own classroom practices" (Reimer 1992, 33).

The method chosen to study the nature of the music education experience will be based on listening to the voices of the teachers and students and will be discussed in the following chapter.

The other part of the question that this study hoped to address was the meaningful part of the music experience. Why is the experience of music significant? How does music impact you?

## **THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE EXPERIENCE OF MUSIC**

The experience of music has been discussed extensively in terms of the aesthetic experience. Aesthetic practice and theory are a conscious intellectual phenomenon. The literature on this subject is vast and for the purpose of this study will be limited to Langer's (1969) writings on the subject as she best encapsulates the discussion on the aesthetic experience best. Furthermore her thoughts have been very influential within the profession on the subject of the aesthetic experience.

The aesthetic experience is known in its reflection as a conscious objectification of the experience of sound. Langer says that the significance is not that music is an emotional response, nor that it is self expression, but rather that music is semantic. "If music has any significance it is semantic, not symptomatic" (Langer 1969, 218 ). That is, music expresses knowledge of human feeling. She believes it expresses the eternal, infinite and ideal, not merely the passion, love or longing of a particular individual. She says there is a "psychical distance" between the artist and the art form which is the aesthetic stance. The question this raises is that of the separation of the individual and the music. This objectification of the experience is a partial view as certainly the sound is not separated from the listener in the physical, emotional and spiritual sense.

Langer argues with Hanslic's views that musical structures logically resemble certain dynamic patterns of human experience (Langer 1969, 239). Hanslic's view seems to explain the way in which the music corresponds with how we experience the world emotionally.

Langer also disputes the notion that musical dynamics relate to forms of mental life. In this view crescendo and diminuendo correspond to directly observable activity in life, corresponding to the same in one's inner life. Accelerando and ritardando can be observed, for example, in one's speech patterns. These thoughts also shed light on the possible meaning of the experience of music.

The meaning in the experience of music according to Langer lies in it's ability to suggest feelings and with that all the thoughts we have about those feeling. "Articulation is its life, not assertion; expressiveness, not expression" (Langer 1969, 226).

The real power of music lies in the fact that it can be 'true' to the life of feeling in a way that language cannot; for its significant forms have that ambivalence of content which words cannot have. (Langer 1969, 243)

Her explanation that music is revealing where words are obscuring, because it can have not only content, but also a "transient play of contents"(Langer 1969) is eloquent thought about the rational aspect of experience.

In the final paragraphs of her chapter on the discussion of music as being semantic, Langer also alludes to the physical, imaginative, intuitive and bodily aspect of the music experience. She says the physical character of a tone, which we think of as "sweet" or "rich" or "strident" and so forth, may suggest a momentary interpretation, by a physical response. In the following passage we see all the possibilities of the musical experience.

The assignment of meanings is a shifting, kaleidoscopic play, probably below the threshold of consciousness, certainly outside the pale of discursive thinking. The imagination that responds to music is personal and associative and logical, tinged with affect, tinged with bodily rhythm, tinged with dream, but concerned with a wealth of formulations for its wealth of wordless knowledge, its whole knowledge of emotional and organic experience, of vital impulse, balance, conflict, the ways of living and dying and feeling. (Langer 1969, 244)

Although she began the chapter with the argument of music as a conscious intellectual phenomenon, in these final paragraphs she alludes to other aspects of the musical experience. In fact at the end of the chapter she says "...not communication but insight is the gift of music" "Music has fulfilled its mission whenever our hearts are satisfied" (Langer 1969, 244).

Langer's argument about the significance of music is that music is an intellectual, conscious phenomenon. In her discussion she objectifies music. At the end of the chapter, however, she writes about how music is experienced. In these poetic paragraphs she introduces the words "insight," "imagination," "dream," "the unconscious," "the physical response" and proposes the idea that music satisfies the heart. Furthermore, she says the assignment of meanings is outside the pale of discursive meaning, implying the realm of the intuitive. Implied in these meanings for Langer seems to be the total human being: the significance of music is the total human response. The total human response hints at depth of meaning that has not been considered in the literature on the music education experience.

This discussion of the predominance of aesthetic response to music has been questioned by Bowman. His countering of the aesthetic response hints at other possible ways in which music is experienced.

"Music's significance and value are seldom if ever confined to the aesthetic: its cultural or contextual 'resonance' is insuppressible. Inquiry along lines like these seeks to extend the scope of musically relevant dialogue, to place alongside questions of structure, authenticity, and 'intrinsic' worth, questions that probe personal, social, and political utility: questions such as, what is this music good for?" (Bowman 1992)

Yet another aspect of the music experience is that of context. In a phenomenological account of the whole, part relationship in music as it relates to the object of music education, Bartholomew (1991) says, "The individual music experience must be seen in context of both self and world."

Myra Tate's (1991) thesis holds that the true essence of a singing performance is the magical coming together of the poet and composer. The medium for that essence, or creative genius, is the singer. At that moment, if the performer and listener choose to open themselves to the divine in the music, it then has the power to be a transcendent experience. This, Tate says, is the spiritual aspect of singing. The spiritual aspect of singing is a deeper meaning of the musical experience that has not been prevalent in the literature.

Huebner has defined the spiritual as a form of knowing in which there is an openness and receptivity to aspects of life that make possible something new and give hope and expectations.

Spirit refers to the possible and the unimagined to the possibility of new ways, new knowledge, new relationships, new awareness. Spirit refers to that which makes it possible to acknowledge that present forms of life-the institutions, relationships, symbols, language, habits-cannot contain the human being. That quality of life that participation in the deeper, hidden dimensions of life made possible these forms. (Huebner 1985, 163-164)

What is it that music educators would say about how music moves us, as Boardman says music does? "...as a profession we hold constant and clingingly to the ideas that music has a power to move us" (Boardman 1991).

Although the experience of music in the literature in this section has been dominated by the aesthetic view, references included have shown that the experience is seen to include other aspects.

Philosophical writings in music education as exemplified by Langer have focused on the importance of music as an aesthetic experience; an intellectual conscious objectification of the music experience. Researchers are currently looking for deeper meaning of the musical experience, questioning what is its value and significance. There is a call for broadening the music theory to answer the question of what is music good for, to recognize the spiritual and transcendent nature of the music experience.

The writers in the field are recognizing there is a lack of writing about the classroom experience (Reimer 1992). These conclusions point to the gap in the literature about the way in which the experience of music is understood. They point to the need to view the experience in a more comprehensive way.

The comprehensiveness of the music experience is explored by Campbell in *The Roar of Silence* (1989). Campbell, composer, author, performer teacher and consultant in psychoacoustics proposes a theory of the three parts of the brain and their functions as they relate to music. Music is experienced in a different way in each of these brains. This discussion of lower, mid, and left/right brain is based on the work of Dr. Paul MacLean, M.D. (1985) a neurological researcher. He has created a model for observing brain functions by dividing the brain into the old autonomic hindbrain, the emotive bonding midbrain, and the newer left/right pre frontal lobes. He states that rhythm is largely experienced through the lower brain: emotion and melody in the the midbrain.

The rhythm of the music experienced by the body is related by Campbell to the knowing the 'body' of the culture. The midbrain is described as the part that yearns for bonding. Melody is experienced in the midbrain and so as we hum and sing together we are bonding. The

midbrain is also described as the link between conscious and subconscious. In the newer frontal left/right prefrontal lobes part of the brain the cognitive aspect of the music experience is processed. The transcendent, and experiences of the spirit of the music originate in the neocortex.

This explanation does not include the consciousness or spiritual nature or the place where the spirit of the music originates. The spirit of the music transcends all the parts of the brain and is found in the neocortex in front of the prefrontal lobes. It is described as the place where patterns, processes, procedures, can be seen. This is the place where we sense beginnings, middles and ends of activities. It is here where we gain understanding of words like humility, justice, love, empathy and compassion. This is also known as the third eye, third ear, and spiritual mind of perception. It can respect all life, sense holistic patterns and coordinate vastly complex activities. (Campbell 1991, 50)

The significance of this understanding is that the musical experience is multifaceted, the different parts of the brain and the body are accessed through rhythm and melody. The experience of the whole song with its expressive character relates to the spiritual mind of perception and is referred to as the third eye. The music experience of the classroom is the embodied experience. It includes the physical mental, emotional and spiritual.

Given that the experience of music is the embodied experience which includes the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of our being, one can conclude the experience has intrinsic value for the learner. In experiences in which the whole of the person is involved there is the possibility of experiences of insight as suggested by Langer (1969), or transcendence as proposed by Tate (1992).

Transcendence for the learner marks the moment when knowledge becomes a personally significant possession. It is a moment of transformation, of going beyond the limit of boundaries of previous knowing. When the experience is transcendent, elements fall in to place, into a pattern of coherence in which the connections are not merely logical. It is a matter of insight rather than inference, and is not reversible. (Tate 1992)

It would not be far fetched to think of the experiences in the music education classroom as having the potential for being transformative "of going beyond the limit of boundaries of previous knowing"(Tate 1992). If the knowing in the music education classroom is not only cognitive but also emotional, spiritual and physical, then it would be worthwhile to look at the notion of transformation in music education in greater depth.

## **TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OF MUSIC**

In viewing transformation through music it is necessary to go "beyond the limits of previous knowing" (Tate 1992), about the experience of music as seen in the literature. It is important to explore the broader historical perspective of the understanding of music. Examples within the psychological literature will be given to address the emotional response to music. Examples of the theories, research and applications in science and medicine will be presented to understand the transforming possibilities of music. The esoteric musical practices which address the spiritual response to music will also be shown. This view of the experience of music in all these areas is in response to the gap addressed in the review of the research literature in music education.

- 1) Ancient sources
- 2) Psychological
- 3) Science/ Medicine
- 4) Esoteric musical practices

### **1) Ancient Sources**

Music throughout history has been considered to have healing potential. Ancient civilizations believed in the sacred nature of words, poetry and music. This knowledge of music gave power to those who were trained, the initiated. This was a mystical tradition, in which intuitive knowledge was important. The ancient wisdom and knowledge of music recognized the connection between sound and healing. There are many stories in sacred texts of such happenings

Pythagorus, the founder of one of the most influential schools of mysticism in the west approximately 2000 years ago, received his training in the far east. His scientific work in music, the concept of the harmony of the spheres has been passed down through history and is presently the object of attention in many music writings (Hamel 1976, 93-94). Pythagoras' theory of the orderly universe was one in which

each and every atom-produced a particular sound on account of its movement, its rhythm, or vibration. All these sounds and vibrations formed a universal harmony in which each element, while having its own function and character, contributed to the whole." (Govinda 1969, 26)

This is similar to the the understandings of the mystics and magicians of Tibet in that "All beings produce sounds according to their nature and particular state in which they find themselves. Each atom perpetually sings its song and the sound creates each moment dense or subtle forms" (Govinda 1969, 27). The ancient understanding of sound was connected to a unified historical perspective of an orderly universe in which the creation of particular sounds was of great significance. This ancient wisdom and understanding of the universe has been quantified in areas such as quantum physics (Goldman 1992, 11).

In the ancient wisdom of life there was an understanding of the hierarchy of prose, poetry and music, music being the state in which one's deepest most subtle expressions could be experienced. "...music is subtler than poetry because it carries us beyond the meaning of words into a state of intuitive receptivity" (Govinda 1969, 22). The hymns of the ancient Hindu text Samveda, are considered to have originated about 2500 BC. These hymns deify all aspects of nature and life, including the sun, the moon, fire, sky, storm, air, water, dawn, rain, and show a respect and sensitivity for the beauty of physical universe. Song was considered sacred as the subject of the song was a form of devotion. (Sen 1961, 47).

Chanting, practised throughout history in all religious traditions up to the present day, has been understood for its transformative power (Hamel 1976, 11, Goldman 1992, 72). Present day research has confirmed that chanting creates health and well being (Campbell 1991, 299).

Composers such as Carl Orff and Bartok were knowledgeable of the ancient understanding of tone, and have used these elongated sounds in their compositions (Hamel 1976, 19). These composers understood the significance of these kinds of sounds to the listener and to the performer.

The healing of psychic disorders by means of musical sounds appears throughout history, encompassing all cultures. The task of the medicine man and shaman was to provide the patient not only with medicines but also with healing chants. With rattles and percussion instruments the evil spirits of disease were driven out, and a drumbeat accompanied the mesmeric laying-on of hands ( Hamel 1976, 165).

The understanding of sound in ancient times, the various kinds of intentional use of sound in spiritual and healing practices is reflected today in the psychological application of modern times.

## **2) Psychological Application Of The Transformative Nature of Music**

Twentieth century North American music therapy research shows ways in which music activities can change behavior. (Nelson, Anderson & Gonzales 1984, Bonny 1975, Byrant 1987). Although music teachers are not music therapists, they are aware of some of this understanding as they work with challenged children in the school system (Kivland 1986, Johnson 1981, Jorgenson 1974). Mostly this therapy been applied to challenged individuals (Hollander & Juhrs 1974), the aging, and patients of psychiatric hospitals (Bowman 1987).

Many sources in literature about the therapeutic effects of music are presented in a study on "Jung, In Music and Music Therapy". Simosko presents Jung's view that there is deep archetypal material accessible through music wherein lies the potential of music's possibility as a therapeutic experience. "This understanding of music as well as Jung's approach to studying our own roots through ancient traditions will merge to stimulate increased awareness of the

untapped potential in examining the musical legacy of all humankind for therapeutic, inspirational and analytical purposes" (Simosko 1987, 17).

This section has referred to literature about the therapeutic effects of music. The success of these therapeutic applications of music is explained in a significant way in the literature in science and medicine on the impact of sound, and the functions of the ear.

### **3) Research in Science and Medicine**

Within the psychomusicology journals are articles about the physiological effects of music. One such study is that of how the vibrations of music relieved rheumatoid arthritis pain (Chesky 1993). In another study music was used in the management of postoperative pain. (Brown 1992).

There is extensive research on the physiological effects of music on the body (Hamel 1976). Hamel writes about a study in which an orchestra was used to treat nervous cases in a psychiatric institution near Naples. In another study reported by Hamel, Berdiyev, a Soviet scientist established that notes of various pitches and volumes have a recognizable effect on the cardiovascular system. The Siegburg behavioral scientist, Kneutgen, reports a decrease in bedwetting in institutionalized youngsters after hearing recordings of cradle songs. The Bonn therapist Hengesch allowed schizophrenic psychotics, used to shock treatments, to play as a group with the 'Orff instruments', and found that it was possible, after this participation with music, for those patients to continue with speech therapy, which had been impossible for them before this experience (Hamel 1976, 166-168).

In *Music Physician For Times To Come*, Campbell (1991) explores the promising new paradigms using sound and music in medicine and therapy. Campbell sees the future of music as integrating its ancient role with modern healing techniques. Clyne cited in Campbell (1991) describes the effects of music, in terms of de-stressing factors such as:

- (1) Pleasant and possible social activity, as in ensemble playing and singing.
- (11) Cathartic effects of releasing repressed emotion, and of contacting memories and associations.
- (111) Generation of empathy, a feeling of belonging and connectedness with other life, or with the Universe. (Campbell 1991,135)

More importantly, Clyne says music can affect strengthening of the immune system in that it causes the release of neurochemicals in the brain, due to the emotional response that we have to the music we hear. He distinguishes between the emotional response we have to the music and the embodiment of it by 'essentic forms'. Essentic form is the biologically given expressive dynamic for a specific emotion (Campbell 1991, 124).

Alfred Tomatis, the French physician, psychologist and ear specialist, says:

the ear is understood to be neurologically involved with the optic, and the oculomotor nerves, and therefore is interrelated with the process of vision and movement. The ear is also related to the vagus, or tenth cranial nerve. This nerve affects the larynx, the bronchi, the heart and the gastrointestinal tract and thus our voice, our breathing, our heart rate and our digestion are affected by the ear. (Goldman 1992, 79)

In his research Tomatis has explored the effect of music on people. He has found that some music charges or energizes people while other music tires people. He found that the music of Mozart and Gregorian Chant re-charged people.

If you put an oscilloscope on the sounds of Gregorian chant, you see that they all come within the bandwidth for charging the ear. There is not a single sound which falls outside of this. Gregorian chant contains all of the frequencies of the voice spectrum. (Campbell 1991, 18-19)

The research of Dr. Hans Jenny into sound frequencies, which has come to be known as Cymatics (Goldman 1992, 91), is based on the theory that every part of the body possesses a harmonic. This harmonic can be tabulated on computer. Cymatics is the transmission of accepted frequency of sound into the tissue for the purpose of correcting a bodily illness. The frequency is applied to the surface of the body; without any breaking of skin. The sound will travel through the body quickly if there is no problem, slowly if there is a problem. Cymatics has been used in the treatment of muscular arthritis, rheumatism and other ills. This computer like instrument is used to project harmonic frequencies to parts of the body that are ill. The premise of Cymatics is that disease is an 'out of tuneness' of some part of the body (Goldman 1992, 91).

Another aspect of cymatics is the creation of form through sound. Sound frequencies transmitted into a single drop of water created a spiral shape. The same drop of water with increased frequency of sound created a spiral with a star in the center. This research was applied to other substances and all manner of shape; one, two and three dimensional, were created depending on the substance and frequency of the sound.

The physical and emotional effects of music have been understood in a new way through the diagnostic and applicative capabilities of technology. Through technology we have come to understand some of the ancient esoteric music practices.

#### **4) Esoteric Music Practices**

Esoteric music practices are conducted for purposes of nurturing the spiritual aspect of life. Spiritual is defined as being of the spirit or soul as distinguished from the body or material matters. It is the thinking, motivating, feeling part of humanity, often as distinguished from the body, also the mind; intelligence, life, will, consciousness, and thought regarded as separate from matter (Webster 1970. 1373).

There are many practices, both ancient and present day, aimed at understanding and development in these areas. Far eastern cultures as well as African and South American music traditions have a connection to the power of music to connect with our inner selves, the spiritual dimension, the possibilities for healing through music, and transcendence (Hamel 1976, 7).

Jonathan Goldman in *Healing Sounds* (1992) explored the therapeutic and transformational uses of sound throughout the world. He has described the potential of vocal harmonics to become a tool for health and self-transformation and described exercises that one can practise. Goldman says that resonance is at the basis of all the sound therapies that he has examined.

Everything in the universe is in a state of vibration. This includes the human body. Every organ, bone, tissue and other

part of the body has a healthy resonant frequency. When that frequency alters, that part of the body vibrates out of harmony and this is termed disease. (Goldman 1992, 90)

Stockhausen compositions require singers to practise six months in order to be able to make the required sounds of the ninth, tenth and up to the twenty-fourth harmonic. Hamel, another musician who has studied the music of people all over the world, says: "Stockhausen has made important contributions to the spiritual experience and understanding of music" (Hamel 1991, 25).

The use of the voice to balance and align energy centres, or chakras, in the body has been part of the Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years. Similarly, there are many individuals using vocal harmonics in a healing sense. In all these the use of elongated vowels with particular focus, and breathing patterns are significant.

In his (1989) writings Campbell's explains the importance of toning as a method of changing the way the mind and body work together. Having been a musician and music critic he was aware of the way in which his knowledge of music stood in the way of his experience of the more powerful aspect of music. His search led him to the practice of toning or the singing of tones for an extended period of time. By toning, Campbell states, one can aid the body's natural function to grow and to balance and continually heal itself. He asserts that the use of chant and drones can benefit the body. Campbell maintains there are more than a hundred recorded systems that correlate the use of tones, colors and rhythms to spiritual development which leads to greater well being.

In conclusion, the literature on esoteric musical practices is about specific musical practices for the purpose of greater physical and mental well being as well as about transcendence and

spiritual development. These practices often involve singing elongated vowels together with specific breathing practices and visualization. These practices have been known throughout history in almost all traditions, for the purpose of healing, raising consciousness and for finding greater purpose in life. These practices are also used in modern times.

The literature presented in this section on change or transformation through music is important to an understanding about the way in which music has been in the past and is at this time perceived and experienced. As we approach the discussion of music in the classroom even though the specifics of these ways of understanding music have only been applied in a limited way, they point to depth of understanding and experience of music which has been identified as a gap in the literature.

Throughout history there has been awareness of the transformative possibilities of music. The knowledge of music therapy, although limited in its present application, hints at such possibilities. Recent research in science and medicine on the functions of the ear, the way sound is experienced and the manner in which music affects us have substantiated the significance of music which has been known since ancient times.

## **APPLICATION TO MUSIC EDUCATION**

Having presented this literature on the transformative possibilities through music, the question that comes to mind is whether there are observations to be made about the transformative nature of music in music education? What is the nature of the transformative music experience in the music education classroom? A number of questions arise from the gaps in the current literature. The gaps identified have shown that the experience of music in the classroom has

been objectified, shown largely as an cognitive experience, without the depth of the experience and the richness of the experience. Furthermore the gap identified is that of the connection between the teacher, the student and the music. Given the diversity, breadth and the depth of thought, understanding and writing and experiencing of music as seen in the literature, and given that the profession's philosophers are calling for an inquiry into greater breadth and depth of the music experience, it seems timely to study the transformative nature of music in the classroom.

The gap seen in the literature review in which the classroom experience is not shown in all its richness and complexity, justifies the need to ask the teachers in the field what they are experiencing. Aside from learning the skills of music, appreciation of the beauty of the music, the aesthetics, we need to study what is happening in the music classroom as we are engaging in musical processes. The method in which the study of the transformative music classroom experience will proceed will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3**

# **A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH**

The approach in this study is hermeneutic phenomenology. In this first section phenomenology will be discussed. Following that the hermeneutic aspect of this research process will be discussed with reference to the particular focus of this study. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach is seen fitting to explore the phenomenon of transformation in music as experienced by the teacher and student in the music education classroom. The ways in which this is suitable to view the transformative music education experiences will be discussed in the steps of the process. The steps of analysis will be discussed in the first section. The second section is concerned with all aspects of collecting the data.

### **THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH**

The study of the transformative music education experience lies within the phenomenological paradigm (Allen & Benner & Diekelmann 1986, 23-38). In this paradigm there is the value of understanding lived experience, the whole of experience, the connections in experience and the embodied knowledge that we live out of.

The approach in this method lies in the interpretive tradition, a tradition which seeks to understand meaning in human experience (MacLeod 1990). Hermeneutic phenomenology as defined originally by Heidegger is based on the premise that human beings are self

interpreting, that they have embodied knowledge they act on, that they have background meanings or the meanings within our culture that are important and that they act out of their concerns (Benner & Wrubel 1989, 41-49). These understandings are relevant to the study of the experience of teachers and students in the music classroom in which teachers and students are interacting with music.

A phenomenological study begins with focusing on the experience one wishes to understand in greater depth. Following that is a process of moving from the broad perspective of the completeness of the experience to identifying the essence of the experience. The range of phenomenological approaches is described by Spiegelberg in the following manner.

its descriptive stage can stimulate our perceptiveness for the richness of our experience in breadth and in depth; that in its search for essences it can develop imaginativeness and the sense for both what is essential and what is accidental; that, in its attention to ways of appearance, it can heighten the sense for the inexhaustibility of the perspectives through which our world is given; that, in its study of their constitution in consciousness it can develop the sense for the dynamic adventure in our relationship with the world; that by the suspending of existential judgment it can make us more aware of the precariousness of all our trans-subjective claims to knowledge, a ground for epistemological humility; and that in its hermeneutic phase it can keep us open for concealed meanings in the phenomena. (Spiegelberg 1975, 70)

The approach chosen for this study is that of interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenology. It is based on Heidegger's thought about how understanding of experience begins with "the question of the sense of Being" (Spiegelberg 1982, 348). Heidegger articulated it as: "Man alone of all existing things...experiences the wonder of all wonders: *that there is being*"

(Spiegelberg 1982, 347). His concern was to illuminate what kind of knowing occurs when one does not stand outside of the situation. This concern was preeminent to him because it appeared to him that most of a person's being was engaged in particular situations (Benner & Wrubel 1989,41). The answer to the question of knowing arises out of the answer to the question of being. Heidegger's understanding of 'being' was one of openness to thought. This openness to thought leads to the understanding or the knowing (Spiegelberg 1982, 350).

Hermeneutic phenomenology has allowed me to understand the particular situation of the music classroom in terms of the whole of the experience. Viewing the whole of experience has allowed me to find aspects in experience that seem taken for granted in the literature. The embodied nature of the musical experience as seen in the childrens' writings is such an example. By looking at the whole experience, including its spiritual, bodily, and emotional aspects, it has been possible to see the transformative aspect of music making in the classroom.

Inherent in the notion of transformation are the changes in ways in which we engage in situations. Heidegger has identified three modes of engagement or involvement that people have with their surroundings and are part of experiences. These are: the ready-to-hand, the unready-to-hand, and the present-at-hand (Packer 1985, 1081).

In the everyday ready-to-hand activities of life where we perform many duties requiring all kinds of skills, the notion of "The Background" (Packer 1985, 1083) is very important. The background includes that which is culturally learned as well as skills that we develop and then take for granted in everyday experiences. This knowledge which is not necessarily explicit is described as embodied ways of knowing as demonstrated in skills, perceptions and sensory knowledge and in ways of organizing the perceptual field. These bodily perceptual skills.

instead of being primitive and lower on the hierarchy, are essential to expert human problem solving, which relies on recognition of the whole. In the teachers' everyday involvement, being engaged with the students and music, many skills and understandings are taken for granted. Teachers are involved with embodied skills of which they are not necessarily conscious as they make many decisions necessary to teaching.

Situations in which we are faced with something that requires our explicit attention can be considered to be unready to hand. Such situations may be problems that need our attention. The experience of conflict, interruption, a sense of readiness, or any number of other possibilities that are common everyday happenings in the music classrooms are the unready to hand situations. They require the teacher to stop and think about what is going on and thoughtfully adjust their actions or find other possibilities of proceeding in the situation.

In the present-at-hand, one is distancing oneself from ones situation, in a reflective manner to assess and try to understand the situation, and then make decisions. In the present-at-hand, the teacher notices a problem, reflects on it to understand it in greater depth and to determine alternative courses of action.

All three modes, the everyday ready-to-hand, the unready-to-hand, and the present-at-hand are part of everyday life. The most common focus of research attention is on the present-at-hand modes. Hermeneutic phenomenology enables the researcher to get at the taken-for-granted practices in the ready-at-hand modes of action.

Interpretation focuses on the taken for granted meanings embedded in skills, practices and language. A focus on meaning is a way to understand our practices. Our ability to focus and interpret are made possible by several aspects of our humanness:

Our bodies as well as our minds are knowers, and this embodied knowledge enables us to move through situations...we are brought up in meanings and understand the world in terms of these meanings...We have the capacity to care, and our caring causes us to be involved and defined by our concerns...we are able to encounter situations in a nonreflective way. (Benner & Wrubel 1989, 42)

In other words the underlying assumptions in Heideggerian phenomenology are that to be human is to be in the world; it is a relational view; the person is self-interpreting. Self interpretations are handed down through language and cultural patterns. Practical activity, everyday practical involvement with one's surroundings, is the focus of this research. Meaning in this paradigm resides in the transaction between the individual and the situation. It is expected that commonalities and recurring similarities and dissimilarities can be revealed within the lived experience.

The notion of bringing to light, revealing what is hidden, is particularly important to hermeneutics. The researcher interprets the data to reveal something that was hidden and taken for granted in the phenomenon being studied. The approach in this study is to uncover the hidden meanings, understandings and practices of the music education classroom experience with regard to transformation through music.

The question guiding this study is; what is the essence of the transformative experience of music for student and teacher in the music classroom? In focusing on the the transformative experiences of music, this study has attempted to illuminate taken for granted meanings embedded in skills, practices, and language.

## **COLLECTING THE DATA**

In the following section the collection of the data is discussed with respect to the interviews, the teachers, the students, issues relating to the data and matters of ethics and rigour.

### **The Interviews**

In the hermeneutic interview the purposes are:

- a) to explore and gather experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon.
- b) to develop a conversational relation with a partner about the meaning of an experience (Van Manen 1990). The interviews done for this study provided an opportunity to listen to the teachers' stories and recollections of experiences of transformation through music as experienced in the music education classroom.

In terms of the limitations and possibilities of the interview method, a competent interview can result in more data, greater clarity in the data and a more complete collection of the specific data desired from the subject as well as the possibility of collecting sensitive information. According to Casey (1992), the weakness of the interview may be the problems of bias from several sources. "predispositions of the respondent, predispositions of the interviewer, and data collection procedures and conditions" (Casey 1992, 119). To guard against these problems, Casey recommends careful preparation of interview questions and the interviewer, ensuring that subjects are exposed to as nearly identical experiences as possible by writing opening and closing statements and pretesting the interview guide.

The interview questions (see Appendix 1) reflect a combination of the suggestions by Van Manen on how to produce a lived-experience description (Van Manen 1990, 64-65) and MacLeod in her "Interview Guides And Probes" (MacLeod 1990, 256-260). The purpose of the questions was to get a description of the experience as lived from the inside as it were, including the feelings, the mood, and the emotions. The aim was to obtain a description that has specificity, vividness, including the perceptions of the different senses. Teachers were encouraged to remember their experiences without interpretations or explanations unless they were part of their reflections as they recalled their experience.

The purpose of the interviews was to hear teachers describe the transformative music experiences and in so doing shed light on the everyday experience in the music classroom.

If the complexity and range of everyday experience is recognized and valued, the different ways of being attuned to experience have a better chance of being acknowledged.  
(MacLeod 1990, 246)

The interviews were approximately one hour in length. They were approached as a relationship of joint inquiry into the interviewees' experience. The teachers were seen as co-researchers. The aim was to listen with interest, understanding, respect, and empathy. The open questions were planned to keep focus to the interview as well as to attempt to get the depth of their experiences (see Appendix 1). The interview was a sincere attempt on my part to be congruent and listen thoughtfully (Benjamin 1969, 52) The teachers spoke freely in the interviews about their experiences.

Four teachers were interviewed two times each. Since in this type of research one is looking for depth of understanding, this was considered an adequate number of people to work with.

In the first interview we discussed the student involvement in this process as well as the transformative music experiences of the music classroom. In the second interview the teachers were asked if they would like to relate any further memories of musical experiences that might have arisen after the discussion and participation of their students in the writing.

The purpose of the first interview was to record the descriptions of the teachers' experiences of transformative experiences in music education. The teachers talked about their classroom experiences, music festival experiences with their choirs, concerts in the school and performances outside of school in various places in the community. The teacher's reflections spanned the whole time of their teaching career.

Following the initial analysis and identifying themes or significant episodes, the second interview was used to clarify situations and verify with the teacher the specific themes that were identified in the experiences told about in the first interview. In the second interview, memories of experiences were at times triggered both by discussion of the students' responses as well as in response to my analysis of the previous interview. Questions such as, "What stands out in your mind about what the students have said?" and "Do any of these responses spark a memory of another child or experience?", were asked in the second interview in order to strengthen the depth of the interview material. All discussions with these four participants were focussed on the positive influence of music education experiences in the lives of children they had and were teaching.

The teachers spoke freely, and as they remembered I experienced their warmth, enthusiasm, excitement, fondness, sadness, and laughter. Their faces, voices and whole manner changed as they remembered and told their stories of musical experiences with children of the classroom

they taught. In transcribing these interviews, the richness of their stories was even more apparent.

## **The Teachers**

The teachers interviewed were four experienced teachers who had over time demonstrated the strength of their programs. Their participation was on a voluntary basis. Their willingness to participate in this research indicated their comfort in the self analysis required in reflecting on their professional work (Redekopp, 1989). This kind of reflective analysis of one's pedagogical relationship with the students was important to understanding the experiences of music.

The teachers taught in schools spanning the economic strata of the area. The teachers were currently employed, and were seen by their peers as having shown expertise in their work. The programs they had developed demonstrated their strength. All the teachers interviewed had been teaching for ten years or more, and had worked with large numbers of children through that time. During that time they had developed their classroom programs, successfully prepared choirs and children for many performances and the authority with which they spoke was based on all these experiences. They were all positive about participating in the interviews.

Teachers were contacted for this research by informal discussions at workshops, conferences and meetings. Teachers who agreed to be involved were sent or given a background letter explaining the research (see Appendix 2). Included in the letter was the interviewing criteria including length of interview, and requirements of the interview including access to taping

facilities and comfortable environment. The confirmation of date, time, and place of the interview was done by phone a few days before the given interview date. The introductory letter gave some background on the interview and the thesis topic in order to give the respondent time to reflect on the questions. A minimum of one hour interview time was requested.

In addition to participating in two interviews, the teachers were asked to obtain responses from one class of students. The manner in which to proceed with regards to the students' participation in the research was discussed at the end of the first interview. Before involving the students in any way letters were sent to the Superintendents of the teachers' school divisions. After receiving permission from the Superintendents to involve students of one class in their research project, the teachers involved in this study were notified of the permission. They then proceeded with involving their classes in the study. The teachers introduced their students to the topic of the research project in the first class and sent home the necessary letters (see Appendix 5) to get parent permission for their children's participation in the research. In the following class the teachers asked the students to write about a music experience, first using the webbing technique to generate their ideas about the musical experience they had chosen to write about (see Appendix 3). The teachers chose a class from grades four to six.

## **The Student Writings**

The student writings were obtained by the teachers and given to me in the second interview. In each case we had some discussion about the writing exercise and how it had turned out. This was not a familiar activity and so the teachers were not altogether sure that what they had obtained would be useful. The students had written with greater ease in two schools and with

greater difficulty in the other two. In one school the students were very hesitant to write but after some encouragement from their teacher telling them that someone from the University was interested in their opinion they made an effort to write.

The students' writing varied in length within all four schools. Generally these writings were anywhere from fifty to one hundred and fifty words in length. In no cases did parents refuse to allow their children to participate. However in some schools students did not return their permission slips and the teachers did not collect their work in those cases. Overall in the writings there was similarity in the way in which the experiences were discussed, including the same words, and references to feelings and the physicality of the experience, as well as references to their opinions of the musical experience they were writing about.

In all cases the writings about their music performance experience ended with feelings of having done well, pride, saying they thought they had done well (Student 4: 2), that they felt special, that they felt proud about themselves, that they thought they were good. One student said "I felt like a shining star right in front of the audience...It was wonderful, everybody loved us" (Student 2: 3).

### **Steps Of Analysis In This Hermeneutic Phenomenological Approach**

The process of data analysis and interpretation proceeded in seven steps. These steps were:

- 1) Review data as a whole while allowing the intuitive, the analytical and the descriptive to give body to the detail.
- 2) Identify the essence of the experiences; a synopsis.
- 3) Identify both the larger and the more particular themes using example from the text

- 4) Search for idiomatic phrases, the anecdote, the etymology of a certain significant word.
- 5) Identify meaning which the above steps have led to. This step is concerned with the insight into the phenomenon that one is searching for.
- 6) Collaborate with the interviewees on the findings of steps two to five.
- 7) Identify the final summary of meaning after having collaborated with the interviewees. This is consensual validation. This is to identify hidden meanings embedded in skills, practise and language.

The seven steps identified for this study were drawn from Spiegelberg (1982), Van Manen (1990) and Diekmann (1989), all of whom uses a stepwise process of analysis and interpretation. The steps of the hermeneutic phenomenological approach are a process of arriving at insight about a phenomenon. These steps are discussed in this section for the purpose of clarifying the way in which the data was analyzed and interpreted and to show how they related to the larger study. It is useful to compare Spiegelberg, Van Manen and Diekmann's seven steps to see their similarities and differences as they describe the process of interpreting a phenomenon.

**1) Review data as a whole while allowing the intuitive, the analytical and the descriptive to give body to the detail.**

The first step Spiegelberg describes as that of investigating a particular phenomena. This includes phenomenological intuiting, phenomenological analyzing, and phenomenological describing. Diekmann describes this step as examining the data as a whole. Van Manen describes the first step as turning to the nature of lived experience. In this study the whole is the experiences of change, transformation in music education classes. This looking at the whole of the experience according to Van Manen involves the practice of thoughtfulness and

a sensitivity to language. Both Diekelmann and Van Manen use the word "whole", and Spiegelberg uses the word "phenomena" which also implies the whole. The study as a whole began with a comprehensive view of the experience of music in the classroom and the experience of transformation through music as seen in many contexts including the ancient and the modern, within a broad spectrum of contexts and disciplines as literature outside the field was reviewed. With regards to the data collection this was the beginning step in which the teachers were interviewed to get their stories about their experiences of change through music as experienced in the music education classroom with their students.

## **2) Identify the essence of the experiences; a synopsis.**

The second step according to Spiegelberg is that of investigating general essences. In order to find the general essence we look at the particulars as examples. Diekelmann describes it as identifying meanings and indicating examples from the transcripts. For Van Manen the second step is to investigate experience as we live it, to describe the experience as much as possible in experiential terms, to trace etymological sources of significant words, to search for idiomatic phrases, to obtain the experiences descriptions from others, to interview others for their personal story, to find the experiential anecdote, to use experiential descriptions in literature and other sources such as diaries, journals or logs, art and other phenomenological literature. In all three there is a focusing on the experience, to find meaning, essence, or significant words, phrases or anecdotes. With regards to the general study in this second step different references were chosen within the research literature and the literature on transformation that was considered relevant. Within the data in the second step the idea of synopsis was the key. Within the second step the stories were synopsisized and from that developed the themes which is the third step.

### **3) Identify both the larger and the more particular themes using example from the text**

The third step according to Spiegelberg is the apprehending of essential relationships among essences or the themes. Diekelmann's third step is the preparation of a synopsis of each text. Van Manen's third step is determining incidental and essential themes and he recommends that the researcher do this collaboratively. In this Spiegelberg and Van Manen seem closer in that they both focus on relationship between themes, whereas the synopsis of the text as Diekelmann says, seems to be what one would do to determine the themes and their relationships. Within the present study the third step involved the relationships of different kinds of literature to each other. Within the data at this point the themes in the stories became apparent in broad categories.

### **4) Search for idiomatic phrases, the anecdote, the etymology of a certain significant word.**

Much is written about themes and theme analysis. Theme analysis refers to the process of recovering the themes embodied in the evolving meanings and imagery of the work. This is about understanding meaning in experience. To allow the themes of the work to emerge involves a certain attentiveness and deep interest in an aspect of life. The three approaches to uncovering or isolating thematic aspects of a phenomenon are: the holistic approach, the selective approach and the detailed line by line approach.

Van Manen's writing about themes lead to the understanding of theme as emerging meanings in life.

- (1) *Theme is the needfulness or desire to make sense...*
- (2) *Theme is the sense we are able to make of something...*
- (3) *Theme is the openness to something...*
- (4) *Theme is the*

*process of insightful invention, discovery, disclosure.*(Manen 1990, 88)

The ways in which themes lead to understandings of meanings in life are:

*(1) Theme is the means to get at the notion... (2) Theme gives shape to the shapeless... (3) Theme describes the content of the notion... (4).Theme is always a reduction of a notion.*

(Van Manen 1990, 88).

Themes are part of the Diekelmann's fourth step. In this step she describes it as analysis of themes from the material and identification and comparison of cases and exemplars and identifying patterns and groupings of meanings. In Spiegelberg's fourth step there is the "watching modes of appearing" (Spiegelberg 1982, 703) which is to observe the way in which things appear. He distinguishes between the aspect from which we know the object as a whole, the view that gives a partial slanted view, and the observing something partially but with clarity. Van Manen's fourth step is the the hermeneutic phenomenological writing in which "to write is to measure one's thoughtfulness"; (Van Manen 1990, 128) in particular to pay attention to the anecdotal narrative. Writing is the method says Van Manen. In writing there is reflection and action. He says:

Writing separates us from what we know and yet it unites us more closely with what we know...Writing distances us from the lifeworld, yet it also draws us more closely to the lifeworld...Writing decontextualizes thought from practice and yet it returns thought to praxis...Writing abstracts our experience of the world, yet it also concretizes our understanding of the world...Writing objectifies thought into print and yet it subjectifies our understanding of something that truly engages us..."(Van Manen 1990, 127-129)

Writing to find the idiomatic phrase, the anecdote, the etymology was the way of getting into the data in greater depth. In terms of the present study each rewriting of a part of the text led into the deeper meanings within each chapter, section, theme and aspect thereof.

**5) Identify meaning which the above steps have led to.**

This step is concerned with the insight into the phenomenon that one is searching for. Spiegelberg's fifth step is exploring the constitution of phenomena in consciousness. This is an exploration of the way in which a phenomenon establishes itself in our consciousness which seems similar to Diekelmann's fifth step in which she writes about developing themes and constitutive patterns as a whole. Diekelmann includes in this development of themes a comparison of themes with relevant literature for further insights. This seems to include Spiegelberg's sixth step in which he recommends that we suspend beliefs, consider all the data, real or unreal or doubtful as having equal rights. This is to facilitate genuine intuiting, analyzing and describing of the given. This compares with Van Manen's fourth step in which he says one must be sensitive to the subtle undertones of language, to the way language speaks when it allows the things themselves to speak. Van Manen says an authentic speaker must be a true listener in this method. In terms of the present study this was a step in which there was a sense of waiting for an insight on a certain section, on a larger connection on the relationship of the experiences to the literature reviewed and the frameworks of the chapters. Within the data this step involved insights relating to the relationships of themes, the way in which key words pointed to the depth of the experience and important aspects of the experience. The fifth step in working with the data was that of searching for the insight within each chapter, section, theme and point within the theme. In much the same way in the larger study this was searching for meaning as each section was written and rewritten.

**6) Collaborate with the interviewees on the findings of steps two to five.**

The sixth step in the analysis is that of collaboration. This was done with the data to a certain extent in the interviews. The teachers were asked to corroborate or expand upon my interpretations of their stories of the first interview. In the present study this is where the committee members have played a significant role in responding to the drafts of the chapters in their different stages. This is consensual validation.

**7) Identify the final summary of meaning of the data**

The final step is to identify the final summary of meaning, after having collaborated with the interviewees. This is to identify hidden meanings embedded in skills, practise and language. Van Manen describes the seventh step as finding one's pedagogic relationship to the experience at hand. He says nothing is so silent as that which is taken for granted or self evident. He says this silence makes human research writing necessary and possible. This seems to include Spiegelberg's seventh step in which one is interpreting the meaning of phenomena; which is Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology in which the goal is the discovery of meanings which are not immediately manifest to our intuiting, analyzing and describing. In Diekelmann's work the final meaning is the confirmation of a constitutive pattern. This shows the way in which in hermeneutic phenomenology there is an unveiling of hidden meanings (Spiegelberg 1982, 681).

Van Van Manen's says the purpose of the writing is to answer the question of

how an educator stands in life, how an educator needs to think about children, how an educator observes, listens, and relates to children, how an educator practices a form of speaking and writing that is pedagogically contagious. (Van Manen 1990, 151)

In this study the final writing of the thesis is about the identification of final meaning of the data. Within the writing about the data as the writing is done, the understandings become clearer, the story of the thesis becomes stronger. The insights and understanding of the music education experiences became clearer through the writing.

These steps have described the process whereby the data were analyzed and interpreted. They also describe broadly the way in which the whole study evolved, guided by the following questions.

### **Issues In Data Analysis**

The data collected from the interviews with the teachers and the writings of the students came to ninety pages when transcribed. A sample of the nature of the interviews is seen in (Appendix 7). The teachers stories and reflections are seen throughout Chapters Four, Five and Six. In transcribing the interviews any references to the teachers' names and identity were removed. The same was done in transcribing the students' writings. All names in the discussion are fictitious.

The data analysis process was a revealing process. In the initial rewriting of the teachers' stories, their detail and depth became apparent. In rewriting the stories there seemed to be ever so more more in a story than on first hearing it. The transcripts allowed for an

appreciation of the language used to tell the stories. The second step which was to find that the essence of the story led to finding the focus and as the teachers has numerous stories the different themes began to emerge. Each story had significant words and phrases which seemed to stand out somewhat.

The teachers commented that the interview process was a useful way to learn from each other. They also commented on the positive way in which these reflections on their experience had impacted them. The teachers all gave willingly from their experience; they also made comments to let me know they hoped what they were giving was useful.

With regards to the writing done by the students, the teachers were generally not familiar with the process. They asked the necessary questions to clarify the procedure. The teachers commented on how students, with assistance in understanding the language of their musical experience, could learn to write about musical experiences in a more articulate manner. The teachers also commented on the valuable and interesting comments made by the students.

### **Issues Of Ethics And Rigour**

To respect the teachers' and students' freedom in participation, the letters to the teachers acknowledged their voluntary participation (see Appendix 2). The students were also given the freedom to choose to participate or not (see Appendix 5).

The teachers gave their consent verbally first of all and then in writing. The students that were involved were those that returned their letter with their parent signature. The students' letter of permission included a section in which they could choose to sign if they wished to withdraw from the research project. There were no students who withdrew from the activity. The letters

to teachers and students indicated the data would be used in this thesis. The letters gave the name of the researcher as well as the supervisor. All of the teachers participated in both interviews although the times of the interviews needed to be changed due to the teachers' work commitments. There were some phone calls in which the students' participation was discussed, as the initial discussion at the first interview had not been adequate. Furthermore there was discussion of the responses of the students to the writing relating to their lack of confidence about being able to do what was being asked of them and with regards to understanding the topic for their writing.

The students' data are not in any way coded to link with the teachers' data. With regards to anonymity for the teachers involved, deletions and substitutions have been made in data where references could point to a teacher's identity.

To address the matter of validity, the following criteria were referred to in part as not all questions were applicable to this research. (see Appendix 4)

- 1 Credibility
- 2 Fittingness
- 3 Auditability
4. Confirmability (Beck 1993, 263-265)

The credibility of research is concerned with internal validity and truth value. This relates to how the data were collected and to what extent the researcher influenced the data. Aside from the transcripts of the interviews, some notes about the relationship in the interviews were made. The researcher attempted to remain neutral in the interviews by being aware that questions and responses in the interview could impact on the data collected in the interview. The questions were chosen to allow the teachers to share their own experiences. The truth

value of the research data will be seen in chapters four five and six in which the researcher has attempted to give attention to vivid and faithful descriptions of the music education experience, the experiences of transformations as identified by the teachers and the keys to the transformative music experiences. The intent of these chapters is that other music teachers will recognize these experiences as similar to their own. These experiences have been drawn from the data of the interviews with teachers and from the writings done by students as well as from the reference notes made by the researcher. Within the following chapters examples from the data have been chosen from all eight interviews and from students in each of the four schools. The sixth step of analysis, collaboration with all four participating teachers on the findings in the data, was another aspect of the effort to make this writing credible. The data analysis procedure was reviewed and approved by the thesis committee

The issues of fittingness concerns the external validity or applicability of the research. It is the concern for accuracy in the representation. Of concern is where the data were obtained and how congruent they are. As all four teachers had more than ten years of experience, they had a wealth of experiences to draw from. Furthermore the schools they had taught in and were presently teaching in, represented the range in economic strata. The school communities represented in the data are in fact a reasonable sampling of schools in general in this province. The data from the different schools was not changed to make it appear more congruent than it really was. Similar ideas and language were used by children in all four schools although with a difference in clarity. The analysis and discussion of the music education experience in the following chapters could be taken to be representative of music education contexts of other elementary schools.

Auditability relates to the method whereby the data were collected and the consistency in interpretation. A full description of the method has been provided so that the reader can

assess each step of the process. The social, physical and interpersonal context within which the data was collected has been acknowledged, but because of necessary limitations, has received limited attention. The reader should take note of the way in which the following chapters move through the experience of music, to the transformations they can create, to the teacher practices that support these transformations. In the final chapter the transformation experiences are discussed in terms of how they 'open up of the voice.'

There are no questions in the Appendix 4 relating to the issue of confirmability but it is understood to be concerned with the neutrality of the research. The criteria of confirmability has been addressed through the questions in the interviews and the corroboration of the analysis of the interview with the teachers. It is hoped that the music teachers will find the themes within the data analysis to harmonize with those aspects that they find significant in their music education experiences. The reader is invited to assess whether the interpretation that follows makes sense.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE MUSIC EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

The experience of music in the classroom is the focus of this chapter. Music education research literature has talked about the content of instruction, teacher behaviours, and matters of pedagogy but the everyday experience of the music classroom has not been given the attention it deserves. The discussion in this chapter will explore the richness of the music education experience with reference to the data collected in the interviews with teachers and the writings of students. This data is filled with stories that encompass the nature of the music education experience. Within the teachers' stories are reflections that point to a view of making music which transcends the separateness with which we have tended to perceive ourselves and music.

Experience has been described in the literature as being relational, contextual and as having movement through time (MacLeod 1990). These three aspects are the framework of the discussion of the music education experience.

The relational nature of the classroom experience includes the interactions between the student, the teacher and the music. The three are woven together in all the stories in the data from the teachers and the students. The data included the individual student's point of view, the group, and as their relation to the music and the teacher.

The contextual nature of the experience is the pedagogical concerns of the teacher, the uniqueness of students and their concerns and the particularities of the music being studied. Within the whole range of situations, students and teachers are engaging in musical activities.

The movement through time aspect, or temporality, is the everchanging aspects of relationships. Through time the children learn the music and the excitement of that changes the contexts for future music experiences. This is the ongoing process of the music experiences. These changes of the music classroom have not been the focus of discussion in the literature. These changes come out of the classroom experience. They encompass both ongoing, dynamic activity as well as a change in the person. Experience is described as both that of a process, and as an entity; a possession of the person (Macleod, 1990, 92). The two are intertwined. This has been seen in the stories of the teachers and the writings of the students. As a process, experience involves in this context the activities of the music education classroom and the teacher practices which lead to changes in student understanding and self concept. As an entity experience is the knowledge gained through experience by students and teachers. Central to the music experience is bringing out the voice, which is both knowledge and process.

The data of this research come from the interview with teachers and the writings of the students. Themes of the experience gleaned from the interviews and the students writings are explored to interpret their meaning. In doing so the aim is to illuminate the essence of the music experience.

The teacher's referred to the music in the data as the song, the piece, the melody or the sound. This points to the way in which the music activity can broadly be based on learning the song, to more specifically working with a melody or even more specifically to listening to the

sound being produced by the participants. In the discussion of the different themes in this chapter, this spectrum of learning is taken for granted.

The process of the music education experience that leads to change is the focus of this study. That is not to say that all music education experiences lead to the transformations of the positive nature being discussed in this study. However it is these positive changes that are the focus of this discussion.

## **STORIES FROM THE MUSIC CLASSROOM**

The data, both the interview transcripts and the writings of the children were the stories of changes through music. These stories encompassed the context of the experience and the relationships between the teacher, the student, and the music. These stories showed the changes that happened to students, in the moment and over time. Since this aspect of the music classroom experience has not been the subject of discussion in the research literature it is believed these stories are important to understanding the music classroom experience. These stories are the voices of the teachers and students about their music education experiences. They illustrate the everyday happenings of the classroom.

The following story encapsulates the completeness of these remembered experiences. This is an example of the commonplace occurrence of the music classroom. To examine it in more depth, the story includes the teachers' reflections, the students' learning, the individual children's comments and the piece of music. The connection of the three led to the change in the group's understanding and future performance. The experience of the music, the process, led to the experience of change in understanding and performance.

I had an experience very recently with a class. We talked about silence and what and how that changes a musical experience. So I asked them to perform a piece that they had been working on and at the end of the piece to talk. So they did that. It was a layered activity and as soon as one group was finished they started talking to their friends while the other group finished. ...Then I asked them to do it again and be silent at the end. I didn't ask them any questions. I just asked them to do it that way. So they did it that way and there was this lag of silence. At the end and after the silence at a very appropriate time, because these were young children, once the sound had dissipated in the room, they seemed to sense that it was okay to talk. Then the one little boy said, "Was that ever neat! It took so long for the sound to end!" and another little boy turned to him and said "The sound wasn't finished when we were finished. I don't get it!" And the other fellow on the other side, a very scientific young fellow, you know you've got them in every class said "Well that's because sound travels in waves, don't you know and it has to go from our instrument to the walls where it stops." and a girl in the back row said "Is that true Mrs. Shore?" and I said "Yes that's exactly right." "Can we do it again?", they said. "We'd like to hear that silence again. That was really neat." They understood very intuitively that the sound that they are making needs to be heard. So they're doing that on a regular basis. I don't have to ask them to do it any more because they want to hear it. They want to hear themselves perform. So I think that that really has transformed them into real musicians because now their listening for the sound. They're enjoying the sound that they're making when they're performing and I think that's what it's all about. For them it's not good enough for one person to be talking. They want everybody to listen. So wouldn't it be wonderful if all our

groups understood that. That particular group understands it really well now. (Int. 4: 3)

The discussion of how silences change the music, followed by the experience of silence at the end of the song, leads to the class's change in understanding of the importance and effect of intentional silence at the end of a piece. The group's performance in the future is changed in that they are now listening for the sound in the silence.

This story gives the learning context, the relationships, and the changes; the completeness of experience. Furthermore the themes of the music education experience as identified from all the data of the eight interviews and the writings of ninety children are seen in this story. The themes of remembering, expressing the gift of music, experiencing the connection through music, the moment of presence, the centrality of repetition, and being moved by the spirit of the sound are all seen. However before going into analysis of stories a discussion of the context of the music classroom experience is in order.

## **THE CONTEXT**

The stories in the data revealed that the context of the music education experience was the individual relationships between teacher and student, student and student, teacher and the group and the student and the group. The relationships between the teacher and the students are experiences of connecting and bonding through the music.

The stories showed that the context included the music classroom, the choir group, the performances in school assemblies, the performances at concerts within the school,

performances at the music festival and in other places in the community. The context of place is diverse. The numbers of students vary from an average of twenty four in the classroom to seventy-five in the choir. Within all these contexts the teachers have a pedagogical responsibility for the participation and learning of their students. The students have their perceptions and relationship to the learning agendas of the teacher.

The relationships in these context are focused around music activities. The activities cover a wide range of participation involving speech, movement, singing, and instrumental playing. The activities range at various times in the intensity of focus and concentration required. These activities span a spectrum in terms of the complexity of the musical consciousness required in the particular musical activity. The activities that the teachers plan for the students become the experiences of the classroom. At the heart of the activities is the song or melody. This is experienced most intensely in the choir situation. The singing of the song engages the student in a whole gamut of attending including mentally, emotionally and physically. The following excerpt confirms the importance of singing within the context of the time allotted for music in the timetable.

"In my school singing is a very important part of the music program. One of their periods in the cycle and they have three forty minute periods each from grade one to grade 6, one of those periods is a choir period." (Int. 3: 1)

When working with a choir which involves large numbers of children, the music teacher must keep order and attention, motivation and musicianship happening at all times. The song is the powerful vehicle that makes it possible. Once engaged in the song, the group energy has focus and momentum. It is the singing that makes it possible for large numbers of students to unite in purpose and thought.

In the following excerpt the teacher describes the intensity, focus and concentration required of the choir experience. This is an experience in which:

they must all do something exactly together. This is fairly foreign to any other part of their musical experience where there is a lot of individual freedom in doing whatever they're doing. And this sometimes it is quite difficult for them to do. But when they do it successfully they have a wonderful, wonderful sense of achievement. Especially those children who would never want to sing alone. But who really enjoy singing in a group. (Int. 3: 1)

Singing is central to the music program. Within the experience of the song there is the possibility of remembering, expressing the gift of music, experiencing the connection through music, having the moment of presence, repeating to learn, and being moved by the spirit of the sound. Singing is the activity where the individual voice can be nurtured and can and does develop and change over time.

## **THEMES OF THE MUSIC EDUCATION EXPERIENCE**

The aim of this section is to show the totality and scope of the education classroom as the parts of the experience are examined. By discussing the themes that came from the teachers stories, interpretations will emerge and lead to greater understanding of the music experience. Each of the themes of the music education experience to be discussed will view an aspect of the experience; but the whole experience is all aspects combined. By viewing these aspects the complexity of the experience may be seen in greater depth.

The themes that will be discussed in the section are about the importance of memory, expressing the gift of music, experiencing co-operation through music, the moment of presence in musical experience, the importance of repetition to musical experience and the way in which we are moved by the spirit of the music..

## **We Remember**

Memory is crucial to musicianship. Memory is important to the experience of music in that it is often shared by groups. The power of the original experience can be experienced in the future through memory. Memory allows individuals to reflect on the musical experience. Memory allows the participants to realize the benefit of the experience. Memory allows individuals to remember musical experiences in which they felt amazed, encouraged and rewarded.

Musical activities memories are often shared by groups and remembered by groups. These activities often create a bond between the participants. It strengthens socialization in another time and place. In the following example the group memory has created change in that community as now the children are participating in music in a different way than they did. The music experience is remembered through our memories and reflection upon our memories. It may be extended over time as we remember it.

And it seemed to me that the group really really changed entirely. Their whole outlook on music and performance but also on themselves. I still hear from students who say "Oh

remember when we were on the Concert Hall stage or remember this." (Int. 1: 1)

The power of the original experience of music is often experienced much later as participants reminisce about their shared activity. In the following story a teacher remembers her musical experience. Her remembering brought laughter and tears to our eyes. This points to the energy that memory pulls out of us upon reflection of experience. Her reflection brought a joyful energy, with surprise and excitement, and the unexpected and the possibilities therein, of the moment between us. The music continued to bring life as it did originally.

I worked...with teachers. We did a concert and we did a song. I can't remember I think it was Everytime I Feel the Spirit and I was directing this thing. And the teachers were having a great time upon the stage. I could tell that. I mean they just came alive but what was hilarious was that the whole audience came alive and of course my back's to them so I missed most of it. But people were just like dancing and singing in the aisle's practically and shouting Amen. (Int. 1: 10)

The individual memories as seen in the data showed how reflective the students were about their musical experience. The visual, the emotional, and the auditory sense of performance are all present in memories. "I can still picture myself standing up saying my lines feeling good about music" (Student 4: 1).

Memories reveal the importance of music experiences. Without the experience, students realized that they would not have the confidence, joy, and ability to express their thoughts to a larger group.

The feelings I am left with after performing "Alice" would have to be confidence and joy. Now somehow it is easy for me to express my thoughts to a larger group. Most of all I have the memories. (Student 3: 3)

Experiences are remembered through stories. These teachers and the students' stories of music experiences include the relational, situational and temporal aspect. Important to this example is that the music is central to the child's reflection and awareness of growth and change.

Music means a part of my life to me...whenever we come to music classes we get to ...do neat stuff like playing instruments... And choir has wonderful songs to sing and I remember... I loved the Christmas Concert... I felt like a shining star in front of the audience. It was wonderful. Everybody loved us... So that's why music means a part of my life. (Student 2: 3)

The teachers, who had many years of memories to choose from, remembered music experiences in which they felt inspired, encouraged, amazed and rewarded for their efforts. The students' memory of the music is often the final presentation, and the feelings the students had about themselves in connection with the performance.

But memory is not only significant when it is connected with a performance of the past, it is crucial to participation in making music within every class. Memory of the sounds created allows the individual or group to change the sound as desired. Memory of the sound makes possible understanding of its form and expressive qualities. Memory is crucial to musicianship.

To summarize the significance of memory to musical experience there are numerous ways in which memory connects the students to their past musical experiences, and it also significant to the present moment in which they are engaged in musical activities. The musical memories of the past are shared by groups in music education classrooms. The power of the original experiences are brought back through memory. Memories show that students reflect about their musical experiences. The memories of musical experiences are reflected in stories both by students and teachers. Memory is significant in the moment in which the student is singing.

### **We Express The Gift Of Music.**

The matter of expressing the gift of music encompasses the whole of the person; body, mind and spirit. The discussion will focus on the mental and emotional aspects of expressiveness. As well, the physical embodiment of sound experience and the physical way in which singing takes place will be discussed. These combine to express the gift of music which is the experience of the spirit.

The gift of music involves thinking while in action. It requires preparation, learning by mirroring, knowing the musical plan and passing it on which often through the final performance. In order to express the emotion of the music the student must understand the emotion and integrate that into their singing. They must become physically involved with the energy of the music. Different physical exercises in the music classroom often assist the students in becoming physically involved. Expressiveness involves the inner core, and when successfully done has been described as magic by the listener. To express the gift of music involves the voice in all these ways.

The gift of music refers to the way in which music is given as a gift for those who listen. In order to express the music the performing person generally needs to give all of their attention, concentration and listening. Singing has been described as a particular form of intentional action (Elliot 1994, 7 ). While singing, students are participating in thoughtful and knowing actions. Students are attentive and concentrating in order to understand the language of music and to express the music.

I just take the premise that every child has a voice. They can all sing. The ear and the attention and the concentration has to develop and it develops at different rates just like in anything else; that understanding in mathematics; the ability to decode the written word in a book. It's another language that they have to learn to deal with and it happens so much through the ear. (Int.3: 3)

### **Expressiveness and thinking in action**

In expressing the music the students learn to be conscious of how to shape the sound and focus the tone in different places in the head, to sing from the heart, to take the breath at the right place and expend it appropriate to the length of the phrase, to connect with the mental images of the song or the melody. While they are engaged in singing the students are actively engaged in making decisions about what kinds of sound to make. The complexity of the music experience of expressing is referred to by the children as being hard work .

The musical was hard work, with practicing and dress rehearsals, but in the end, seeing how everyone enjoyed putting it on and how everybody enjoyed watching it, the hard work was definitely worth it. If there are more, I hope I get to be in them. (Student 3: 3)

The teachers' experience is that students gain confidence through singing which they gain by using something within themselves. The many decisions about singing require thinking in action.

I see that children gain a confidence of using something that is within themselves to express themselves not just through speaking but also through the singing. (Int. 3: 2)

**Expressiveness involves preparation:**

The children enjoy the song for its own sake but respond generously to preparing and presenting a song for others to enjoy. The teachers say the children love to perform. They are not hesitant about expressing the sounds and ideas of the song. They are comfortable about expressing. The teachers experience the students' responding with enthusiasm to expressing sound qualities, images, and emotions .

**Expressiveness and mirroring:**

Within the methodology of teaching musical patterns and other instrument work in order to express the music, the teachers use mirroring.

There's a communication process...I'm wanting to share the music with them and their sharing the music back with me as they learn it. Together we've created something. There's ...a magic that happens in playing an accompaniment on instruments or in singing a song or even playing a game. ...at first the child doesn't know what you're going to do, so you're

the one that's putting out the energy and the explanation and the child's mirroring it back. (Int. 1: 1)

The process of mirroring it back is part of the way expressiveness evolves in the music classroom. The teacher presents to the child and the child to the teacher. In this mirroring back and forth, a new creation of sound emerges. The different senses are involved in the mirroring. The mental, visual, aural, emotional and the intuitive are involved in the giving and the receiving of sound between student and teacher.

**Expressiveness involves passing it on:**

Through practice the group prepares to give the audience the experience of hearing their well prepared song. One teacher said, "They understood intuitively that the sound they are making needs to be heard." This may well also refer to the way in which the students adjust their singing behaviour in the performance situation in order that the audience will appreciate their performance. In this performance the students in the classroom are prepared. They understand the conductor's clues but also know how to use their own listening skills to make decisions about how the song can best be presented.

**Expressiveness and the moment:**

The music experience is known in the moment, in the present. It is one of giving to the audience, to the group and of sharing one's effort. Expressiveness in all its complexity is practiced in the minutes of performance as the group focuses on the music. The energies of the group are focused on the song or melody being presented.

When I was getting ready for the musical I felt nervous and sort of scared. But when I was on stage and singing, dancing and acting, I was transformed into "Tweedle Dee" and was in Wonderland. It was fun to play a main part and have a twin. Also I loved watching everyone get into the play and just have fun. (Student 3: 2)

**Expressiveness and understanding the emotion:**

In order for students to sing expressively they need to understand the emotion of the song. To get into the emotion the teacher and students may share their experiences. The teachers draw from their experience in the moment of getting into the emotion of the song.

Well, taking a song or certain theme to make it come alive for the students...from my own experiences I can draw from what I'm experienced and I can show them videotapes and listen to tapes....I can read them stories...We can look at a globe or a map...bring as many experiences to the children to help them recreate...what the...music is all about. I found that, whatever I've experienced has probably helped me in my teaching the most because in different cultures...to be able to experience the music first hand helps me to relate it to the students even better....it's just an interest I have in music from all over the world and I want the student...to experience that. (Int. 1: 11)

**Expressiveness requires integration of the emotion:**

The students awareness of the emotion of the music and the integration of it into their own singing is important to expressiveness. In addition to focusing on the many aspects of sound production, the students are asked to convey the emotion through their singing. In

connection with emotional expression, teachers frequently call on the image of singing from the heart. When the students are singing from the heart the teachers say the sound changes and the emotion can be seen in their face as well. The students faces show expressions to fit the song.

so some times it will make the air on your neck stand up or it will give you shivers or you'll just realize that all of a sudden they're all focussing on one idea and that they're all trying to express it, you can see it in their faces and you can hear it there's just an emotion in the sound. (Int. 1: 2)

#### **Physical aspects of the energy of expressiveness:**

Learning to express involves body language. Different senses are involved. The teacher works with articulation, listening and emotions to put it altogether in the song. A teacher talking about learning to express says:

For instance...in those situations, where I would demonstrate what I'm looking at or and I would sing the phrase and then expect the student to sing it back, there's a type of communication that's going on whether it be in body language, facial expressions communication through the eyes, through all the different senses. They're picking it up and mirroring it back, so it's like this circular type of communication. (Int. 1: 2)

The physical aspect of expressiveness has been referred to as "hearing the emotion in the sound". The following excerpt gives an example of the way in which the students are

physically energized to participate with greater active energy. Students participate in warm ups of many kinds to develop greater expressiveness in their sound.

And I made them jump up and down again until I got them to sing, but by the end of the class they were really singing out with feeling, moving their bodies when they sang, working, you know, like they were enjoying it, and actually sang the song very very well. They were singing out, which is something that hadn't happened before. And I do that even now, with the parachute, and other things...to try and invoke a feeling. I do the jumping up and down before choir practice... so that they can feel something. And it seems to be very important that kids connect with some sort of feeling inside of themselves, that they get the same kind of feeling, like the...diver...You never see an Olympic diver go up on the diving board, talk to all his friends, wave, throw things, and stuff like that. They go up and concentrate really hard, and they...do little warm-up exercises with their legs, and their hands...and they...bow their heads and think about what they're going to do. But when they actually do the dive, every muscle...is all poised...They're moving mountains of muscles to get everything into place, and it takes a lot of practise. Or, the runner. The runner doesn't go over to his sidewalk, and...say, "I'm going to talk to my friends, throw things, and yell."...He stops and listens to that silence so he knows exactly how he's going to run...They concentrate very hard on what they're going to be doing, the task at hand, and then, when they do run, it's...the best running. Anybody who's done running...who's done athletics well...have a feeling inside of them that it's going well...They have a feeling of exuberance, and expending of energy...So we've been trying to work on that focusing as well. Focussing the energy so that they come out with performance rather than coming out with broken

pencils and notes written to friends, and things like that. (Int. 7: 11)

**Expressiveness requires knowing the plan:**

To express the music is to have a plan just like the diver or the runner. The matter of expressing is to know this plan and to rehearse it and focus on it as the diver and the runner do before and during performance.

**Connections within expressiveness:**

Expressing the sound includes the group sharing as well as the individual bringing to mind whatever thought processes can influence the making of their own sound. The totality of the expression of the group is the mix of the contribution of the individual to the group as directed and inspired by the teacher.

A week before our musical...I was very nervous and worried that none of it would work out. I didn't really have a big part in the play but I was still scared because I'm even shy to do anything in front of my parents. But when we went on stage and did our part, everyone loved our class. Everybody was laughing. When the concert was over I felt proud and relieved that everything went okay. A few days after the play we watched ourselves on tape and I saw some mistakes that we had done, but I still thought we were good! (Student 4: 2)

### **Expressiveness and the final performance:**

A part of the expressiveness of the music experience is the final performance. The teachers interviewed said the children love to perform. To perform is defined as that which one acts on so as to bring to accomplishment, or carry out to completion, meet the requirements of, or render or enact (Webster's 1970). The nature of the music experience is that there are a lot of completion points within the singing of the song and the final singing of it in front of a particular audience. The students write about the final expression and their enjoyment in it.

The play was full of enthusiasm and fun. I think everyone did well in playing and being the part that they were chosen for. I think my favourite part was...Being in a play like...was fun to do and act. I also liked the songs. (Student 3: 5)

### **Expressiveness and the inner core:**

At the core of the music education experience is learning to express what the song or music needs. The students connects with the inner core of emotion as they sing and in so doing are validated. As one teacher said:

...but expressing yourself is working with the inner core of emotion...it really validates who they are. Some of the studies that I've seen, people from all walks of life who have learned to express themselves through music, whether it be prisoners, or mental patients, or rich people, or poor people, everybody improved by expressing themselves. And I think for children, it really validates who they are. (Int. 7: 9)

From the initial singing to the final performance there are many learnings which are presented in the final performance. Students have the openness and agility to explore and move through the steps of learning a song and through it they bring something to completion. When the students know the song very well, they can communicate with the inner core of their emotion. Such communication has been described as 'the magic' in musical performances.

### **Expressiveness and the magic**

The teachers talk about the magic of performance. The children do their best before an audience. Often a special effect or magic is created.

Together we've created something so there's that kind of...magic that happens in playing an accompaniment on instruments or in singing a song or even playing a game. (Int. 1: 1)

In summary to express the gift of music involves many kinds of knowing, requires understanding and integration of the emotional aspect of the sound, involves the body and is seen through our physical manner of expression, is a matter of passing it on, of having a plan, of having completion points, of getting at the inner core of one's being and of experiencing the magic.

## **We Co-operate And Experience The Connection Through Music**

Co-operation is important to the connection experienced through music in the music classroom. The connection with the music is known through working together with others. Listening, attending, and participating are the ways to connect with others. "We do it exactly together," the teacher said. The student wrote, "Everyone worked together to make a great play" (Student 3: 4). Cooperation in this context is understood as the students willingness to participate in singing the song with all the necessary attention to listening, breath and posture. Cooperation happens in the group situation of the music classroom and the choir situation.

Cooperation has many definitions. In ecology it is an interaction beneficial to all organisms involved (Webster 1970). In music classes when students are cooperating, the participants are more successfully able to experience the connection through music. Co-operation in choir is beneficial to all involved. When all members are co-operating, the sound produced is more pleasing to the ear, and the requirements of the class or choir are accomplished sooner. When the group works together in harmony, therefore everyone benefits. When everyone sings or plays in harmony they experience the connection through music.

At the core of the the choir experience when everyone is working together, is the sound. The sound created by a group working in harmony has a way of benefiting all involved. "But in music you're creating something together so when there is co-operation you can make beautiful music" (Int. 1: 4). Research has shown that participation in singing increased the participants' co-operation level in other activities they engaged in (Anshel & Kipper 1988). One teacher described co-operation in choir in the following way.

They must all do something exactly together. And this is sometimes quite difficult for them to do. But when they do it successfully they have a wonderful, wonderful sense of achievement. (Int. 3: 1)

The wonderful sense of achievement comes from the sound created when all participants are listening and concentrating on the song being worked on. Another teacher says: "but in music you're creating something together so when there is cooperation you can make beautiful music" (Int. 1: 4). To create as a group implies that a consensus of sound is arrived at. The interactions that will be beneficial to all are those that create a unity of sound. All voices combine to sound like one voice. When this happens there can be great satisfaction, and a wonderful sense of achievement .

The following story tells of the changes the group experienced as they co-operated. The music education experience requires co-operation:

Well I guess that's probably why I got so excited about that one school choir because it's the type of school where it seems to be disjointed and kids have a hard time getting along with other kids...There's a lot of that...That whole total unity came together...They actually worked on something and accomplished doing it together without having a big argument...or someone else telling someone else how to do it...in the middle of it. So that's another thing that choirs...like team work do. (Int. 5: 5&6)

When everyone is working together it is much like team-work. Significant to this team work is the effect of the sound on the participants. The effect of the unison sound is that it resonates within the group; this is a situation in which everyone in the group is listening. We know that

cooperation in a choir involves attention to posture, attention to breathing and attention to listening.

Posture, breath, listening and attention have been the subject of much attention from ancient times as is seen in all the meditation traditions and also in recent times by among others the French ear specialist, Tomatis in his extensive research work on the functions of the ear. His thinking about posture or verticality is revealing. About this notion of verticality he said, "What the ancients knew was that once one reaches perfect auditory posture the body reaches out and literally incorporates all the sound that comes from outside " He explains how verticality affects brain consciousness, body balance, the non verbal body language, the ear's ability to hear its own voice and it's ability to "...charge the organism with electrical potential" (Tomatis 1991, 17). With this kind of modern research and ancient understanding about the way in which we are affected by our posture, the sounds we hear and make, one can conclude that the wonderful sense of achievement of the choir members arrived at by their disciplined attention to posture, breathing and listening to the sound was a state of consciousness in which they were energized, in which they experienced a measure of healing through sound.

In conclusion cooperation, which is a part of the music education experience has been experienced as "a wonderful sense of achievement" to the individual and the group working in cooperation. Through cooperation the students have joined with other voices to experience the sound as one voice.

## **We Have Fun; The Moment Of Presence**

The moment of presence is understood from the writings of the students to be the times in which their full attention is on the music. Most often they wrote about the demands of performances. In performances the students are usually very focused and attending to what the music requires of them. The students' writings about performances included how they felt, physically, mentally and emotionally. Their descriptions of their experiences were very physical. They talk about the fact that they were hot, and their feet were tired, and it was stuffy.

Overall in the writings the most prevalent word used consistently was fun. Over and over the students write. "We had fun." "I had fun." "I think it was fun." "I had lots of fun." The experience of performance involves expressiveness, and cooperation which have already been discussed but the important point here is the immediacy, that attention to how they feel physically.

The teacher says, "I want the children to have a sense of fun in doing this. In making music there's a joyfulness about it" (Int. 3: 7). Her students write:

Doing the operetta was fun and exciting. Preparing for it was fun, but also hard. I think our rehearsals made it easier to get up on stage and feel more sure of ourselves. During the play, on stage, I felt sure of my movements and I was having fun!  
(Student 3: 1)

The origins of the word fun are in the Latin *follis*, which is bellows. Singing involves the diaphragm, which is much like the idea of bellows. The word fun is appropriate to the

experience of singing which requires attention to breath. When the children sing they are present in the immediate demands of the situation. The moment of presence involves the voice of the student and the attention of the student. In their writings about their musical experiences the students talked about their nervousness before performance. Nervousness is made up of emotional tension felt in one's nerves. Nerves are described as fibres connecting the body organs to the central nervous system; the brain and the spinal cord. Furthermore the nerves are involved in sending messages to and from the brain or a nerve centre. To experience nervousness is to be aware of the sending of a more than usual amount of messages to and from the brain. Musical performances involve the sending of many messages from the brain to the different nerve centres. These same writings usually conclude with the statement that this performance was fun. The whole experience of making music is experienced in the body, in all the nerve centers, and in its voice the group comes out of the experience having united in sound at a particular time, often having fun.

### **We Do It Over And Over; Repetition Is Central**

The music experience is one of repetition of patterns of sound. In order to learn music repetition is needed. The repetition of songs or melodies or rhythms builds skills and understanding of musical concepts such as reading notation. Other learning could be such as relating to how sound is made vocally or on an instrument. The form, the melody, and the harmony are experienced through repetition. A teacher explains the importance of repetition to a student struggling to improve her sense of pitch.

And I said, "so it might take you four or five years, it might take you a year before you really get the tone matching down to perfection where you can do everything perfectly well,

where you can hear all of those things. Because you may have to train your hearing. But it's very possible. Anyone can do it and I think it's just a matter of practise." She practised and when she reached grade six she won the musician of the year. She played recorder beautifully, danced beautifully, played Orff instruments and her singing voice, though slightly weak, was on pitch and she could memorize, she had a good tonal memory. (Int. 2: 4)

Within repetition lies the opportunity for children to participate at the different levels of listening ability. Even though children are at different levels of ability, they can benefit from the music experience because the experience is their connection with the song or sound. The repetition of the sound allows the student to connect with the music each time it is made and thereby improve musicianship as well as have the experience of participating with the group.

The music experience is carried on over time and is connected with the past and future. The repetition of a song gives pleasure. Repetition is central to the experience of music, is experienced simultaneously in different ways and yet benefits participants individually. Through repetition the participants' music skills and self concepts are changed. Through repetition the individual students' voices are developed.

### **We Are Moved: The Spirit Of The Sound**

The final theme to be discussed is that in the experience of music the participant and the listener may be moved by the music. Being moved by the music is understood to mean that one is inspired by it, or is changed or transformed.

The teachers speak about being amazed in connection with working with students and music. They are amazed at the change created by the music in their students' performances and growth in musical abilities. Amazed is defined as filled with great wonder and astonishment (Webster, 1970). Wonder is the feeling of surprise, admiration and awe aroused by something strange, unexpected, and incredible. The origin of astonish is "to be altered" (Webster 1970, 40). Through the experience of music the students and teachers are altered.

We are altered in that we come alive. The teachers talked about the sound and students coming alive. This is change or transformation in both the individuals participating and the sound which is very much part of them.

Yet another way that being moved is described, is to be excited. The definition of excite in terms of physics relates to higher energy. In this excerpt the teacher reflects on the excitement of the music experience that she remembered.

I don't know how to put it in the right words. I know it's been said many times but music is the food for our soul...Our soul is coming alive and our spirit...Everytime I feel the Spirit may be that which instigated it. All of a sudden their spirits were alive. Everybody was in tune with the same kind of thing. They were vibrating. It was just a marvellous moment you know...It was contagious...I think we gain a lot through those experiences. I don't know if we could ask a math teacher if they ever have that kind of bang ..coming alive, or in chemistry. Sometimes when that happens I'm really thankful that I'm in this kind of environment that those things can happen...I guess maybe I thrive on that. I'm always amazed when it happens. I mean it's not always something you plan. That was one extreme situation where I can just recall hundreds of people...but you just realize that no matter what I

could give them they gave me so much more back. (Int. 1:  
10)

Within this reflection the teacher referred to vibrating, chemistry, and bang. The music experience has connected the participants into pulsating energy experienced individually as joyfulness. Participation in music is ultimately about creating energy and what the teacher is saying is the song creates an environment. The participants in that environment are the students. The teachers and students are directing that energy. There is a lot of chemistry involved in all the possible interactions between students and students and teachers and students and the song. When all of these unite in singing in tune with co-operation and expressiveness there is a change in the chemistry of participants. One student writes about this energy:

I loved being on stage. I've always loved being in a spotlight.  
I'm so spirited. as my friends say, so that letting my energy  
out, through dancing or singing shows how much I like being  
on stage. (Student 3: 4)

This is where many of our memorable music experience memories of feeling lumps in our throat, tingling down the spine, tears in the eyes or other physical sensations come from. Music experiences provide many a stage on which energies dance, and ignite listeners to dance along at some level. The tears and the lumps and tingling are the evidence of being moved and remind us of the value of the experience. We say we were moved by the music. The teachers and students refer to being moved or touched by significant musical experiences which involve the singing and playing of instruments by students in the music education context.

We may not know if we are moved to tears through the associations we have with the song or with the song itself or the way in which the song is presented. Nevertheless we are moved. Songs often have that effect on both the performers and on the listeners.

Our last number was a very moving, stirring performance. One that brought me very close to tears, it was quite moving. One of the boys said about that particular number, "I've never been so glad to be a Canadian." (Because it had something to do with living in Canada.) It just made me feel so warm and rich inside. And this is from a ten-year-old. And I thought what a wonderful expression of the aesthetic experience for that child. (Int. 6: 9)

In conclusion, the themes of the music education experience discussed in this chapter includes the remembering, the co-operating, the repetition, the having fun, the many aspects of expressiveness and the experience of being moved by the music. In most of the discussion of the aspects of the music experience the students' voices are heard singing. This chapter has focused on the parts of experience but the whole of the experience is the voice of the student being heard by the teacher and the audience. The changes in the students through the music education experience is the focus of the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 5

## TRANSFORMATIONS

Musical experiences in the classroom can lead to many changes for the student personally, at the time they are attending the classes and in their future life. The stories the teachers shared corroborated the notion of change through music (Tomatis 1991, 13). In this chapter I will present the themes of change or transformation through music that emerged from the analysis of the data of the interviews and the students' writings. The stories or experiences of the teachers and students pointed to different ways in which music experiences transformed them, the situation or their lives. The music classroom experience is experienced by the individual and as individual who is part of the group.

Experience has been described as movement (MacLeod 1990, 84). The teachers' and students' stories reveal that movement is inherent in experiences of the classroom. Students and teachers experience transformations through music. These transformations happen in the moment, over time, reaching into the future, and change the quality of life. The songs that children learn, for example, often stay with them through time.

When I first learned the Australian songs for our assembly, I didn't really like them. Now, I find myself singing or humming them, and I like them a lot now. (Student 3: 10)

In asking the teachers to recall experiences in which there was change or transformation, teachers' reflections spanned different time lengths for different stories. Many of the stories had ongoing sequels in the second interview. They reflected that teachers have ongoing

relationships with the students they are talking about even after they have left their classrooms or school. The music experiences of these teachers had a sense of ongoingness. In addition to the teachers' sense of continuity there were reference to the significance of music learned in the music classroom. The songs learned in the classroom often live on into another setting and time in the future.

The significant phrases and words the teachers use are important in identifying the nature of the transformative experiences. What teachers and students have said is seen as reflective of the experience although it cannot replace the experience. Music is a total body, mind and spirit experience and can be known in its entirety only as it is being produced.

What stands out in talking to these teachers is the variety of ways in which music making transforms the situation and those involved. Music experiences transform the individual's understanding of musical concepts, self esteem and attitude. They transform relationships between students and teachers, they transform the musicianship of the group and thereby their performances. Changes in the students' singing, impact the school community. Musical experiences transform moments and the life of the student after the classroom experience. These transformations show changing relationships, changing context, and the impact of change over time. These changes impact the development of the individual students' musical voice. The notion of transformation through music is a complex one.

## TRANSFORMATION OF MUSICAL UNDERSTANDING

The first type of transformation is that of musical understanding. Participation in music experiences develops many different new musical understandings. In music education classrooms students are exposed to music they are not familiar with and they learn to enjoy it.

I liked his music and enjoyed its beauty, started to listen to the music at home, studied the music, learned how to read music, listened to Don Giovanni, The Marriage of Figaro, The Magic Flute and the beautiful tragedy; The Requiem. I didn't feel angry. It seemed to calm me. My work increased in accuracy but that's destiny. (Int. 5: 1)

Students become interested in learning about music they were not familiar with before. Often they come to enjoy listening to the classics. As children participate in music experiences in the classroom there is change in their understanding of all the musical concepts. They also experience change in their understanding of music of other cultures and styles. As students listen to and sing the music of another culture, they develop respect and appreciation of this music which they did not know before.

For instance right now students are working on [Africa]. Well . I've worked in.[Sierra Leone]...I can draw from what I'm experienced and I can show them videotapes and listen to tapes. I can read them stories. They are stories that are written about [Africa]. We can look at a globe or a map .We're going to have ...come in and play a....We try and bring as many experiences to the children to help them recreate...what the...music is all about. (Int. 1: 8)

When students give performances it gives them the opportunity to focus on what the music is and that changes their understanding of the music. Through performing and telling about their performances students understanding of the music changes their knowledge of the musical piece. It gives leadership responsibility to the child performing. They are asked to talk about their pieces that they perform to the class. When presenting to the class in this way the student is in a teaching situation. Research has shown that the greatest amount of remembering and learning happens when one is in a teaching situation.

When they perform on the piano, it's not just a performance. Then they have to talk about the piece of music and what they heard in musical terms and we've just done this recently with grade 3's. That gives that child a sense that they were the one who provided what we actually discussed. And then we'd go back and say, "Can you play the beginning again?" or "Can you play this part again?" And then we'd talk about that...This is my way of getting them to talk in musical language, not to say, "It felt like there was a fight." or "This was...." They can say how it made them feel but I don't want them to attach any story to it. It's an opportunity for them to use rhythm ideas, beat, pulse, meter, melody ideas, staccato, legato, high, low, dynamic changes, tempo and maybe even the structure of it and talking in those musical terms. (Int. 3: 10)

This quote speaks of how students learn the language of music theory. The importance is that the learning is happening through the experience of participation in music. The child who tells about the music not only becomes knowledgeable but also finds their confidence to speak about the music that comes from them.

Yet another aspect of new understanding happens when music is integrated with topics of study done in the classroom. Here is one such story about the way in which students' learning experience is changed when music is integrated into a unit of study done in the classroom. The children experience the way songs can speak about the everyday topics they are learning and thinking about. These experiences change their learning of the unit or topic. Songs often say succinctly what might otherwise take a lot of words to describe and explain.

I also try and integrate their experiences so that I go to the teachers and say what are you;...What kind of unit are you working on right now? Grade 3 's right now are working on reptiles so we're singing songs about alligators and crocodiles and snakes and things like that because then it doesn't seem like it's off by itself somewhere; that it exists on its own. Then they get the sense that this becomes a whole experience with something else that they're doing somewhere else. It's not just we come to the music room and we sing. We're actually doing something that we hear our teachers talk about Okay. It becomes somewhat integrated into their classroom experience as well...I guess in my basic thinking about what I'm teaching is that I think of my units of teaching as integrating into their lives in some way. (Int. 3: 6)

Musical experience in the music education classroom change the students understanding of musical concepts, appreciation of unfamiliar music and music of other cultures, and through integration of music into other subject areas their learning experience of other subject areas is changed. In all of these the students is singing or speaking and the experiences are ones in which their knowledge and experience is broadened.

## TRANSFORMATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S SELF ESTEEM

Student writings about their musical experiences frequently reflect developing self confidence and knowledge about music. They write about feeling happy, excited, joyful, nervous and proud before, during or after their music experiences. Their written expression confirms what the teachers have seen and heard in their performances. In addition, they write about how their experiences have changed them in terms of how they feel greater self confidence.

Alice in Wonderland was important to me because now I'm not afraid of public speaking. And it was fun to perform in front of people. (Student 3: 1)

Students are encouraged to take part in musical activities they might not otherwise feel confident to do without the encouragement. Teachers often have a vision and confidence of the potential abilities of their students, and in those contexts the children may succeed beyond what they are initially sure they can do. Students engage in learning experiences that are difficult for them; they take the risk and they succeed. This strengthens their self confidence. I believe this story is commonplace for music teachers.

I think of a grade 6 girl when we did Anne of Green Gables and she didn't even do the singing audition because she was so shy. She found it far too difficult even to expose herself to her peers at that point in time. But inside of me knew that she was the perfect person to play Mathew in Anne of Green Gables so I took her aside and I talked to her and I said, "I would really have liked you to have done a singing audition because I think there's a part that's perfect for you." And I said "Would you be?" I mean this is a girl and she would be asked to play a boy's part and I said, "Would you be willing to play the part of Mathew?" And her face just lit up and you could tell that that

was the role that she hadn't even thought of... She wasn't sure that she could do it. And I said to her "Susan, I know that you can, I have great confidence that you can do it, we can work on this together. And I know that you can do it." She ended up playing the part and sang to a huge audience. This was over a period of about two months where she got the challenge to do it and then accomplished it. (Int. 3: 14)

The teachers experience with the student who was able to achieve the confidence over the two month period to perform the part in the musical, points to the change in self confidence. In other cases the commitment to practise over a period of years makes a significant impact on their achievements and the respect of others which impacts self esteem.

She says, "Everyone hates me." I said, "Well at the very least you're a wonderful musician." And I said, "You know you can just practise music and do a great job on that." And she's now received ...three or four scholarships to International Music Camp and she's flying out to Montreal, I think in a couple of weeks time to participate in the festival for trombone players, brass players... She's in grade 8, but she plays for the senior high band, because they need a great trombonist that can read music ... And [among her peers] she no longer seems to be an outcast or a nerd. She's suddenly looked up to. (Int. 2: 3)

The successful musical achievements of a student who initially was timid and insecure is a phenomenon frequently experienced by music education teachers. Students experience opportunities in which they share their own songs created out of their own experiences. The student in the above story chose to practise her music; to make the commitment and benefitted through that. Self esteem is also developed in music education experiences in which the students use their creative musical ideas both in building their own musical skills

and in sharing them with the group. When students share their own songs, and experience a respectful listening atmosphere, their self esteem is increased.

I really like to let...if they say they have a song, they usually are making them up. I let them come up and they sing their song and they usually talk about their Mom going to the store and their Dad going to work, all the little things that happen in their life, but they put them to a little tune. And I think that's important for the other kids to hear because maybe the other kids have never thought of trying to make up a little song. You know everybody's experiences are different. (Int. 1: 6)

The excitement of the students involved in creatively moving to express the music, or improvising a melody, or dramatizing a certain character changes to confidence when they are comfortable with new learning. There are innumerable ways in which transformations related to self esteem may happen. Students may be shy about improvising initially within the classroom but with experience they may become comfortable creating their own melodies on the recorder, or barred instruments and also vocally. The following example is that of the student who was working on composition with the music teacher.

He usually expresses his change by his whole face starting to grin. He doesn't smile a lot. He starts to grin and says, "I like that." It's not quite as magical a transformation from "I dunno, blah, blah, blah." to "That's fine, I really like that, put that down, let's keep that!"...and "I'm in control, I can do things, I have validation here, this is mine...I'm getting special treatment here." His is more a shy awareness that he's done something really special, and that he likes it very much. (Int. 7: 14)

The discussion of this section has focused on how music experiences transform the child's self esteem through taking the risks to play a part, in making commitments to practise, and in performing in various kinds of performances, and in creative experiences. Through these experiences teachers have seen students gain confidence. Students write about their building of confidence. Through these experiences the students often are developing their particular gift, be it singing a solo, the ability to play a steady beat, the ability to play a more difficult part on a instrument, the singing and acting combination, or many other possibilities related to music classroom experiences. Through these experiences, as their self esteem changes, often their attitude changes as well.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF ATTITUDE**

Music often has the effect of changing the child's attitude to a situation. Children may come into music classes with a negative attitude about music or their ability to participate and after some time or certain musical experiences they behave differently in the music class or choir.

I've had students when I've started in a new situation say, "I hate music." "I don't sing.", or "I don't want to do this." And so I try to keep an eye on them as well, and try to find out what is disturbing them or what's going on in their lives. I know one little boy he's also in a TLC class and he said that he hated music. Just last week he asked if he could play the piano and so I let him go and play the piano. And of course he didn't really know how to play the piano but he just played up and down the piano. He was so proud of himself and he thought that was great and the next day he brought this book and he'd written all these eighth notes and quarter notes and so you sometimes have to nurture that along. So it's not really a fact

of hating music. It's probably either frustration or something else that's bothering them. Music is another area where you can sometimes help kids sort out their problems just through the actual process of making music. (Int. 1: 5)

Students' attitudes to music often change after a particular experience in the music classroom context. Often it is a case of being able to perform for the class in some way. In particular when the student contributes in a creative way; in any number of contexts such as on any of the classroom instruments, or vocally, students can have a very positive feeling about these experiences. Through the students unique music experience in which they receive special recognition or acknowledgement, they may change their attitude to their music classroom participation.

A change in attitude can come through the way in which a class participates in the learning being presented. The unfamiliarity of the piece and perceived difficulty can be discouraging to students. To hear a performance of the music will often be motivating for the students.

So I brought in a recording for them to listen to and I had them sit in the centre of the room and I had them sit very close together and I put speakers at opposite ends of them so they would be in the centre of the sound. And the recording was of the "Sanctus" of the Faure Requiem. I got them to be silent and I played the recording for them and at the end one little boy said, "Is that what we're going to sound like?" And I said, "Yes it is." "Oh well I think we'll be just great!" And that experience of listening to the end product when they hadn't started on the piece at that point was a real motivator for them. They worked very hard in a very disciplined manner for the next half an hour at a very challenging piece of music...So the sound experience of listening to it changed the manner in which they approached it I think. (Int. 4: 4)

There are many ways in which students' attitudes to music are changed through experiences of solo performances or through successful focused learning. When the students' attitude changes through their participation in music, their relationship with other students also change.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STUDENTS**

A change in the musical voice of the student through their solo performances of singing or playing an instrument, prompts changes in their relationship with other students. They are often given respect for their particular role or participation in some musical activity.

It changed me because before Alice, nobody noticed me as much. They just saw me as Sally Nolan, fast runner, and that was it. But when I got up on stage in my costume and makeup, I portrayed the best caterpillar that I could, three times. I forgot I was performing and just had fun. Now a lot more people from JK to grade twelve notice me and tell me how great I was. They know me now as Sally Nolan: good actress and Caterpillar. This is a good change. That's how its changed me. (Student 3: 2)

The example illustrates that changes in musical knowledge and changes in relationships are intertwined and are synonymous with change in the individual. There were other stories in the data of how students gained prestige and admiration from other students as they sang solos and played instruments.

I had that little boy in a grade 4 get up and talk about his experiences in musical theatre and his performance. And the kids said would he do his song and dance. So he got up and right in the middle of the room; he did his song and dance, the whole thing you know. And the other kids really appreciated it. (Int. 1: 6)

The fact that students are able to entertain their friends in the music classroom or in choir situations increases their positive interactions with their peers. As students are given special opportunities in music classrooms to sing and dance, their relationship with their teacher changes as well.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**

Transformation of the relationship between teachers and students is a central theme in all of the interviews. Music teachers have stories to tell about how their relationship with a student went through changes from that of the uncooperative student to one of being a cooperative student and that of the student hesitant to engage, to that of engaging with confidence. Within all the learning of the music classroom, the teachers' relationship with the student is in the foreground, as the work of musicianship requires relating at all levels of depth and with honesty. Difficulties in differences among personalities is often resolved through the musical experience. The child may have a testing attitude towards the teacher initially and after some experience, the child's attitude changes making the working together in the classroom more comfortable. Such changes in attitude is an example of the transformation of relationships between teachers and students. As these changes tend to come about through particular musical experiences, it is significant that students, in their writings, express gratitude for the

teacher providing the musical opportunity. They frequently thank the teacher for their own particular part or solo in the musical or concert. Music teachers experience transformations of teacher and student relationships as a result of student performances. As the student in the following writing feels special, so do many students who are given special parts in musical explorations and performances. Students have special musical opportunities in the music classrooms, in assemblies and at concerts in the school and in musical performances outside the school.

I liked the play. When I saw Peter Pan last year, I felt that I couldn't wait until grade six so I could be one of the people on stage. I had a of of fun doing the play, especially the second show because I was more relaxed. I felt special because someone was watching me all the time. Thanks for letting me take part! It was fun! (Student 3: 3)

Student writings have shown that they have an appreciation both for the teacher providing music opportunities for them and for the change in their self esteem due to this experience. In that the student has feelings of gratitude to the teacher for their learning experience, their relationship with their teacher is changed. The teachers are aware of the significance of the relationship she/he has with each student. Each student is encouraged to sing, to join in, to be part of the music being made in the classroom. These changes in relationship play a significant part in the way in which music is made in the group in the music classroom.

## **TRANSFORMATION IN THE WAY MUSIC IS MADE IN THE GROUP**

Transformation of the way in which music is made by groups in the music classroom happens in many different ways. In learning to sing with a particular quality and excellence, the sound of the group will be changed. Through the modelling of the teacher and other resources and the feedback and listening to other groups, children develop the ability to hear and produce a higher quality of sound. The way in which they make music in the group changes.

Each individual within the group has the responsibility and the possibility to make changes in the sound of the group. The social impact of such commitment to creating a unified sound may be a more lasting change than the way in which the sound is made. But the lasting social change was created by the sound made by the group.

The other thing I think that's really important really transforming for these children is that they have to co-operate with one another. They have to listen to one another. They have have to be in the same space with somebody else and do something together. That's also has a real social impact on kids. It's an activity that they can all do together...So there's a unifying thing about that, that I think the human being needs. I know I'm talking in very general terms. These...are really the key changes you would call transforming...because they are not just momentary things they are things that you take with you forever. (Int.3: 11)

Children learn from the teacher and from each other; the group is made up of singers at different levels of pitch ability but once in the group their ability to sing in tune is improved since they listen to the models of other students around them. There are many ways in which

the music of the group is transformed by the individual singer's ability, attitude, effort, commitment, concentration and understanding of the music.

How do children learn how to sing?...They are very good imitators...They hear good models around them, and good models are given to them, they will then have a better way of using...their singing voice. Because it can be used badly as well as well. There can be different ways in which that can be used...The transformation of [the voice] is occurring through the very careful guidance and training of someone who's [modelling how to sing]...Transformation will be of a different quality if somebody comes in and just lets them sing in any old way. They may still be transformed in some way, but it will be a different transformation. Why else do we send our children to sing in the festival and hear other children sing and hear somebody talk about what they're doing, and how very, very good they get...at recognizing when they hear a good choir, and what makes them a good choir. They begin to really know how to discriminate about those sorts of things and say, "We're good because we do those things, too." And that gives them a feeling of satisfaction that they're singing something worthwhile, and have achieved some level of excellence, just as they do in their individual efforts, when they're writing a test in some particular subject. Or when they prepare a project, or something they're going to present in class and get very positive feedback on that. That transforms them because they slowly become people who say, "This is something I can do." (Int. 8: 7)

The experience of discovery of a musical concept within the music education classroom is an example of how the musicianship of the group can be changed. Once they understand the

importance of listening for and recognizing aspects of musicianship they will put these in practise thereby changing the sound of the group.

There are endless possibilities for music experiences that transform the way in which music is made in the group in the education classroom. It is the individuals in the group however, who are making the effort and contributing. That makes the transformation of the group music performance possible.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF GROUP MUSICAL PERFORMANCE**

The transformations of sounds of the group may need to be understood in terms of the recent and ancient understanding of the possibility of the healing power of sound. The research of Clyne has shown that music acts on both the mind and body. He has identified essentic forms as "...the biologically given expressive dynamic form for a specific emotion." The sound of the melody of the music connects with these essentic forms thereby communicating the emotions to the mind and body (Clyne 1991, 124). The listener is temporarily engaged in this communication which may have pleasing emotions. The songs the children sing are often based on their joyful, playful, curious, creative sense. As the musicianship of group is transformed so is their own experience of their singing transforming.

The story quoted in chapter four in which the group discovered that they preferred to have the silence at the end of the song, is a good example of change in the group's musical performance. The change in the group's musical performance is due to a change in their listening .

So I think that that really has transformed them into real musicians because now they're listening for the sound. They're enjoying the sound that they're making when they're performing and I think that's what it's all about. (Int.4:3)

The sounds made by the group can have a transforming effect on the group. The sound of the group is changed as the singing of individuals change.

## **TRANSFORMATION IN SINGING**

In the music education classroom, transformation happens as the childrens' ability to sing changes. They develop a greater sense of pitch, projection, and confidence. As the ear, the attention and the concentration are developed, children become more adept at singing. Teachers observe and experience this development happening at different rates in children. The voice of individual students develop at their own rate. They learn to blend in with the group and will sing on their own when they are ready to do so. Given the significance of the ear on the functions of the mind and body (Campbell 1991), a change in singing ability cannot help but affect one's mind and body. Developments in the ear's ability to hear and recognize different frequencies are moments of transformation as the whole body and mind are changed.

In the following discussion, the teacher alludes to the spectrum of possibilities of transformation in singing. Transformation in singing begins with learning to sing in tune to being able to be part of a group that makes a lovely singing sound. With more experience and practise students gain the knowledge of how to sing with greater skill and at some point the transformation may lead to having the confidence and skill to be able to sing a solo.

These are all examples of change in one's ability to sing. It may however not necessarily follow that the person with the strongest, most in tune voice is experiencing the greatest transformation through their singing sound. Transformation is the change in ability from one ability to another. Therein lies the value of the experience.

Some children will gain a lot of confidence and will say, "I've got this really nice voice. I want to share it." The next transformation could be that they couldn't even hold a tune and now all of a sudden find that they can keep a tune going and sing along with other people....They can be part of this wonderful sound experience and know that it's very excellent and say, "I was in that group that made that lovely sound." And that creates personal pleasure for that person. (Int. 8: 6)

"Singing done well is an exquisite form of what Schon calls "thinking-in-action" and "knowing-in-action" (Elliot 1994, 7). Elliot describes "knowing-in-action" as procedural knowledge. "When a student is singing musically, he or she is demonstrating a rich form of procedural knowledge called musicianship" (Elliot 1994, 7). As the child develops their ability to sing, they are engaging in these forms of "thinking in action" and "knowing in action". The development of the voice through singing is transformative. When student voices have experienced change and a measure of transformation the school community will be affected.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF AN ASPECT OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

Music transforms the school environment through events such as sing alongs, concerts and assemblies. One child's solo in a school assembly if done well, can, like a ripple, bring about many positive feelings, comments and encourage other students to make similar efforts, as

well as give memories to the school community. In the following story one child's singing significantly affected the rest of the group.

One of the most touching things that ever happened was we always ended every Friday with "Amazing Grace" and we sang it and there was one little boy Joe and he used to get up, "Time for Amazing Grace " he'd say, "I'll sing the solo." and he'd get up walk to the front and sing at the top of his lungs, beautiful singing. ...Every Friday he'd sing this you know and he'd say, "I have one other request, I'd like to add the song "I Know where I'm going." which is a hymn tune. So we added that to the roster and he sang that every week, he and two other children that he made a little trio out of. And when I read of him dying of cancer in the newspaper, both Sue and I, my accompanist, both went to the funeral which was held in a little chapel nearby the school...We didn't recognize anyone there except one family member and so we thought well we've sort of made a mistake coming there...We were grieving because we knew this child...The minister got up and said that Joe had passed on at age 21 of cancer and that the only thing that he had dear and close to his heart was he'd like to hear the choir sing. First of all he said they'd like to sing "I know where I'm going". After that we're all going to all stand and sing "Amazing Grace". And Sue and I just burst into tears. (Int. 2: 2)

It is not only an individual child's singing that affects the group, it is also the song itself. There are innumerable events at which the song "Amazing Grace" and other songs have been a moving experience. As experienced music teachers discuss songs there will be considerable agreement, although not complete consensus, on which songs can move one to tears. Teachers say that certain songs have transformed a whole room of students as they participate in

singing as well as the audiences who hear these songs. The teachers have come to know what songs will be transformative and may choose to present them to their students. Not all songs are chosen for this purpose and "moving" can include emotions such as sadness, happiness, freedom, surprise and humour and other emotions.

Musical activities often transform the school community in the sense of the drama, costumes, and excitement that they create. A school musical invariably affects the tenor and mood of the whole school. A teacher describes such an experience for a student in his first day in that school.

I was doing a musical called "Clowns" in an elementary school and we had all our grades four, five, and six kids involved. That was two-hundred and twenty-three students. On a Monday early in April, we did two performances for our school, that day. Now on that Monday, in lands a student who had never gone to school before, who had lived in a home with grandparents on a northern reserve. And he landed in our school on that day. He was eight years old, had never, ever been to school, had no group experiences, and that was the day he landed in our school. Can you imagine being a child who had never been to school before and landing in a school where there are two-hundred and forty people dressed up as clowns? So now the next year I was not at that school. Now this story starts almost two years after that child landed in that school. I was now working in another building. I had an office in another building, and the child was there. I recognized the child and the child recognized me, and he said, "I remember you. You're a clown!" He said, "What are you doing here?" And I said "I work here, now. Would you like to come and see where I work?" So I took him down to my office because in my office, I had a composite picture that one of the parents

had given me of all of the cast on the stage of this production. Now that child, this is now you have to remember, this is almost two years later, told me everyone, every single name of every single main character, pointed them out on the picture. pointed out where I was, and said he remembered one of the songs had something to do with colours. He had so many incredible details of that performance embossed in his brain that he could sing snippets out of it, almost two years later? What an impression, that one experience made for that child.  
(Int. 6: 5)

Two hundred and forty students in one school dressed as clowns is an example of how musical productions often transform the school community. The impact of this transformation is felt by the student who feeling frightened and strange on his first day of school arrives in the midst of these friendly clowns. These kinds of transformation experiences within the school community often go with students in their lives after the classroom.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF STUDENTS LIFE AFTER THE CLASSROOM**

All the teachers noted that music becomes part of life outside the classroom. It could be said that when the musical experiences go with the student and become part of their life outside of the classroom their life has been changed. Students and former students often sing the songs they learn in other settings in the community together with school friends. Sometimes they are taught to siblings and other family members.

The grade five teacher went hiking with girls that were in grade seven and eight now. They were in the Lake district in England and they were staying in youth hostels so that they were responsible for doing dishes at certain times. What they would end up doing with her encouragement, is sing all the songs that they have learned either in choir or through their operettas. She said it was just amazing. All the songs that they remembered that was now part of their experience. (Int. 3: 9)

The extent to which this happens is often known by the teachers only many years later. Adults, in remembering their early music education experiences, often realize the significance of those music experiences much later. They may hear the music they sang or listened to in their days in elementary school. Some of their listening experiences will result in understanding and appreciation of the music in later life. Sound takes on many dimensions. As they remember songs, beautiful sound, performances, and the way in which their music teachers related, their life can be enriched. These experiences are made up of the moments of experience in music.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF THE MOMENT**

We are transformed as we communicate with the audience through the song. Students and teachers talk about the excitement of performance. They talk about being "lifted" or feeling high after a performance. In this excitement of the moment of participation in music, one may lose touch temporarily with the distractions around and be totally engrossed in the sound and actually hear it in a way in which one has not heard it before. The teacher in talking about these moments says,

I think the high points are when you and they know that they have done this really really well and the other thing is that they have communicated something to an audience. That they've actually brought pleasure and something special to people who heard them because that's a very special feeling.  
(Int. 3: 7)

When the group has communicated well to the audience, there is a transformation in the group atmosphere and presence. Others listening to the sound will perceive that the sound was noteworthy; they are often moved, or appreciative of having heard it. These moments often come at the end of the song. The sound of the music tends to linger in one's ear, one tends to hear the last strains in the silence at the end. However not all listeners listen in the same way and these sounds get lost.

You hear a choir finish a piece with a big number, and you need that silence following it, in order for the sound to be heard by people's souls. So it's the silence of the sound.

I often find, when I go to the symphony, and other performances, the clapping starts much too early for me.

Yes!

I need time.

Yes, exactly!

You need time for it to permeate your being!

Yep! (Int. 6:7)

The significance of the music experience is in its potential to transform in many different ways in the moment and over time. It can transform individuals, relationships, the group and the learning environment. It can and does impact the lives of students outside the classroom, at the time they are students and in later years.

The discussion thus far has centred on the nature of experience and the types of transformations that take place through music education experiences. The teacher is an important part of the process of transformation, but the processes and practices used by the teacher have been in the background of this discussion. In the following chapter the teacher processes and practices that facilitate transformations to occur will be discussed.

## CHAPTER 6

### KEYS TO THE TRANSFORMATION EXPERIENCE

Transformation experiences in the music education classroom do not frequently happen on their own. The possibilities for transformation are there due to teacher practices. Keys refers to the teacher practices that support possibilities for transformation. The discussion of this chapter will focus on the themes in the data relating to that which opens up the possibility of the transformative experience in the music classroom for the individual child. These keys are found in the everyday practice of the music teacher. Teacher practices include relationship with the child, the presentation of the song, the exploration in the learning of it. Through the supportive teacher practices transformation experiences are possible for the individual child and for the group.

This chapter is about teacher practices, in which the teacher is aware of what is happening, understands what needs to be, and acts as is fitting in the situation. Secondly, the students needs and abilities are the teachers' concern. Thirdly this chapter is about the song. The transformative music experience is the relationship of these three parts.

#### OPENING UP

Opening up is the building of the relationship between teacher and student in the music classroom context. The beginning of the relationship between teacher and student is that of the teacher listening to the student. The teachers see the group as made up of individuals. The sound of the group is the combination of individual voices. Awareness of the individual

within the group may be taken for granted. The everyday practice of caring for the individual student is very central to the way the teacher proceeds in the music classroom. Attention to the individual child is taken for granted in the sense that working with music requires listening to all the sounds made by the students. Music teachers listens to hear the ideas of their student as well as listening to their voice and how it blends with the group voice. These kinds of listening are very crucial to establishing a relationship with the child. The relational aspect of the music classroom experience has not be given significant attention in the research literature. Teachers build relationships with students by listening to their ideas and stories as well as their singing.

After listening to the student the teachers become aware of their needs.

The teacher practice is let's find out where these kids are, and let's...help them to use music to further them as a human being...For so many of the kids that we deal with in schools now, they have no beauty in their lives, and we as music teachers can provide that beauty for them. And it takes, I think the humanness of our teaching to look for the places where we can bring that beauty alive for them. (Int. 6:5)

Knowing the needs of the student, the teachers are constantly watching for opportunities to give a special musical involvement to a child who is interested and ready. Music education experiences ."often give kids a chance to shine where they may not shine in academics, they can shine in music." This statement may well be referring to the therapeutic aspect of having an experience that nurtures self esteem. But music teachers are also involved in giving opportunities to the gifted student and in these cases these experiences may be thought of as opportunities in which these students have a self actualizing experience (Maslow 1970, 167).

To build the relationship with the students requires that the teachers share themselves with the students. The trusting relationship is part of the transformative experience. Telling stories is an example of a way of creating trust and making a connection between teacher and student.

I tell my students a lot of stories, and a lot of my personal stories about students that I've taught, or about my experiences, and I think that that helps their willingness to be open in the classroom, and trusting. They trust me. Because I trust them to tell them my stories. (Int. 6: 11)

Opening up to the student in this discussion includes the teacher listening to the student, being aware of the students' needs, looking for opportunities to involve the child who is ready, and sharing themselves with the student. Let's look to the dialogue that the teacher has to see how that is key to creating the possibilities of transformative experiences in music classroom.

## **TEACHER DIALOGUE**

A significant part of the stories of change that the teachers shared in their interview, was the dialogue they remembered having with their students. The significance of the teachers dialogue with students is that it shows the ways teachers supported the individual student and ways in which the teachers engage and challenge their students to participate in musical experiences when they may not realize their capabilities.

Teachers' dialogue is a key to engaging students in musical experiences. The teachers look for ways to engage all students in the class and in particular, to engage the individual student to participate in ways they might not do without assistance. In the process of teaching the music, the music teachers encourage the students at many points to engage in a particular

musical activity, musical exploration, musical performance, or musical effort. There are many examples of teachers dialogue in the data in which students are encouraged to engage in some musical activity. Teachers are present in the situation to such an extent that they notice what is happening. They understand the learning process and students needs in the situation. They are able to interpret the responses of students and to know what to present next, how to act in order to move the sound or learning experience to the next step of learning.

Teachers dialogue is a key to encouraging the student. Teachers remember what they've said to students, in spite of the hundreds of interactions they have. As music teachers they relate to whole school populations. They remember because they have experienced it often. They have many hunches that certain students can benefit from the musical participation they are offering even though the child may be hesitant to engage in the experience. Teachers encourage students who do not feel confident, as in the case of Julia introduced in Chapter Five, to be the musical person they are capable of being.

She says "Everyone hates me," I said, "Well at the very least you're a wonderful musician." (Int. 2: 3)

In the story of the child who played Mathew, also introduced in Chapter Five, the teacher encouraged the child to play a part in the musical. The teachers often have the vision and confidence in the child and the child succeeds beyond what they are initially sure they can do. The teacher believed in Julia's ability, then found the appropriate way to communicate that to her.

In the following story a struggling student finds comfort, self esteem, and personal achievement in relation to his involvement in music class. This story is indicative of the many

levels of relating by the music teacher. The teacher is aware of the musicianship of the student, as well as his emotional state and self concept and becomes involved and hears about the ongoing concerns of the student's life. Music teachers are aware of these ongoing concerns of their students.

A high school boy came to me as a student in grade 10. I found out that he had been participating in music in the other school. He came into my band class and was a fine drummer. It was obvious when he walked in and sat down that he was much more comfortable back there than any of the other students and than me. Turns out that he had been in four schools in the last little while and had had incredible problems at home and was now living with the extended family in the community... He had not attended a single class for a year except for band class in his previous school. Band class was the only one and he attended it regularly. He caused quite considerable consternation to the other teaching staff in the school... However he was one of my star pupils. Consistently got good grades. Consistently worked hard. Consistently became a leader. He was going to drop out of school. So I went to talk to him about why that was... He gave me all of the hopeless and helpless arguments and the problems that he was having academically and the problems he was having in his home life. And I just asked him one question, "Where is it that you feel best?" And he said, "At school in band class." And so I asked him, Was he prepared to give that up by dropping out of school? And he didn't drop out of school. Now I think there were a lot of other factors in there but I think by asking that one question, because that was the only place in his life at that moment where he was feeling really good about himself, where he was an obvious leader held in great respect by his peers and by his teachers. That was the one part of his life that was going really well and he recognized the need to keep that

part...That was about five or six years ago and I have heard from him on occasion. He's phoned me and he's doing okay. He finished his grade twelve, didn't get great marks but he did finish it and he's now working in the community and playing in a rock band. I feel his musical experiences have played a great big part in his life. (Int. 4: 2)

Teacher dialogue is key to challenging the student to make important choices for themselves both musically and personally. The teacher in this case asked the question that allowed the child to reflect on their own experience. In so doing the teacher respected the child to be able to make their own decision. The teacher noticed the students ability and his commitment to music. Her guidance in this situation is an example of thoughtful teacher dialogue and a way to engage the cooperation of the individual as well as the group.

The teachers' dialogue engages the student, and supports the student in their musicianship and personal decisions. In addition to being important for individual, these practices are very central to the cooperation of the group.

## **COOPERATION OF THE GROUP**

The theme of cooperation of the group is both a process, and a goal. Teachers explore many different possibilities to get the cooperation of the group. The teacher affirms, challenges and models to develop the cooperation of the group.

The group dynamics of the classroom require understanding of the psychology of the milieu. This includes understanding what is important to the community, to the school, the parents and the child. The goals of the music classroom will reflect consideration of the milieu and

understanding of the group. The teacher affirms the group by assessing their capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses. In so doing the teacher is free to work with the group without distress. The teachers understands the students' difficulties to achieve certain musical goals before they are ready to do so. The teacher prepares the students, encouraging them to use their attention, concentration and musical skills they have developed and engage their creativity to have successful and fun musical happenings. The music teacher is also excited about the students' cooperation.

An experience that I had...in the music festival, this past week, was I'd worked with the group on music and choreography...We seemed to be able to get the choreography one day, the music the next day, and sometimes the energy and enthusiasm. But we never had put all three together until the day of the festival. Finally they were able to put all three things together, stay together, sing together and put lots of enthusiasm in. That excited me so much that they actually could do that that I started clapping for them when they finished without even realizing what I was doing. And I think it was just because I was so excited that they'd finally gotten it. And so it's true even as a music teacher that when we finally can see things coming together it makes us happy and excited.  
(Int. 5: 2)

The teachers know how to challenge the group to the musical participation they are capable of. The teachers' choice of songs and the expectations for how the musical activities of the group are continuously balanced with affirmation of the group. In all musical activities the individual within the group is challenged to listen with a musical ear. The teacher prepares the students, encouraging them to use their attention, concentration and musicianship.

Music teachers encourage and model co-operation. For example, at different points in the lesson plan and larger unit plan, students are given ways in which to make decisions for themselves and their learning. Teachers support their decisions thereby modelling cooperation. There are many ways in which teachers encourage students to contribute to improve the cooperation of the situation. The teachers keep the students engaged in singing activities because in these moments the greatest unity and cooperation of the group is felt.

The music teachers affirm and challenge students in order to have cooperation in the music classroom. The teachers also model cooperation. In all these situations the song is central to the purpose of the discussion. The cooperation is needed to get into the story of the song.

## **GETTING INTO THE STORY OF THE SONG**

Having established rapport with students, music education teachers will introduce the song to their students. To introduce the song most often requires getting into the story of the song. The teachers use questions and shared experiences and singing to get into the story of the song. The teachers assess by the way in which the song is sung whether the story is understood and makes the necessary plan to move the learning in that direction.

The teachers assess how children understand by asking questions about the song. By asking them to share their understanding the children can learn to express it in their own way. The teachers ask different students to share their understanding, recognizing that each student may have their own words with which to express the idea. There are also factual questions about the story that may be useful to understand the story of the song.

To get into the story of the song it is sometimes useful for students to share their experiences and stories. This enables students to get into the emotions of the song.

I know with students too you can sometimes see that change there's a song that they sing ... I'm thinking about grade 3 again ... I don't know why ... "I'm Super I'm Smart I'm as Good as Can Be" ... They really got a charge out of that you know and just the positive thing that that's saying and to some of these kids that's really important. So it can really change their whole attitude for the day and can set a good attitude.  
(Int. 1: 5)

The teachers sing the songs, modelling the way in which it is to be sung. The students learn the song by listening. The teachers know the manner and order in which to proceed in presenting the unique characteristics of the song to the particular group they are working with. The manner in which the melody, rhythm, phrasing, and other aspects of the song are presented, is part of getting into the song. Furthermore the teachers might engage students in discussion and analysis of the song or music in order to check on their comprehension and understanding. Students might get into the song by creating parts on instruments to add to the song. Discussion about the different levels and kinds of participation in the song are unlimited. The teachers are responsible for bringing the students into the song at whatever level they will engage in it.

Teacher practices that assist the students in getting into the song include questions, shared experiences and singing with the students. Having come into the story of the song, the students are ready to connect with the beauty of the music and thereby bring it alive.

## **CONNECT WITH THE BEAUTY OF THE MUSIC TO BRING IT ALIVE**

To connect with the beauty of the music, first of all the music teachers choose a song that they find beauty in; that they are inspired to sing. Then teachers give the student the experience of the beauty of the song through the singing, teachers uses techniques to help the student to recognize the beauty of the music, teachers work to assist the individual voice to interpret the beauty into their own singing, and finally teachers plan to give students the opportunity to share the beauty with others.

In order for the teachers to connect with the beauty of the music and bring it alive, the song will be one in which the teacher finds beauty. The teacher's enthusiasm will be essential in presenting the song to the students of the music classroom.

To connect with the beauty of the music the student has first of all to experience it by listening to the song and singing the song. The song chosen is age appropriate and also fits into the unit of study. In order to quicken the students learning the teacher may sing or play the song meanwhile asking the students to listen for something in the song. Learning to sing the song and knowing it, that is to such an extent that they can sing it without assistance will require repetition. In teaching the song the teacher uses modeling, encouragement, and specific feedback on the musical aspects of the song needing attention and repetition.

Singing has been described as involving four kinds of musical knowledge or "knowing-in-action" These four are described as: formal, informal, impressionistic and supervisory musical knowledge (Elliot, 1994). The formal knowledge is the matters relating to tongue position, musical phrasing, melodic structure, musical form which can influence the students thinking

in action. The informal knowledge relates to knowledge acquired through progressive music making. The impressionistic knowledge is known as "musical intuition" and relates to the way in which musicians have a strongly felt sense that one line of action is better than another. Supervisory knowledge is the ability to adjust one's musical thinking while in action. These are the kinds of knowing that are being practised in the working with the song or music and connecting with the beauty of the music.

Modelling the singing of the song is an important aspect to teacher practice. The teachers are aware of the fact that the technicalities of the song must be balanced with the expressive aspects of the song. In order to master any difficult spots of the song the teacher will assist the students to discover the songs' unique melodic structure using visual demonstrations. The next step is bringing the students into the song by singing phrase by phrase, depending on the grade level, the level of difficulty and the purpose for which the song is being learned. However the students must begin by singing the song; learning the words and the sounds and the ideas of the song. Understanding the lyrics may require some discussion about certain words or phrases. Depending on the song, the class, and the response of the students to the singing of the song, the teachers decide whether to ask students to explain the ideas of the song. Sometimes teachers ask students to share their experiences in order to understand the beauty of the song. At this point it is key to continue to sing the song. These introductory listenings and discussions must not carry on too long, pacing is of utmost importance. The students must begin the singing without too much discussion. Throughout all this the teachers show excitement and enthusiasm for the song with appropriate emotion for the content of the song. At this point the sounds of the music will carry the students into the song.

"I've always felt better after I've made music, if I've gone to a singing lesson. I've always felt a hundred percent better leaving there than when I came." (Int. 1: 5)

To understand the beauty of the songs is to know all its aspects, melody, rhythm, the beauty of the words, the dynamic nuances and the way they fit together. Once the students have sung the song a number of times they will become comfortable with the patterns in it; meanwhile the teachers are assessing by listening, determining what parts of the song are not being understood, or need extra attention for reasons such as the words, rhythm, melody or dynamics. The teacher is constantly listening, assessing and making decisions about what is to be done in the next stretch of time. Decisions must be made about whether or not the song will be sung again and for what purpose. After mastery of the melody and rhythm, the interpretation of the song will be given attention. The teacher may have some further discussion on the ideas in certain phrases, may use other images to explain phrases and in order to bring a certain energy to those parts. The students will be asked to apply those ideas in order to change their sound in some way.

The beauty of the song is a number of things. It is the patterns of the sound. It is the way the words fit the patterns of the sound and it is the ideas and emotions that fit the patterns of the sound. This order in the sound and the way in which it fits together within the song may well be an experience of sorting out. This experience may assist in sorting out life's problems as the following excerpt implies.

so music is another area where you can sometimes help kids  
sort out their problems just through the actual process of  
making music. (Int. 1: 5)

To connect with the beauty of the music is to move to the interpretive level after the song has been sung and discussed. This is to challenge the student to go deeper into the ideas of the song and express the song. The students need to understand the emotion, and it is important

that they find something in their experience to relate to in order to connect with these emotions. They may not understand the emotions portrayed in the song but if tenderness is the emotion, they must have some experience of that in order to convey it. As mentioned in chapter five, teachers practices help students to connect with the beauty of the music.

The humanness of our teaching [calls on us] to look for the places where we can bring that beauty alive for them. (Int. 6: 5)

To connect with the beauty is to share it with someone. This is best done in music education through performance to an audience. Communicating to the audience with excellence in singing has the potential to put the student and listener in touch with the beauty of the music.

I think the high points are when you and they know that they have done this really really well and the other thing is that they have communicated something to an audience. That they've actually brought pleasure and something special to people who heard them because that's a very special feeling. (Int. 3: 13)

These experiences are truly opportunities for being moved by the music. When the teacher, the student and the music have connected there is great potential for the spirit to be moved. There is a sense of feeling very alive when the teacher has worked to engage the student and the student is co-operating. At this time the teacher and student. are in tune with each other.

Teacher practices that are relevant include their opening up, the teacher dialogue, getting cooperation, getting into the story of the song, and getting into the beauty of the song.

Teachers know how the musical experience is complex, requiring attention, focus, many listening skills, concentration and many decisions by the student as they participate in music.

The keys to musical transformations have included the teacher practices, the co-operation of the student and the sound. What is essentially key about the musical experience, is the way in which all practices are such that the individual may find and develop their voice, the ability to sing in tune, to sing with a stronger voice, to develop their articulation, to develop their tone quality through it all, to develop musicianship, to have a happy experience. In the concluding chapter the opening of the voice is discussed as it reveals the way in which this is after all, at the heart of the learning experience.

# CHAPTER 7

## BRINGING OUT THE VOICE

### INTRODUCTION

This study has viewed the experience of music in the music classroom as described by teachers and students. As experience is complex and multifaceted this experience too is complex. The parts of this experience have been examined in order to understand the meaning of the whole. These includes the making of music in the music classroom, the changes students experience through their classroom music experiences, and the teachers' practices that support the possibilities of the changes.

The complex, interactive nature of these parts of music classroom experience is frequently overlooked in the research literature where the focus in the discussion of music education has objectified and isolated parts of the experience. Teachers and students and the music interact, connect and are impacted at various levels of being; physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. This relational nature and the impact of music on teachers and students in the classroom has been significant to this study.

The depth of the music classroom experience and the significance of the teacher practice wisdom in in the classroom is commonly taken for granted by music teachers themselves. They seldom speak about it. When students' and teachers' experience is examined, it is found that everyday happenings in the classrooms are transformative. The experience is meaningful and impacts on students and teachers. The impact is both within the classroom and often years later. Experiences are transformative socially, emotionally and are intrinsically linked to body, as music making in the classroom concentrates on voice. Before exploring the issue of

finding the voice it may be helpful to review the main findings about experience, transformation, and teacher practices.

Experience has been described as the combination of situation, interaction, and continuity (Dewey 1938, 44). It is both something which the person has or can gain in an ongoing process. These two are found to be in continual interplay (MacLeod 1990, 119). In this study the situation is the music classroom, the interactions are those of the teacher, the student and the music. Through the music classroom activities, the students experience many kinds of knowing (Eisner 1985). Change is a characteristic of music education experiences. These changes or transformations lead to bringing out the voice.

As the data of this research were based on the voices of teachers and students, hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen as an appropriate research method. This study was first of all about the phenomenon of change in music education. The understanding of phenomena in this study is based on the following statements:

- ...the study of lived experience
- ...the explication of phenomena as they present themselves to consciousness
- ...the study of essences
- ...the description of the experiential meanings as we live them
- ...the human scientific study of phenomena (Manen 1990, 10&11)

Secondly, the hermeneutic aspect, is the reflective, interpretive nature of the method. It is said the study of the way we experience the world, can be "grasped most truthfully by exploring the stories that tell about the truths being lived" (Reimer 1992, 32), and so it is fitting that teachers and students stories are the data. The study aimed to interpret the stories of the teachers and the students about their classroom experience. The "complex, situational and

relational nature of [the music education] experience" (MacLeod 1990, 224) seemed most appropriately studied through this method. The research question is focused on the changes being experienced through the music education experience. The data consist of interviews with teachers and writings by students in which they speak about change through the music education experience.

## **COLLECTING THE DATA**

The purpose of this research was to examine the changes experienced in and through music classroom activities. In order to examine the everyday music classroom experience, four experienced successful teachers were interviewed. As well, writings from ninety students were obtained. The teachers were asked to recall and reflect on stories of their teaching experience and their students were asked to write about a music experience. The first of the two interviews focused on the teachers' memories of transformative experiences in the music classroom. The teachers had many stories to tell about the changes they had experienced in their classrooms. In the second interview the teachers and I discussed the writings the teachers had obtained from their students and the teachers responded to the interpretation of the stories of their first interview.

This method of interviewing experienced teachers became important not only for their responses to the question but also for the significance of the language relating to the musical experience. The teachers told about experiences in music education in which there was change. When the language was examined, it was found to be significant in describing the bodily nature of making sound. Significant words and phrases from the teachers' stories gave clues to different aspect of the experience. They pointed to the way music is experienced in

the classroom by students and by teachers, as well as to the many changes students and teachers experienced through the music, and the teacher practices that supported these changes.

The teachers' and students' important words or phrases, illuminated the way in which language is grounded in experience. These words pointed to what is significant to transformative music experiences. Although the stories told about experiences, they were not the original experience itself. Significant words and phrases pointed to the essence of the experience.

The steps of analysis which are part of hermeneutic phenomenology, were a process of moving from viewing the whole of experience in its richness to finding the essence of experience. The process was particularly appropriate to this research as the complexity, relational and layered nature of the music classroom experience were examined to reveal how through transformations the voice is developed in music education classrooms. Through the hermeneutic interpretation it was possible to examine the relationship of the student, the teacher and the music.

The understanding of the data deepened by moving through the steps of analysis and interpretation. Through this process insights into experience were revealed. In the first step the experiences or stories were rewritten to include as much significant detail as possible. This was an experience of moving inside the stories through the writing. In the process of rewriting the stories interpretations of their meanings and significance became apparent. The second step was that of focusing on the essence of the story and as this was done with the stories from all the interviews an overall pattern of themes began to emerge. This was the third step. In the fourth step idiomatic phrases, anecdotes and etymology of words were given attention. They gave clues to a greater depth of understanding of the themes that had been identified. These

clues became significant in the grouping of themes into chapters four, five and six. Each chapter focused on an aspect of the music classroom experience. In the sixth step, the interpretation of these experiences was corroborated by the interviewed teachers. In this last chapter the aim is to demonstrate the final analysis of the interpretation of transformation through music education experiences.

The hermeneutic phenomenological method has been both an enlightening method and a valuable process of working with the data about the music education classroom experience. Examination of the data led to a discussion of the music experience beginning with the classroom experience of making music, followed by the discussion of the many kinds of transformations teachers and students experience through music and then a discussion of teacher practices that support these transformations through music.

## **THE MUSIC EDUCATION CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE**

The music education classroom experience was the first part of the transformation experience to be discussed although it must be seen to be happening quite simultaneously with transformations and teacher practices. The themes from the data about this experience includes *remembering* which includes reflection, *expressing the music* which includes the many levels of experience within the song, *experiencing the connection* as in the moments of performance and in *experiencing the spirit of the sound* when moved by the music.

The teachers interviewed recalled the experiences of the ways in which they saw changes in individual students and in groups. As they remembered these experiences, they included reflections they might have had at the time and now had again. In their writings, students

reflected on their experience, noting the way in which they had gained self confidence and important memories. This is the notion of continuity (Dewey 1936, 44). Experience is understood over time as situations that follow each other. It is significant that the changes the teachers and students remembered were those of growth and learning.

In the everyday activities of the music classroom, where many interactions and communications are going on, the teacher and student and the music itself are interacting. The significance of the connecting theme is that without the cooperation of the student and teacher the music cannot be expressed and they cannot be moved. Connecting is central to the experience and it happens through the music.

From the teachers' and the students' comments, the music experience is seen as taking place in the moment and over time. The teachers in talking about the music education classroom experience remembered how they gave of themselves and how they worked to engage the students. They remembered getting the students' co-operation and they remembered how the students expressed themselves. They remembered being moved by music experiences. These memories are confirmed by the student writings, all of which were positive statements about how they felt, how they participated and how they were acknowledged by others. The students recognized their own achievements, how they valued the experience, and how they valued the music and their teachers' part in making these experiences happen. The span of time in remembering particular musical experiences points to the way in which the experience is significant to the participants.

The students' writings tended to be about a performance experience; the culmination of much practise and learning. The significant words in their writings included, their "being nervous", their "having fun" and how they felt about themselves in relation to the performance. The

bodily nature of making music is evident in their language. "Fun" was used by many students. "Fun" etymologically originates from the French word, bellows. Its origins are well reflected in the students' links among fun and making music, primarily through singing and performing. Their writings showing the embodiment of the music experience is substantiated by the research of Tomatis (Campbell 1991) in which he has shown that our voice, our breathing, our heart rate and our digestion are all affected by the ear. In that our listening is so central to the music experience it affects our whole being, mentally, emotionally and physically.

The theme about repetition speaks of the intentional aspect of aiming toward a goal or a certain sound; the ability to execute all the parts of the song, to be mindful of whatever is being expected in the performance, to remember the notes of the scale when improvising and endless other reasons for repetition. Repetition is also a part of remembering an experience. Children choose to sing songs they already know well. There is order and security in repeating the known, particularly in a group situation. The individual student practising on their own also uses repetition to learn. Repetition is important in building the confidence to improvise, in that the improvisation is contrast to repeated melody. Repetition is central to the music education experience.

The theme about expressiveness spans the spectrum of activities of the music classroom. For example, the song is used and understood at a number of different levels including the song as an activity, the song as the music, the song as the melody, and the song as made up of sounds. When the children sing in a playful context, singing is experienced as an end in itself. Their sounds are not necessarily the focus of attention. At another level, the song is understood in terms of expressing the music. When children sing a song they are experiencing the emotions in the story. The tempo and dynamics changes are fitting to the

ideas of the song. At another level the song implies singing while being conscious of the ideas of the song, with awareness of how to produce tones and how to create the pitches while listening keenly in order to be in harmony with others. In other instances the particular vowels sounds are made with attention to the breath in order to capture a sound, an image or an idea or simply to experience the resonance of the sound. Within this spectrum of activities teachers may focus on a melody, rhythm, form, improvisation or any other skill with their students. All these possibilities of song experiences are part of expressiveness in the music education experience. Recognizing the wide range of possibilities within the song reveals the possible scope and depth of the experience within the music classroom.

In their discussion about the music experience, the students and teachers talked about being excited about their musical work. The teachers were moved to tears by performances done by their students. These kinds of responses of being moved by the music is not often talked about although they are commonly experienced. Teachers talk about the soul and the spirit coming alive in connection with these experiences. Being moved by the music takes us beyond the realm of the mental, emotional, physical to that of the spirit; described by Huebner (Eisner 1985, 163-164) as "participation in deeper, hidden dimensions of life."

Within all these themes of the music experience there is the element of giving and receiving. The teachers gave of their understanding and caring to motivate the students to express the music. They in turn received the children's effort, their co-operation. This connection between student and teacher made possible the music that has the potential to inspire those who hear it.

Within the music education experience, at the point at which the music, teacher and student have connected there is the possibility of transformations of various kinds. These transformations were alluded to by both the teachers and the students.

## **TRANSFORMATIONS THROUGH MUSIC EDUCATION**

Many transformations were talked about by the teachers in the interviews and the students in their writings. They spoke of transformations as changes. These changes could be seen relating to time and relationships.

The transformations of time are those of the moment and over time. The time span in any given story could be within some classes or over a period of many years. The transformations of the moment remembered were often those of performance situations. In these moments students have realizations about themselves and their abilities in which all of their effort of practise, co-operation, attention and the skilled listening combines with the support of the teacher and the audience which in most cases are parents or friends. However there are moments of transformations in the classroom when a particular realization comes about within the group, such as an understanding of a musical concept. Other times the particular contribution of a student in a class creates changes in the moment. These changes, extended over time, impact upon the atmosphere of the classroom and the school. As students learn to sing in tune, with expressiveness and include such aspects of singing as projection and clarity, their voice is strengthened. These changes impact both the music room milieu and the perception of music education in the school community as parents give positive comments about how they've enjoyed the children's musical work. Over time, the students use their musical understanding, experience and repertoire in other places and times in their life.

Music experiences in the classroom effect change in relationships. The experiences of making music and performing and listening to music often gave the students a greater sense of self confidence. Such changes influenced their relationships with other students and with their teacher in positive ways. They receive greater respect from the other students and recognition from their teachers. The knowledge and listening skills that develop over time also change the students' relationship to their participation in music. Singing solos is a case in point. Through their musical experiences, students find their own voice. They become comfortable with singing or playing solos or in confidently expressing what they have come to know.

Students' writings showed that the students themselves were aware of these changes. In their writings, students also acknowledge the important part their teachers play in making these experiences happen.

## **KEY ASPECTS OF THE MUSIC EDUCATION TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE**

The key aspects of the transformative experience in music education are the teacher practices that assist these transformations. Through their practices, that are formed by the context and are relational in nature, the teachers make many kinds of connections. It is these connections that are keys to the transformative experience.

Teachers engage in many levels of skilful planning, including making decisions about the specifics of the music being studied and decisions about how to engage individuals and

groups in learning activities. The aim of the decisions and actions are to bring out the voice of the individual student. The teachers listen carefully to the sounds the children are making and continuously assess whether they have understood aurally what is being required of them, or whether certain parts need attention, repetition, or more discussion. The teacher knows the parameter of the lesson, the objectives of the larger plan or the unit, the month, the year, and the objectives of the specific song, melody, or sound being studied. Within all these frameworks operating in each lesson, the teachers relate to the students of many classes who come into class with a particular frame of mind or emotional state of being. The students may be tired, excited, focused, unfocused, eager, distracted or many other possibilities, and with each the teacher makes particular choices and decisions to engage the students in the making music together. Through the teachers' stories and the students' writings, it is evident that the teachers continually experience the unexpected and find the resources within their skills and practice experience to make decisions at these unexpected moments. They do however, in fact take these moments for granted. The decisions teachers make to attend to the situations that require some intervention on their part are simply part of the knowledge that comes out of teaching practice.

More specifically within teacher practice is the significance of their dialogue with students. The data showed how teachers continually encourage and motivate students to greater musicianship. The teachers' dialogue encourage students to commit to a task such as singing a certain part of a song, or improvising on a recorder or some other instrument. Teachers guide students who are committed to working at their listening skills in a particular way. Teachers encourage both individual and groups to express, and listen in the music room context. It is evident in their dialogue how the teachers relate and care about their students. They encourage the struggling student to continue to practise or the shy student to try a part they might not be brave enough to audition for. This caring is an important aspect of their

knowledge in practice and is part of the situation in which students experience transformations through music.

Teachers work with songs to open up students' singing voices. Teachers develop trust between themselves and their students, often through sharing their own experiences or by listening to the experiences of the students. Through sharing, the teachers help students to understand the stories of the songs. Teachers choose appropriate songs for their students and thus bring out the voices of their students.

The sharing of the song happens by teachers and students connecting with the beauty of the song. This is where the students' imagination is needed to understand the song. Teachers have many techniques to help students think imaginatively. When students do understand the story within the song, their singing quality changes to fit the ideas of the song. When they understand and know the song the student's singing is transformed. One teacher described it as "coming alive". In these "coming alive" moments the students' voices are open and enthusiastically engaged in singing. There is an essential connection between body, mind and spirit. These experiences are associated with great energy, strong emotion and are felt by many participants in the situation. In such situations the teachers sense the oneness of the group. These are moments of connection between the student, the teacher, and the music. They are moments in which transformation is made possible. And it is in these moments of transformation that the students can find their voice.

In conclusion, the keys to the transformative music experience are the connections that happen in the music classroom through the skilful practices of the teacher. These connections; the opening up, the dialogue, the getting into the song, the engaging the students

in co-operation, the experience of the beauty of the song, all lead to bringing out the voice of the student.

## **A MATTER OF VOICE**

The significance of music education experiences that are of a transformative nature are that they are ultimately linked to one's voice. These experiences are in the broadest sense a matter of voice, of developing one's voice and finding it through experience. Our voice is generally perceived as the way in which we express ourselves. In bringing out the voice the individual is allows him/herself to be heard. In being heard by others we hear ourselves. In hearing ourselves we come to greater understanding of how we sound and we can change the sound. This process, once begun, has its own momentum. The significant point is that transformations through music can be the impetus for this change and individual growth and awareness.

### **The Essence Of The Music Education Experience- Bringing Out The Voice**

Transformative music education experiences are central to bringing out the voice. At the heart of the music education experience is bringing out the voice. The definition of voice includes:

.sound made through the mouth...the ability to make sound...to sing...sound regarded as like vocal utterance in communicating to the mind [the voice of one's conscience]... a specified condition, quality, or tone of vocal sound...utterance or expression. [giving voice to his joy] ..any

of the individual parts sung or played together in a musical composition ...sound made by vibrating the vocal chords with air forced from the lungs. (Webster 1970, 1591)

These expressive aspects of voice are a part of a musical experience. The physical attention to how sound is produced, includes the "sound made by vibrating the vocal chords". The matter of "utterance or expression" relates to the attention to emotions in learning to express the music and the attention to the heart of the music and wanting to share it. The physical mental and emotional attentions are the individual's total expression which all combined add up to one part of the understanding of bringing out the voice. This is an integral part of the process of learning to sing. All the different aspects of voice, whether singing or creating melodies are part of the expressive aspect of voice.

Another notions of voice found in the Sanskrit definition is that of being heard in what one has to:

say, tell, utter, announce, declare, mention, proclaim, recite,  
describe...'to name,call' (A Sanskrit-English Dictionary 912)

The ancient idea of all beings producing a sound according to their particular nature and situation (Govinda 1989, 22) is loosely linked with the modern research of Cymatics which says all parts of the body have their particular harmonic (Jenny 1986). The ancient notion said that all beings' sound was part of a universal harmony and the modern notion says all parts of the body possess a harmonic which has a relationship to a particular tone unique to the individual. The relationship of these understandings to bringing out the voice is that our voice is in essence made up of the particular state in which we find ourself; psychologically and mentally and physically and spiritually. Our sound frequency and therefore our voice is

affected through all of life's changes as well as these experiences of transformation through music. When the students learn to sing in harmony and are bringing out their voice they may well in a larger sense be part of a universal harmony and they may well, be adjusting some parts of their body harmonic frequency and thereby arriving at a state of greater harmony with their own sound.

The matter of bringing out the voice must be seen beyond that of sending out of sounds and words, to that of sharing our essence, to that of connecting with our purpose in the situation we are in. By learning to express oneself we are honouring that purpose. Children and adults have varying gifts. This attention to the voice and its expression allows the individual to nurture the gift of their voice. For some individuals their gift is very much the spoken words and finding new ways to express ideas. For some individuals their gift is the beauty of the tone quality of their voice which allows others to hear what they say. For other individuals, their gift is the ability to speak through melody and their own creation of it. Others may find their gift in speaking with the group, for others it may be the ability to carry on the expression of what the composer intended. There are infinite possibilities to the way in which individuals find their voice. Ultimately the voice is about expressiveness, sharing oneself, creativity, and personal empowerment. Music experiences in classrooms significant impact on all these aspects of bringing out the voice.

The teachers expressed their amazement about how the students came alive through their experiences of music. I believe these are instances of hearing one's own voice and the impact of that on one's being. The following story illustrates this point of coming alive, of finding something at the heart of one's being, by bringing out the voice.

Long before I thought of becoming a physician, the professional warned by Hippocrates to "heal thyself." I did just that by instinctively finding a way to resurrect my voice. Perhaps I couldn't have done it without the generous foundation laid by my musical parents, but in the summer of my sixteenth year, I taught myself how to sing. I had fallen into an intimate relationship with a two hundred year old pine tree that enjoyed the winds and weather halfway up a mountain behind our house. I would meander up that mountainside, climb high into her branches and listen to the wind strum her needles. Way above the houses and buffered by miles of thin air from the music critics below, I gradually found my voice. Free from embarrassment, I learned to sing wildly to the world from the treetop stage as the inhibitions that were choking my voice looses their grasp. I learned to sing to my heart's content. In doing so, I feel I reclaimed an essential part of my humanity. (Weeks 1991, 29)

Bringing out the voice involves nurturing and understanding the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of our being. Through the development of the voice we touch the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects. The teachers' stories of their music experiences related how voices of the students' singing was exciting and moving: in the realm of the spirit. The spirit of the music is experienced through voices. The potential of the music experience is that the voice may be moved by the spirit; the individual involved may experience transcendence through singing. Bringing out the voice brings with it the possibility of transcendence (Tate 1991).

The teacher practices discussed in Chapter Six assist the students in bringing out their voice. The focus of the teachers' and the students' stories was on how the individual or group voice was transformed. These stories were about children finding their voice in being able to do

something they didn't think they could do or about being part of the group voice that was being shared with an audience. The transformations were about growth and change in the voice of individuals or groups. The changes were about strengthening that voice. The way in which teachers work with children in music education classrooms has the potential to strengthen the voice. In music education classrooms the voice is brought out in the midst of the co-operation of the group.

Music experiences go with us over time; music is often part of most celebrative moments or times in one's life in all cultures and throughout history. The transformation experience is one of building confidence in being able to voice what one wishes to sing or say in celebrative moments as well as in moments of reflection. The music experiences in the data have shown how the students came to use their voice with greater confidence, skill and clarity of tone, greater projection, and greater understanding of the way in which to sing expressively. The experience of opening up the voice can and does affect self awareness and self confidence. As children learn to sing with greater confidence they become more aware of how they want to sing or speak in many situations of life.

The experience of finding one's voice touches the heart of the curriculum. Considering that the whole child is involved in the music experience, including the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual, in order to learn to be expressive, to learn co-operation, focus, concentration, and creativity, all kinds of knowledge are being developed. The music experience is central to the child's learning as the knowing in this experience is important to other curriculums as well. These are learnings important to being a functional member of society; to finding one's purpose or place in society; as in bringing out one's voice.

We have seen the significance of the musical experience and the teacher practices relevant to the many ways in which transformations happen in and through their music education experiences. The voice is with us always, "You can't lose it, you can't leave it at home. You always have it with you wherever you go" (Int. 3: 1). The development of the voice in the music class can transform one's life. It then continues to do so wherever one goes.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS :**

The research presented in this thesis gave rise to a number of recommendations that have applications to practice, to education and to research.

Through the process and method of research, students and teachers engaged in reflection as that made their contributions in the interviews and the writing. Such reflection leads to significant insights on music education. From this experience it is my recommendation that such reflection by teachers with other teachers, and by students with their teachers would provide valuable learnings and would give valuable direction to music programs. Teachers could engage in a reflective process with their students. Teacher inservices could be structured around sharing stories of music experience to gain greater understanding both about teacher practices and about the impact of the music education experience.

Yet another aspect of this research significant to education is to understand how the song must be understood in it's depth and breadth of experience. Learning a song spans a spectrum of possible activity and enables different levels of participation while bringing together communities of peoples. The experience of singing must not be trivialized. The

potential to engage body, mind and spirit in singing a song significantly contributes to the experience of wholeness that education aims to achieve.

Within the research literature there is a need to recognize the transformative possibilities of the music education experience. More research is needed to find the way in which the music experience has elevated our life experience. By recognizing these possibilities of transformations our pedagogical approach can be influenced.

This research shows how music education has impact on people's lives beyond the classroom. It indicates why music education merits a more central place in the overall curriculum.

Finally the research has shown the importance of sound. Sound is at the heart of transformation in the music education classroom. Sound is frequencies, sound has the ability to create changes, to raise the energy of the milieu, to bring about transcendence. When moved by the music, or in experiences of transcendence we are in harmony with the sound. We need greater harmony in our world. We need songs and music that unite us and touch our hearts and thereby heal our communities.

## APPENDIX 1

### INTERVIEW FORMAT

#### **Interview 1**

During our interview, you will be asked to describe some episodes from your experience of teaching music in which you feel your teaching expertise made a difference in the student's participation, behaviour, co-operation performance or anything else. Given your understanding of music and how children learn, how have their musical experiences made a difference to the child? What kind of stories come to mind?

Please describe the situation in story or narrative form. Fill in as much detail as you consider necessary for someone else to understand your intentions, expectations, feelings, negative and positive as the situation unfolded. It helps to recount how you were thinking and feeling before the outcomes of the situation were clear, since this is the most accurate way of accounting for the uncertainty that exists in any unfolding teacher student situation.

The following should help you recall your teaching episode:

Select a particular experience.

An incident that went unusually well.

An incident in which there was a shift, i.e. things did not go as planned.

An incident that is very ordinary or typical.

An incident that you think captures the quintessence of what teaching is all about.

An incident that was particularly demanding.

An incident you recently experienced that stands out in your mind for some reason or other.

Include in your description of this student's experience some of the following observations:

The context of the incident, e.g., time of day, other's present, expectations of the student.

A detailed description of what happened including as much dialogue as possible.

Why the incident is important to you.

What your concerns were at the time.

What were you thinking about as it was taking place.

What were you feeling during and after the incident.

What if anything, you found most demanding about the situation.

What you found most satisfying about the situation.

### **Interview 2 Guiding Questions.**

Having seen the responses of the children to the music experience you and the children agreed they would write about, can you comment on how the children have responded?

Do these responses bring something to mind about the incidents that you described last time or any other musical experiences that relate to the way in which there was change in the music classroom due to the musical activities of the classroom.

Are there any particular teacher practices that you feel are relevant to the changes we are talking about?

Having described a number of different experiences relating to transformation through music what is your sense about the relevance of particular music; such as genre or cultural, or any other aspect of music that you feel is relevant?

From the experiences that you and others have related I have identified the following themes and patterns. I would like you respond to them:

The first impression I had was:

I identified the following as relevant in all the interviews:

My understanding of your experience in which:

Does that fit for you as the essence of the lived experience of change through music?

## APPENDIX 2

### LETTER TO PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

Winnipeg, Manitoba

R

January 26, 1994

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The purpose of this letter is to follow up on your indicated interest in participating in my research project, and to confirm your consent to be interviewed about your music teaching experiences.

I am delighted that you have agreed to be a co-researcher in this research project. I am presently engaged in thesis work in the Masters of Education program at the University of Manitoba. My thesis advisor is Dr. Larry Patterson who can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_  
Committee members are Dr. Martha Mcleod ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) and J.P. Redekopp ( \_\_\_\_\_ )

I am asking for two interviews with you, for this project. Each would be about one hour long. The interviews will center on your music teaching experiences. The interviewing would be best done when and where we will not be interrupted. They will be tape recorded and I will be transcribing them. I will need to plug in a tape recorder and will be making some notes as well, as we go along.

I will also discuss with you the project data we will need to get from one of your classes. This will involve giving information in one class about the research and passing out letters for parent permission. In the next class the permission slips would be collected and after discussion about the topic the students would be asked to do a written exercise. The papers of the students who have parent permission would be collected and passed on to myself at the second interview.

I will be transcribing the recorded interviews, and all identifying characteristics will be deleted from the tape and all the tapes will be erased once the research is complete. All information will be kept confidential. Please remember that your participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from it at any time should you wish to do so.

Results of the study will be summarized and forthcoming after the completion of the study in the fall of 1994.

I appreciate your taking time to consider becoming involved in this research and will be calling you in a few days to arrange the time and place for the interviews. I can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_ (wk) and \_\_\_\_\_ (wk).and at home at \_\_\_\_\_.

Please complete the consent form below and kindly bring to the first interview.

Sincerely,

Alvina Koshy

---

I agree to participate in this music research project about Transformation Through Music: Experiences in Music Education. This will include two interviews of a maximum one hour in length each. In addition I will engage one class in discussion on this topic and obtain their written responses.

---

(Name of participating teacher)

## APPENDIX 3

### LESSON PLAN

**Background:** In the two previous classes, the explanation was made about participating in the research. The topic was explained and the students were given letters in order to obtain parent signatures for their participation in the research. These were returned in the following class. In the 3rd class the following lesson will take place.

**Review of the topic:** The topic for consideration is change through music, a review and remembering of your experience.

**Ways in which to remember:** The teacher begins with a short explanation requesting the students to remember a music experience in which they felt changed them in some way. The teachers encourage the students to think as broadly as possible about the experience, including remembering how they felt, what they remember seeing, expressions on the faces of others, what sounds they heard, the instruments played, clapping or any movement done while participating in the musical experience.

**Preparation for brainstorming:** This is followed by a brainstorming with the class about music experiences that they could write about.

**The assignment:** The teachers ask the students to do a webbing exercise, a brain storming of their memories, relating to a musical experience after which or during which they felt a change in feeling or understanding. They are encouraged fill in as much detail as possible.

Each student is asked to do their own written webbing exercise. After the webbing they are asked to write a short summary paragraph.

## APPENDIX 4

**Table 1: Evaluation of the Credibility of Qualitative Research**

1. Did the researchers keep in-depth field notes regarding the researcher-informant relationships?
2. Were the effects of the researcher's presence on the nature of the data collected considered?
3. Did the researchers keep field notes of their actions, interactions, and subjective states during the investigation?
4. Did the researchers discuss their own behavior and experiences in relation to the informant's experiences?
5. Did the researchers become so involved with the informants that they "went native," that is, had difficulty separating their own experiences from the informant's?
6. Were multiple methods of data collection (triangulation) used to determine the congruence of the results among them?
7. Were the readers provided with rich excerpts from the transcripts of field notes?
8. Did the researchers validate the findings with the informants?
9. Did the researchers search for negative instances of categories or discounting evidence for tentative constructs (Field & Morse, 1985)?
10. Were data analysis procedures reviewed by a judge panel to prevent researcher bias and selective inattention (Morse, 1989)?
11. Do the readers view the findings as meaningful and applicable in terms of their own experiences?

**Table 2: Assessment of the Fittingness of Qualitative Research**

1. Did the researchers establish the typicality of the informants and their responses?

2. Did the researchers check for the representativeness of the data as a whole?
3. Did the theoretical sampling result in a range of informants experiencing the phenomenon under study?
4. Were the data made to appear more similar or congruent than they really were?
5. Did the study results fit the data from which they were generated?

**Table 3: Critiquing the Auditability of Qualitative Research**

1. Was a tape recorder or other mechanical device used to record the interviews?
2. If a tape recorder was not used, did the researchers write their field notes immediately after the interview or observation to increase accurate recall?
3. Was an in-depth description of the strategies used to collect and analyze the data provided to the readers?
4. Were the characteristics of the informants described and the process used to choose the informants?
5. Were low inference descriptors, informants' verbatim accounts, included to substantiate the categories developed during data analysis (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982)?
6. Were the social, physical, and interpersonal contexts within which the data had been collected discussed by the researchers?
7. Did the researchers specifically define the categories developed and also identify their theoretical antecedents?
8. Did more than one researcher perform the theoretical coding?
9. Did colleagues review the data to determine if they had identified the same categories and constructs as the researchers had?
10. Could another investigator clearly follow the decision trail used by the researchers in the study? (Beck 1993, 265-266.)

These questions were formulated at the beginning of the research process. Over the course of the study as I learned more about the process of hermeneutic phenomenology. I realized that question nine in table I, and questions two, seven and eight in table three were not relevant to the approach taken in this study.

## APPENDIX 5

### PARENTAL CONSENT LETTER

Winnipeg, Manitoba

R

January 27, 1994

Dear Parents,

The purpose of this letter is to request your permission for you child's input into a research project. The input requested will require their participation in one music class conducted by their usual music teacher. The research is being done by Alvina Koshy, a graduate student at the University of Manitoba in Music Education.

The students will be asked to write about one of their music classes or concert performance; an educationally sound activity. Before they write they will review through discussion in approximately seven minutes what they might write about. They will be given fifteen minutes for the writing exercise which has two parts to it. The first part is a webbing, a familiar technique to write one's own ideas on a topic. Following this they will be asked to use these ideas in a summary paragraph. Students will be asked not to put their names on the papers and any identifying marks will be removed.

Students participating in this research will be given feedback on the results and you may upon request obtain a summary of the research when it is completed. All information received will be confidential.

Please remember it is voluntary participation. Students will not be pressured in any way. Their honest response will be valued.

Please complete the form below to give permission for your child's participation in this research. I have included a student withdrawal form should your child wish to withdraw from participation in this research project. Your support in this research is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Alvina Koshy.

I grant permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in this music research project.  
(name of student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(parent signature)

Due to my discomfort in doing this assignment, I choose to withdraw from participation in this research activity.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(student signature)

## APPENDIX 6

### SAMPLE SCHOOL DIVISION APPROVAL LETTER

Winnipeg, Manitoba

R.

January 24, 1994.

Superintendent of Schools

\_\_\_\_\_ School Division

\_\_\_\_\_  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am presently a Masters of Education student at the University of Manitoba working on a thesis topic: Transformation Through Music: Experiences in Music Education.

For this project I would very much like to work with \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ school who has demonstrated strength in her music program as recognized by her/his peers.

\_\_\_\_\_ has agreed to participate in two one hour interviews outside of school time.

This letter is requesting your permission to involve one class of \_\_\_\_\_ students in a research project. This would require five minutes in the first class to introduce the research topic of change through music to the students and to hand out parent information letters with permission slips attached to be returned in the following music class.

In the following music class the topic would be reviewed with some brainstorming about what they could write about, which would take about seven minutes. This would be followed by a written assignment for the students in which they would first of all doing a webbing exercise: to generate their own ideas on the music class or experience that they chose to write about. Following this they would be asked to write a summary paragraph using the ideas in their web. The time give for the written exercise would be about fifteen minutes. The papers of students who have parent permission to be involved would be collected. Students would be asked not to put their names on the paper and all identifying marks will be removed.

I am requesting your permission after having received approval by the Faculty of Education Research and Ethics Committee. Please find attached a copy of the parental consent letter.

My faculty adviser is Dr. Larry Patterson and my committee supervisors for this project are: Dr. Martha Mcleod and J.P. Redekopp.

I appreciate your consideration for my request to involve one class of students in this research project. I can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (wk) and at home at \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

Alvina Koshy

## APPENDIX 7

### SAMPLE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

This original interview transcript is from Interview 4:1-2

Q: is the researcher. A: is Mrs. Shore (pseudonym)

Q: Experiences in music education in music education in which you have experienced change of some kind through music. What stories come to mind?

A: I have one very recent story actually. I have a grade 5 student who has come to me this year who is academically a non reader and in music class a non participant. A non participant physically. If you saw this child in my class you would see her sitting at the side of the class absolutely stone faced not participating in any rhythmic or melodic activities, especially anything that involves any kind of body movement. Yet this child loves coming to music class and has established a bond with me that's almost like a friendship. Now my approach to her is to leave her alone because she is participating even though she never picks up a mallet or picks up a drum or uses her voice. I have this intuitive feeling that someday in her life everything that we've been doing is going to be opened. One day she's going to blossom and all of this stuff that she's been taking in is going to be innate knowledge. She's going to know it. She works with a counsellor on a very regular basis and one day she and the counsellor and I went to the music room together and the three of us sat behind three bass instruments and just played to listen to the sound. She was very uncomfortable with this setting: two adults and she. First of all I had asked her to come by herself but she wouldn't do it so then I said, "What if the counsellor comes along"? Well that was okay. So there were the three of us. Our counsellor has had no musical training at all. My idea was that as with most children with a one on one she would just do these things that I know she can do and she wouldn't. It was very apparent that she could but she wouldn't do it. She's a very demanding child in that everything you say to her must be completely thought out. She will not accept it if there's any flaws in the reasoning and she said to me, "Why are you doing this?" And I started to cry and she started to cry. She was very very upset with the fact that I was crying and so I just said to her that you know music is such a part of my life and I get such joy from it that it's hard for me to see children not accepting that part of it. And she said, "Okay but don't cry". And we

left it at that. I think it was two or maybe three days later I passed her in the hall and she looked at me and she said "Thanks." That was it. That was three months ago and she still does not participate in music class but she anticipates things that need to be done such as moving an instruments or changing mallets or erasing the board. Her level of participation has changed somewhat. It's still not in a musical way but much more in a participatory way and I expect that if that child stays with me as a teacher for a long time that that musical ability will blossom. If she's out in the hall and hears a class or a choir singing she'll often say "Gee I like that song." So there's a real level of auditory participation in my mind with this child and I don't have a problem letting her sit because I know that someday...that that's much more beneficial to her right now. So that's my story number one.

My story number two is about a high school boy who came to me as a student in grade ten. I found out that he had been participating [in band]. He came into my band class and was a fine drummer. I mean it was obvious when he walked in and sat down that he was much more comfortable back there than any of the other students and than me. Turns out that he had been in four schools in the last little while and had had incredible problems at home and was now living with the extended family in the community that I was teaching at. He had not attended a single class for a year except for band class in his previous school. Band class was the only one and he attended it regularly. He caused quite considerable consternation to the other teaching staff in the school that I was in. However he was one of my star pupils. Consistently got good grades. Consistently worked hard. Consistently became a leader. He was going to drop out of school. So I went to talk to him about why that was. He gave me all of the hopeless and helpless arguments and the problems that he was having academically and the problems he was having in his home life and I just asked him one question. "Where is it that you feel best?" And he said, "At school in band class." and so I asked him, was he prepared to give that up by dropping out of school? He didn't drop out of school. Now I think there were a lot of other factors in there but I think by asking that one question because that was the only place in his life at that moment where he was feeling really good about himself, where he was an obvious leader, held in great respect by his peers and by his teachers. That was the one part of his life that was going really well and he recognized the need to keep that part. That was about five or six years ago and I have heard from him on occasion. He's phoned me and he's doing okay. He finished his grade twelve, didn't get great marks but he did finish it and he's now working in the community and playing in a rock band. I feel like his musical experiences have played a great big part in his life. So I think

they're different kinds of stories but I think that music is affecting both those children in a very different way. Are those the kinds of stories that you want to hear?

(The school bell rang)

The one girl I spoke to you about is so uncomfortable with her own emotions that it was really hard for her to see that this subject area was so emotional to an adult because that's very foreign to her experiences and to see an adult cry I don't think she'd ever seen an adult cry. That was very hard for her. She didn't want even to admit that that could take place.

Q: You know in terms of the every day classroom experience in which children come into the music class and you engage in some musical activity. Maybe this is another kind of involvement, not necessarily the individual student but the group. How do you experience the way in which music changes us as work with the group?

A: I had an experience very recently with a class. We talked about silence and what and how that changes a musical experience so I asked them to perform a piece that they had been working on. At the end of the piece [they were not] to talk and so they did that, it was a layered activity. As soon as one group was finished they started talking to their friends while the other group finished. Then I asked them to do it again and be silent at the end. I didn't ask them any questions. I just asked them to do it that way. So they did it that way and there was this lag of silence at the end. After the silence at a very appropriate time because these were young children, once the sound had dissipated in the room they seemed to sense that it was okay to talk and the one little boy said, "Was that ever neat! It took so long for the sound to end!" and another little boy turned to him and said, "The sound wasn't finished when we were finished. I don't get it!" And the other fellow on the other side, a very scientific young fellow, you know you've got them in every class said, "Well that's because sound travels in waves, don't you know and it has to go from our instrument to the walls where it stops.", And a girl in the back row said "Is that true, Mrs. Shore?" and I said, "Yes that's exactly right." "Can we do it again?" they said. "We'd like to hear that silence again." "That was really neat." They understood very intuitively that the sound that they are making needs to be heard. So they're doing that on a regular basis. I don't have to ask them to do it anymore because they want to hear it. They want to hear themselves perform. So I think that that really has transformed them into real musicians because now they're listening for the sound, they're enjoying the sound that they're making when they're performing and I think that's what it's all about. And

for them it's not good enough for one person to be talking. They want everybody to listen. So wouldn't it be wonderful if all our groups understood that, but that particular group understands it really well now.

Q: Can think an experience in which music was instrumental to a shift or change as your story just now [showed]?

A: That's a tougher question to answer I think because it in my mind, it's a long term effect. But I have a group of children who sing on a regular basis and are sometimes not very well disciplined and have a lot of repertoire on their plate and it's very difficult and some of them are really struggling. So I brought in a recording for them to listen to and I had them sit in the centre of the room and I had them sit very close together and I put speakers at opposite ends of them so they would be in the centre of the sound. And I the recording was of the Sanctus of the Faure Requiem and I got them to be silent and I played the recording for them. At the end of that one little boy said "Is that what we're going to sound like?" And I said, "Yes it is. "Oh well I think we'll be just great!" And that experience of listening to the end product when they hadn't started on the piece at that point was a real motivator for them. They worked very hard in a very disciplined manner for the next half an hour at a very challenging piece of music by hearing what they were going to sound like. So the sound experience of listening to it changed the manner in which they approached it I think. If we had done it in a different way and given them the music and said "This is what we're going to do, and here's how it goes." I'm not sure they would have attacked it in the same way but when they heard the sound of it and the gloriousness of that piece they were really anxious to sound like that so let's get at it and so you know I think in that case it certainly transformed their work habit.

A student story from Transcript 2:1

Mrs. Smith and Sean are pseudonyms.

When I first started recorder I thought it was the hardest thing in the world, so I didn't go to Mrs. Smith's classes. The she phoned my dad and talked to him and my dad talked to me. So I went to the class. I didn't know the fingering. I was upset. Then I got Mrs. Smith to teach me. I learned pretty fast. Then Mrs. Smith got me to get another boy. He came. I showed him the fingering. He caught on pretty soon. Then she gave us the songs. They were ...and.... The

next day Sean never came. I was kind of mad because I was the only boy there. I told Mrs. Smith and she phoned Sean's parents. Then Sean came back. Now I'm happy. Then we practiced morning and afternoon recesses. I really liked it. On Friday she told us to come at 10.00. I came but Sean didn't. We practiced for an hour. On Monday we had to go to Planetarium Auditorium. Then Mrs. Smith got Sean and we left. We played very good. We waited for our placing and we placed bronze. I was so happy. The next day they announced it on the P.A. system.

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