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**The Accessibility of a Classical Music
Education to Youth in the United States**

Josie Davis
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April 2014

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Abstract

The purpose of this investigation was to examine how classical music education is supported and made available to children in the United States, an underexplored area in the field of music and the arts. The paper examines the relationship between social class and the accessibility of classical music education to youth. The theoretical paradigms of Howard Becker, Annette Lareau, and Pierre Bourdieu argue that lower class families with reduced cultural capital have limited access to the arts and classical music in the U.S. The study incorporates a close examination of current literature, survey data collected from 50 parents who have children enrolled in private music lessons, four interviews of educators and music professionals, and draws on my own experiences teaching music in other parts of the world. The paper emphasizes potential barriers to receiving a music education, but also examines the merits of learning how to play an instrument and the kind of values music can teach. The research concludes that classical music is exclusive to children from lower social classes and that exposure to music can enrich the lives of youth in many meaningful ways.

Introduction

I have always felt there was a stigma attached to classical music in the United States. This is affirmed by the idea that classical music is intended for elite, upper class, older white, educated Americans. In my own experiences as a concertgoer and musician, most members appear to fall into this demographic. Perhaps classical music is only accessible to people who have received some form of education or exposure to the genre of music. Ruth Wright (2010) affirms this tendency and describes how most concertgoers tend to be middle class. This trend particularly carries over to people learning new instruments. Wright adds that, some kids are celebrated and encouraged in their music learning, while other are alienated and discouraged. It appears there is a class difference among students who are dissuaded from learning an instrument and students who are supported. Having spent time teaching music to disadvantaged children in Panama and India, I believe that classical music can be accessible to the underserved in any country, including the United States. In this paper, the term “underserved” refers to low-income communities.

In Panama, I worked with children of all ages conducting and rehearsing ensembles and teaching students one-on-one. Many of the kids came from poor areas and had very little family support—financially or emotionally. For many of the kids, playing music served as a way to overcome cultural and socioeconomic barriers, and fostered dedication, discipline, and patience through the long-term study of an instrument. Similarly, In India, I worked with the Child's Play Foundation and taught violin to young children at an orphanage. I was particularly impressed by how motivated the students were to come to their lessons everyday without any oversight. Often they stood by the door anxiously waiting for me each morning, eager and grateful for the opportunity to play music. They absorbed information quickly, as if they were hungry for

anything that would stimulate their minds. Watching the children smile, sing, hum, and help each other was one of the most rewarding experiences I have had as a teacher. It was clear that the opportunity for the children to learn an instrument profoundly changed their lives. Their exposure to music demonstrated that hard work, determination, and patience could yield satisfying results. The kids were appreciative and attentive in ways that I had not seen in young American music learners. In my experiences teaching in other countries, music has proven to be a powerful medium for self-expression and community building. Moreover, because the study of music requires a great deal of dedication, patience, and self-discipline it can serve as an important way to bring people together. From my perspective, music is a universal language that can serve as an equalizer to unite many different kinds of people.

Spending time teaching and observing music education in other parts of the world has made me curious about accessibility to music education programs in my home country. Classical music has played a central role in my upbringing, education, and life. However, my experiences with classical music as a child always felt removed from the wider community. I was fortunate to have parents that had the time and means to look after my lessons. It always seemed that my fellow music students came from families similar to my own—families that offered stability, and encouragement throughout the music learning process. The underrepresentation of children from a less fortunate background was obvious. Perhaps this was a function of the financial impediments to classical training, but I believe that stigma about classical music may be an important contributing factor.

This project seeks to examine the merits of studying music, while acknowledging aspects that hinder access to music learning such as social class and accessibility of music education to youth. My research seeks to understand how music is supported and made available to students

in the United States regardless of social class. To address this, I focus on the role of private versus public music instruction in student access to music education in the United States. The intent of this paper is not to test a specific relationship or hypothesis, but rather, to explore the process of music education and its accessibility to youth in the United States.

Literature Review

Arts Institutions and Education

There is very little written about the accessibility of classical music education in the United States. Much of the literature in journals is based on research carried out in Europe—a region of the world with a rich history of public and governmental support for the arts. The gap in scholarly research may be more deeply rooted in attitudes toward classical music in the United States. Belfiore and Bennett (2008) explain how a lack of institutional support has caused the arts to be undervalued in America. Although classical music is taught using a traditional Eurocentric model, the U.S. does not have systems of patronage and institutionalization that are hallmarks of classical music in Europe. Many musical organizations in the U.S. are privately endowed or receive funding from sources other than the government. Belfiore and Bennett describe how the lack of public support for classical music in the U.S. may have to do with social stigma around classical music. Often fine art is associated with genius and elitism, because very few artists are able to make it to the top of their field. The goal of becoming a true artist seems unreachable and can turn people away from classical music. Sociologist Howard Becker (1982) believes that if less emphasis were placed on stardom and professionalism, there might be more support for the arts. There is a common conception in society, and among artists, that producing art requires unique gifts, talents, and abilities. This exclusivity can turn people away from the study of music. In *The Social Impact of the Arts* (2008) Belfiore and Bennett provide an interesting account of the way the arts are perceived around the world. They frame their argument by looking at the arts through the lens of intellectual history and discuss the transformative power of the arts by describing the ways they can affect individual lives and communities and also shape cultural identity. The authors introduce the idea of the arts as a

“barometer of public health.” The arts are a necessary element of culture and society. However, the authors argue that another factor that is especially prevalent in the United States is the lack of institutional support. This has caused the arts to be undervalued and has threatened a collapse in arts institutions. There is a common belief among the public that the arts are indispensable but there is very little public discourse and public policy to substantiate and support the arts. Often public policy is dominated by economic concerns, science, and commerce, while support for the arts is miniscule. Belfiore and Bennett argue that we need to recognize the value of the arts in its ability to create social cohesion and cultural empowerment. In addition, the authors make an important distinction between fine art and crafts or popular art. They describe fine art as being associated with “genius” whereas popular art is mainly based on skills that can be easily duplicated—making it more accessible to the general public.

In short, the research by Becker, Belfiore, and Bennett point to some of the misperceptions about what it means to be an artist and help explain why music education and arts programs are often undervalued and underfunded in schools across the country. To show how music can be a vital force in positive social reproduction when supported by public policy, it is important to include a discussion of the power of music as a social movement in the United States and in countries around the world.

Music as a Social Movement

There are many different initiatives around the world that seek to bring music to underserved populations. It is impossible to write about music education and youth without mentioning one of the most widely known and respected social programs in the world: El Sistema, in Venezuela. Dr. José Antonio Abreu in Caracas founded the program over three decades ago. Abreu believes that “music has to be an agent of social development, in the highest

sense because it transmits the highest values - solidarity, harmony, mutual compassion. And it has the ability to unite an entire community, and to express sublime feelings” (TED). Abreu’s vision and work have been revolutionary. The El Sistema program of Venezuela currently offers music instruction to more than 500,000 underprivileged children. Students attend free music classes for three or four hours a day, six days a week. The program emphasizes the importance of hard work and joy in the creation of music. The El Sistema network in Venezuela is publicly financed and endorsed by the government, which contributes about \$64 million each year to the program (New York Times, 2012). Since its inception, the El Sistema model has inspired the formation of hundreds of similar programs around the world including at least forty in the United States. The model is unique because it emphasizes the idea of music as a social movement that can help children rise above conditions of poverty.

In 2013, the National Alliance of El Sistema Inspired Programs was established to bring together music programs with a similar vision from across the United States. In many ways the El Sistema model has revolutionized music instruction because it emphasizes the power of music and acknowledges the process of music making rather than focusing on music study as a career pathway. Of course there are many students in the El Sistema program who have successful careers in music—such as the revered Los Angeles Philharmonic conductor Gustavo Dudamel. However, the experience can be equally rewarding and important for children who have serious interests beyond music. The program is an important example of the way children can flourish through the study of music. The aim of the initiative in Venezuela is to steer children away from a life of crime, drugs, poverty, and gangs and to instead, help them become productive citizens. It has served as a diversion away from crime and drug abuse in Venezuela and provides a way for youth from all backgrounds to coexist—working together to create beautiful music (TED).

Exposure to classical music gives children a chance to develop and recognize their self-worth, feel a sense of achievement, and come to realize the value of community. In addition, it provides structure and a cultural setting that enables kids to learn the value of dedication, hard work, and patience. The El Sistema model has had tremendous success and has become one of the most widely discussed social movements in the music world. The program empowers children in the most vulnerable portions of society. Abreu describes how the program provides children with a “noble identity” and makes them role models for their families and communities. It also helps them to be better students at school. In addition, Abreu explains how “music is the number one prevention against prostitution, violence, bad habits, and everything degrading of the life of a child” (TED). The impact of large-scale music education programs like El Sistema epitomize the positive effects of exposure to music and how it can be made accessible regardless of social class. A closer look at how opportunities for education and knowledge of the arts translate into cultural capital follows.

Cultural Capital and Education

Bourdieu (1983) provides a sound argument for the way education affects society. He explains how education distributes and reproduces cultural capital in society. Cultural capital refers to the characteristics such as habits, linguistic and cultural competence, and socialization skills given by families and other agents of socialization, such as educational institutions. Cultural capital can be represented by the way one dresses, speaks, and presents oneself. Engaging in the study of classical music can enhance one’s cultural capital and many sociologists use exposure to the arts and music as one example of the way cultural capital permeates society. For example, in his book *Art Worlds*, Becker (1982) argues that well-socialized members of society can experience and enjoy art (such as a picture or concert) with

very little training. Culture is transmitted to successive generations by family and through the educational system put forth by the ruling class. The amount of success one has in the education system is determined by the amount of cultural capital one possesses. This results in a hierarchical ordering that can propel feelings of stigma and exclusion among those of the non-ruling class. Bourdieu's theories about education can be applied to the study of many different subjects, including music.

Dimaggio and Useem (1978) confirm the importance of education in determining one's engagement in "high art," such as classical music. The authors find that parents in different social classes pass on cultural preferences and capital to their children in different ways. Schooling is a determinant for whether or not people will develop artistic taste. The authors introduce four propositions for the origins and consequences of class cultures. The first states that arts appreciation is trained; the second is that arts appreciation is contextual; the third is that arts consumption enhances social cohesion, and the final proposition states that arts consumption is a form of cultural capital. The final proposition is the most important in our discussion of music education because, through art and education, the authors explain how families try to transfer cultural capital to their children to create a pathway for upward social and economic mobility.

Many parents expose their children to the arts by taking their kids to theaters and museums and by watching classical music performances. Children of parents with a more educated background are more likely than others to have been exposed to the arts at a young age (Bourdieu, 1978). This is important because it describes tendencies that may be present in parents of children. The implication is that educated parents with high cultural capital are more likely to enroll their children in private music lessons than less educated parents. Despite

parental support, Davidson argues that an internal drive in a child is an important factor in his or her desire for musical success. She highlights this point in a 1999 study that examines why children start and continue with music learning. Davidson finds that children often develop an internal drive to learn music because of previous exposure to the arts. She uses a social constructionist approach to examine why students engage in the study of music, arguing that music helps students develop their personal identities. In addition, she identifies three factors that children must experience to enable success in learning. The first is a learning environment that is conducive to experimentation and improvisation. The second is a setting that promotes regular instruction with consistent expectations from lesson to lesson. The third factor is a reason for interest that sparks motivation—this could be a concert experience that caused a child to want to learn an instrument. All three factors highlight the importance of internal drive in the learning process and help explain the factors that lead to successful music study. Additional studies have examined the way children begin learning music and possible barriers that prohibit a person's exposure to music.

Brändström (1999) examines how middle school aged students engage in music through participation in music schools and in their everyday lives. He applies Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital to analyze the relationship between music education and sociocultural background of students. Brändström collected data through a series of 369 interviews of those currently studying music at a municipal school, those who previously received instruction but dropped out, and those who had never received instruction. He concluded that sociocultural predisposition explained why certain children gravitate toward the study of an instrument. For example, familial support and a basic appreciation for music were important factors in determining a student's interest in learning music. He also found that those who studied music

in school were twice as likely than those who did not, to want to become higher professionals in many different career areas, including music. In addition, he argues that one's habitus—the product of one's living conditions and life experiences—plays a prominent role in a student's attraction to music. Habitus is an influential factor in the process of socialization and informs the context of childrearing. This study is important because it highlights the potential benefits of studying classical music, while acknowledging the many factors that may impede classical music instruction, such as a lack of familial support.

Davidson, Brändström, Dimaggio, and Useem emphasize the importance of familial and financial support in nurturing music learning. Bourdieu and Becker explain how frameworks of support are often contingent on cultural capital and on having knowledge about the arts. What follows is a closer examination of parenting strategies and the ways cultural capital is passed on from parents to children.

Lareau: The Role of Parenting Style

Perhaps one of the most influential scholars in this area is Annette Lareau. In her book *Unequal Childhoods*, Lareau (2008) defines cultural capital as the "the possession and acquisition of symbolic goods" that are valued in society. Cultural capital is inherent and internalized in all of us and becomes embodied through the habitus. Knowing how to dine at a fancy restaurant is one example of cultural capital. There are certain manners and behaviors that are accepted and others that are frowned upon. Both cultural capital and habitus propel the process of social reproduction. In addition to family setting, educational institutions serve as sites for this reproduction. When a student attends school, his or her cultural capital is shaped, defined, and influenced. This creates an advantage for upper and middle class children who have the resources to receive a decent education, but can have negative consequences for working

class children who often attend schools with low financial support. It further reinforces and exacerbates their "class" in society and enhances the reproduction of social inequality.

Lareau discusses two paradigms of childrearing, which she refers to as natural growth and concerted cultivation. The goal of the natural child growth approach is for children to enjoy their youth and for parents to allow children to foster their own creativity. Children grow up with independence and are given space to use their time creatively. Lareau argues that working class families tend to allow their children to play with a less organized routine than middle and upper class families. Through the natural growth approach, children develop strong interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills and become independent and creative thinkers.

Lareau contrasts natural child growth with concerted cultivation. She observes that middle and upper class parents play a greater role in organizing the daily lives of their children than working class parents. There is a heavier emphasis on scheduled activities. Middle and upper class families encourage their children to ask questions and to be self-reliant. Children are taught to work hard to prepare themselves for a future that promises a good job and a comfortable living wage.

Lareau argues that concerted cultivation and natural child growth are associated with two separate social classes: the upper class and the working or lower class, respectively. Children who grow up with the concerted cultivation model generally come from families with the means to support extracurricular activities, such as private music lessons. In many cases, parents with greater cultural capital are more interested in providing a multi-faceted environment for their children, including opportunities for children to participate in the arts. Lareau's work explains why certain children are predisposed to have exposure to music. Parents with higher degrees of cultural capital are more likely to bring their children to a concert or to support music learning.

In addition, there is social pressure to conform to a particular model of childrearing. This may make it difficult for there to be a melding of different parenting styles because parents are reluctant to adopt a strategy that might not feel entirely comfortable. While Lareau's work helps to describe potential barriers to the study of music, it is important to consider the potential benefits of learning an instrument—rewards that can enhance the lives of all children regardless of the way they are raised.

The Merits of a Music Education

McPherson and Hendricks (2010) examine students' motivation to study music compared to other academic subjects. The authors conclude that music students have much higher motivational profiles in all subjects, not just music, as compared to non-music learners. They also assert the importance of treating music as an academic course. The article provides a broad overview of the National Standards for Music Education (outlined by the National Association of Music Education) and how music is incorporated into public school systems. The authors found that music learners in the United States had higher motivational profiles compared to non-music learners in the following areas: values, competence beliefs, task difficulty, perceived expectations of parents, and interest in school and outside of school. However the interest in music category yielded surprising results. The authors write that "while music interest in school was the lowest-ranked subject overall [ranked by students], music interest outside of school was the second-highest subject...ranked lower only than PE." This suggests that there is confusion among students about the role of music as an academic subject. The authors describe how "music study in U.S. schools may not presently serve a broad population of students in ways that sufficiently promote the value of music for them at the individual level." The article provides a helpful perspective on the motivations behind music learning among elementary and secondary

school learners in the United States. In addition, it points to potential benefits of learning an instrument.

Froehlich (2007) describes how music learning can happen in many different locations and among varying demographics. She describes how many classically trained professionals believe that a music education should accomplish three goals. It should provide an opportunity for young people to make music for the rest of their lives, it should expose students to the European tradition of classical music, and it should continue to create an audience base that supports the arts. However, the three goals are accomplished to varying degrees depending on the way music is taught. Inequality exists in the education system hinders the chances for children from lower classes to receive a music education. This is due in part to the lack of a systemized music education curriculum in the public school systems nationwide. According to Froehlich, public schools want graduates to be able to play an instrument or sing at a technical level that is determined by each school program, have the basic ability to read music, and have experience playing music as part of a larger ensemble such as a chorus or band. The National Association for Music Education outlines national standards for public music education and provides resources for music educators. In addition to national standards, most states have developed specific standards for arts education.

According to a study released in 2012 by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement and by the National Center for Education Statistics, in the 2009-10 academic year, 94% of public elementary schools offered music instruction. Most of the schools that offered music reported that instruction was given once a week and educators were given a curriculum guide produced by the district to serve as a guide for teaching. A much smaller percentage of public schools reported that they offered additional music education activities

outside working hours, such as opportunities for additional music study or school performances and presentations. Secondary music education indicators are similar to those represented by elementary programs. For the same academic year, 91% of secondary schools offered music programs and most schools used a curriculum guide to outline music learning goals. The study also concluded that music education was less prominent in poor districts around the country. Although public music education is offered in most elementary and secondary public schools in the United States the quality of programming and instruction varies significantly among schools.

Mixon's book *Reaching and Teaching All Instrumental Music Students* (2007), provides an overview of the ways that music educators can tailor their teaching to reach learners from different backgrounds. Mixon points out that often well-funded suburban school districts have model music programs. However, there is an inherent problem in using them as models because many districts do not have comparable economic resources to build programs of the same caliber. Mixon describes the variation in learning styles among economically disadvantaged schools. It is important to create an environment that supports diversity. In addition, the music curriculum should include culturally relevant music that may vary within the geographic location of the school. Although a lot of schools tend to have a "Eurocentric" curriculum, it is important to cater to the different cultures and demographics that are represented among diverse student bodies. Educators must acknowledge that diverse social groups relate to music in different ways. It is difficult for families to relate to classical music when there is no awareness or exposure to the style of music.

Davidson's (1999) list of factors that children must experience to succeed in learning (mentioned above) highlight the importance of internal drive in the learning process. Although public school music education is an important part of a child's education, music opportunities are

often inadequately supported and are given little emphasis in the overall curriculum. This causes many children interested in learning an instrument to turn to private instruction to gain a more well-rounded and in-depth understanding of music.

Although there is not a large amount of literature related to the accessibility of music education in the United States, the previous research just described, has influenced my own thinking on this topic. We must think of the potential benefits of the arts and the power of music as a social movement. In order to support a movement in the arts, we must understand how exposure to the arts is distributed in society. The theoretical paradigms of Becker, Lareau, and Bourdieu point to the ways that cultural capital is obtained and reproduced in society. Becker's *Art Worlds* describes how societies connect with art. Although he focuses mostly on the concept of art as a form of collective action, he explains how social and cultural capital is obtained through immersion in the arts. Lareau's research focuses on different practices of childrearing in the United States and how this varies with social position and class contexts that children experience through their upbringing. Bourdieu is particularly influential because he points to the way education distributes and reproduces cultural capital in society, which often leads to upward mobility. All three theorists explain how certain opportunities are valued and made available to some children, while other children are prone to fall through the cracks.

The research of Davidson, Mixon, Froehlich, McPherson, and Hendricks explain the value of music and the benefits music learning can have on child development and wellbeing. The review of the literature supports the perception that classical music education is less available to people of lower classes because of financial, educational, and class barriers. However, for those that can afford to study privately, research suggests that exposure to the arts

increases cultural capital, social capital and social mobility. What follows is a closer examination of two music education programs that seek to make the arts accessible to the wider community.

Research Methods

In the initial stage of the project I relied on books and journal articles to provide context for the topic. The materials helped inform what theoretical paradigms I would use to frame and support my argument that classical music is less accessible to children from underserved families, and provided background on previous findings. The framework established by the literature review and theoretical discussions was explored using two methodologies: survey methodology and ethnography.

To contextualize my research, I familiarized myself with two education programs that offer instruction to youth—one in my home state of Maine, and the other in Ohio. The Bay Chamber Music School offers private, ensemble, and orchestra instruction to students of all ages in Maine. The Ohio music education programs are housed at the Oberlin Conservatory. These include the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra (NOYO) program—that provides orchestra instruction for young students in the Oberlin area, the MusicPlay program—an early childhood music immersion class, and the community music school, which offers private and group classes to students in the surrounding area. All three programs have been important facets of the Oberlin community for many years. I was interested in the perspective of parents who have children enrolled in both programs, however my initial attempt to survey parents of students in the NOYO program was unsuccessful. NOYO already had plans to administer a survey and did not want to over stimulate parents with too many requests for information. However, I was able to gather data through an anonymous survey administered to parents of children enrolled in music classes at the Bay Chamber Music School. The survey was given anonymously through an online site called Survey Monkey. I was given a list of email addresses directly from the music school that included contact information for 150 parents with involvement in the education programs at Bay

Chamber. Of the 150 people that received the survey, there were 50 responses suitable for analysis.¹ Some people opened the survey but skipped all of the questions; these respondents were not included in the fifty who provided answers. The survey asked questions about household income, race, gender, and included open-ended questions about the perceived value and importance of a music education.² I wanted to get a sense of the way the music school is perceived by parents and also the reasons why parents enroll their children in music lessons. The information I gathered helps explain why parents value music education and the potential benefits of music learning. It also points to barriers that stand in the way of receiving a music education or learning how to play an instrument.

In addition to survey data, my research had an ethnographic component. I conducted interviews with four different people in Maine and Ohio who work in the programs described, to hear their different perspectives on music education. They were asked questions about the way music is perceived in their own communities and the work they are doing to alleviate stigma surrounding classical music. To evaluate the accessibility of both programs in their respective communities, the ethnographic portion of my research provides accounts from people working directly in the field of music education and from parents who have created an opportunity for their children to study music. The survey data and interviews coupled with the sources cited in the literature review provide new insight into the ways music is accessible to students in the United States. By taking a micro-level view throughout the course of my research, I have attempted to extrapolate broader trends that explain the behavior of larger groups of people.

¹ The survey had a response rate of 33%.

² See appendix for a list of survey questions.

Case Study: Bay Chamber Music School

The Bay Chamber Music School sits in the quaint village of Rockport, in Midcoast Maine. The latest census data from 2010, reported that Rockport had a population of roughly 3,300 and the median household income was \$59,464—this is \$11,000 more than the median household income for the state of Maine and about \$9,500 more than the U.S. average. Rockport is one of Maine’s most affluent towns, with a large population of wealthy retirees (Prashant, 2007). The Bay Chamber organization has had a presence in the community for over fifty years as both a music education center and a sponsor for a summer music festival that occurs in the months of July and August. The festival features not only performances of classical music, but also of other genres, including folk and jazz. The Bay Chamber Music School—less than a decade old—is a member of the National Guild for Community Arts Education—an organization that supports ongoing learning opportunities in the arts. As a member of the organization, the music school works to make arts education accessible to the surrounding community.

The school currently offers a range of classes to all ages (newborns to elders). Some students have no prior musical experience, while others have played for several years and are looking for further instruction. There are a total of 135 students enrolled in weekly private lessons. However, the school has a total enrollment of about 350 students. Some travel only a few minutes to their lessons while others travel over an hour. There are three separate orchestras open to varying levels of students: a beginning youth, an intermediate youth, and an adult ensemble. In addition to orchestra, students can enroll in chamber music instruction with music school faculty. The school offers additional classes that focus on ukulele, guitar, jazz, voice, improvisation, and early childhood music classes. Although the program is more weighted toward stringed instruments, voice, and piano, there are also lessons offered in winds, brass, and

percussion. Because all of the surrounding public schools have bands and choruses, there little incentive for people to study these instruments privately.

Monica Kelly is the executive director of Bay Chamber Concerts and oversees the music school. She sat down with me to talk about the mission of the school and how Bay Chamber seeks to bring exceptional music to the Midcoast community.³ Monica was a board member of the organization for nearly ten years before she became the executive director. In 2000, during her time as a board member, Monica started the Odeon Youth Orchestra. The orchestra was her personal creation and was not affiliated with Bay Chamber. The ensemble provided an opportunity for young musicians in the area to come together once a week and play classical music. In 2006, the board created a strategic plan to establish a music school and the first step was to merge the Odeon orchestra with the organization. Monica began to work for Bay Chamber and became the executive director in 2010—the same year that the music school opened. Since its inception, the music school has become a fixture in the Rockport community. The school welcomes students from all musical and class backgrounds. Monica spoke about the diversity in the student body at the school:

We have absolute beginners who have no musical background, we have pre-conservatory young people, and we have advanced amateur adults—adults who perform but on an amateur status. Geographically we have students from Damariscotta to Bass Harbor and Orono to Augusta [this is a 75 mile radius]. So it is a huge semi-circle—a huge geography. Socioeconomically we have people that are below poverty level to people who have contributed upwards of \$100,000 to the organization. Our students represent a broad spectrum, just like this community.

Our conversation moved to the subject of private instruction. The school strives to make lessons affordable. Private lessons cost between \$44 and \$93 dollars depending on the length. The

³ See appendix for interview schedule.

shortest lessons are thirty minutes long and the longest are ninety minutes. Participation in the orchestras costs between \$350 and \$550 per year. The music school is committed to offering financial assistance to all who qualify. However for many people in Maine, the cost of weekly instruction is inhibitive. Monica explained how the tuition costs elicit different reactions depending on the person and the quality of instruction.

Depending on your perspective \$62 [per hour] either seems really low or really high. In our community, it is on the high range. You can get an hour-long piano lesson in Midcoast Maine still for \$20 dollars an hour. Some of the local pianists who teach have no credentials, but they have a little studio in their home and they take beginning level students.

Monica emphasizes how the music school offers more to students than one lesson per week. Participation in the school provides the opportunity for students to build connections and learn among their peers in a supportive and nurturing environment. The social aspect of music is important because it changes the way students connect with music.

We feel that when you join a music school you are looking for a particular kind of music education that is different from a home studio. The biggest goal for the music school is not only to advance an individual's learning, but also to connect them to other musicians. We are trying to build a community so that people meet other people that they can play music with.

Monica stresses the importance of collaboration among students. The music school provides opportunities for students to play music together in groups such as orchestras or smaller chamber ensembles.

Our conversation turned to the subject of scholarships. Although the town of Rockport itself is a relatively wealthy area, many of the surrounding communities are comprised of poorer populations. In addition, the cost of travel is expensive because of the distances between communities. The Bay Chamber Music School currently awards scholarships to 40% of the student body. Financial aid is based on need and is distributed in four levels: 10%, 25%, 50%,

and 75%. There are a couple of students who attend at no cost, but most students pay something for their lessons. The level of the award is initially dependent on the current poverty level set by the government. For example, in a single-person household in Maine, if a person earns less than \$12,000 per year, they are considered to be below poverty level. Financial aid is determined based on the size of household and annual income. In addition, the music school considers enrollment in local programs such as the YMCA and the Free Lunch Program in the public schools to help determine more accurately whether or not someone can afford lessons. Monica emphasizes how there are many people who fall just outside the margins of the financial need structure, but that still cannot afford to pay for music instruction.

I feel that there are people deserving of financial aid that won't fall into those categories because they are so low. You have to be so poor to qualify for aid—even at the YMCA. So if you take the federal numbers I think I increase the scholarship by literally 400%. Nobody here would qualify for scholarship and yet these people have six people in their families and are earning \$30,000 per year.

Bay Chamber is committed to building a sustainable financial aid program that makes music study affordable and possible to all interested students. The school has a generous endowment that helps fund scholarships. One of the biggest challenges that the school faces is raising awareness in the community about the organization's existence and purpose. This is a challenge that many arts organizations must confront and alludes to the impact of stigma in classical music.

Monica's sentiments are not uncommon in the art world.

I don't think there is great awareness in the broader community that we even exist. We just invited the music teacher from the Belfast elementary school [25 minutes away] to come down and talk with us and she didn't know that we have a music school. There is work to be done in the broader community. I think that it has to do in part with a stigma of classical music that it is elitist and exclusive.

Elitism and exclusivity are commonly associated with classical music. In his book *Art Worlds*, Becker uses the same words to describe the common perception of classical music in society.

Bay Chamber is working to break down these misperceptions in many creative and innovative ways. The music school has recently launched a new slogan “meet in the music.” The catch phrase in many ways represents the mission of the school.

We want people to realize that we are trying to create a meeting place. It is not a divide that you have to cross over to become a member. It is an intersection where a lot of different people come and where experiences happen.

The school is making an effort to reach out into the community with programs that suit a large audience. For example, each year the school hosts a sequence of free matinee performances featuring music or dance for over 2,400 public school students from across the state. In addition, the school offers annual open houses, which welcome community members to peruse the facilities, participate in trial lessons, meet the faculty, and experience a musical “petting zoo.” The organization has also made an effort to reach out to populations that have no access to music, like the incarcerated prison population and juvenile detention centers. In 2013, Bay Chamber put on five concerts for inmates in the Maine State Prison. These kind of outreach initiatives help raise awareness, but also shows people the benefits and beauty of sharing and experiencing music.

We turn now to an interview with the faculty chair and violin teacher at the Bay Chamber music school. Gilda Joffe began studying violin and piano when she was a young child. She comes from a musical family and was urged to engage in music by her parents—who were both musicians. Gilda received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in violin performance from the Juilliard School in New York City. She joined the faculty at Bay Chamber, where she currently teaches a private studio of violin students. Gilda spoke about the music school and the current climate of music in the Midcoast Maine area. She described how the school tries to tailor its offerings to suit the demands of the community.

We are here in a small community and we try to bring in instruments that people are interested in. Not everything is classical because that is not the world of today. We try to cross-pollinate our experiences for the children and for adults as well. So we're not closed to any possibilities of what might happen here. It is a community music school, not a conservatory.

Gilda emphasizes the importance of offering programs that the community is interested in. For example, the music school is not limited to classical music. There are currently programs in jazz and ukulele. One of the most important perspectives I wanted to draw from our conversation, was Gilda's opinion about the merits of a music education. Gilda explained, referencing the Greek philosophers, that music is "fundamental to all brain, hand, and mental development." She described how there is a bulk of research that describes the benefits of learning an instrument.

There have been countless studies showing how the study of an instrument develops the brain in certain capacities. Thinking is quicker, right brain and left-brain function is better, mathematics is better, verbal use is better, comprehension is better, reading skills...everything is bettered by the employment of learning a musical instrument because of the way it facilitates the brain.⁴

Gilda went on to explain the importance of collaboration in music. She compared music to sports, explaining how it requires both mental and physical coordination simultaneously. Learning music teaches people how to work together.

Music is not competitive, it is a team sport, but it is not against people it is for people. It is not only for the musicians, it's for enveloping the audience and bringing them into a world, which they may not have access to.

Gilda describes the way music allows people to connect to their peers and to listeners. She brought up public school outreach performances as an example of the social and group aspects of music, which Monica mentioned earlier. Gilda described the way the concerts are engaging to

⁴For more information see: Irene Peery & Peery, Craig. (1987) The Role of Music in Child Development. 3-31.

the young students who attend.

The kids send back letters and drawings and all sorts of fun things, which we have on the wall. They draw pictures of the performers and of the instruments. It's fun for them, they internalize the experience and then they externalize it in their letters and pictures. You can really see the path of the experience.

In her experience, Gilda has seen the positive effects the exposure of music can have on children. She believes that greater emphasis should be placed on the arts in the public school system so that more students can have access to music. Over the years of her teaching, Gilda has noticed that most of her students (regardless of their socio-economic background) have had the same “zest for learning” and excitement about music. However, she also explained how some students take lessons so they can put their experience with music on their résumés. Like Monica, Gilda commented on the way the Bay Chamber organization is perceived as an “elitist organization” in the surrounding community. She went on to describe how the organization and music school is trying to reach out into the community in an open and inviting way.

There is nothing elite about what we are doing because we are trying to expand as much as possible to reach people. In the past Bay Chamber might have had that reputation, for very good reason, but the world is very different now. We are a *community* music school—that is the bottom line. That is what we are aiming for, it is not to please a certain group of people it is to give exposure to as many people as possible.

Both Gilda and Monica acknowledge the perception and reality that classical music is elitist and inaccessible to most people and they are working hard to change this. In addition, both Monica and Gilda describe the ways that music can be beneficial to children. The survey data analysis provides a more in-depth view of the topics that were brought up in my conversations with Monica and Gilda by providing insight from parents of children who are involved in the music school.

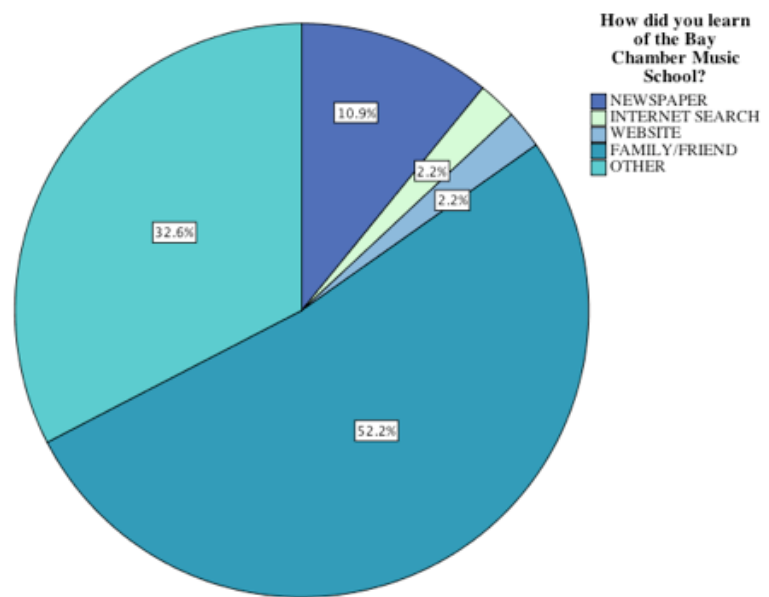
Analysis of Survey Data

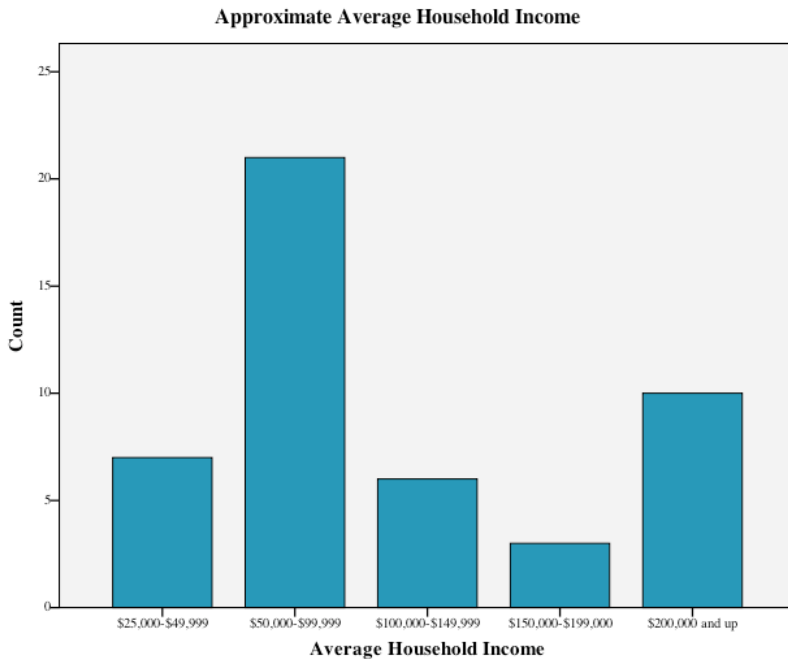
I administered an anonymous survey to over 150 parents who have students enrolled in the Bay Chamber Music School. I received fifty useable responses. The pie chart shows the breakdown of responses to a question about how parents learned of the Bay Chamber Music School. 52% of respondents learned of the music school through word of mouth and their family and friends. About 10% of respondents discovered the school in material that was printed in the newspaper. Despite the prominence

of advertising on the Internet, the smallest percentage of respondents reported that they learned of the school through an Internet search or other website. The data suggests that recognition of the school is based on word of mouth interactions. In her interview, Monica Kelly explained

the struggles of making the music school visible in the community. Kelly described how many people that live in the surrounding area do not know that the school exists. However, the survey results suggest that energy should be spent on advertising in a social way. Although the internet is a popular medium for advertising in the modern world, survey respondents learned of the music school in other ways, through social interactions with their family and friends.

Another survey question asked about annual household income (see bar graph). The income question is important because it sheds light on the kind of demographic that the music school currently serves. Although there were nine different breakdowns of annual income, I





combined several categories to make a clearer breakdown of socio-economic conditions. Of the fifty respondents, one fifth reported an average combined family income of over \$200,000 per year and about 44% of respondents reported an average salary of between \$50,000 and \$99,000 annually. Forty of the fifty respondents made over \$50,000

per year, which is slightly above the median income of Maine. About 15% of respondents reported that they make between \$25,000 and \$49,000 per year. These numbers indicate that most of the survey respondents were in the middle to upper-middle class income bracket.

Respondents were asked about the distance of their commute to the music school. Maine is very rural and communities, businesses, homes and schools are often spread apart from each other. 64% of respondents commute up to ten miles to the music school and 8% commute over 30 miles. The majority of respondents commute under twenty miles to the school. Responses to the question indicate that the music school tends to attract students that live within about 20 miles of the school. However, one survey respondent reported that her family took a ferry from their home on an island to the mainland and then drove twenty minutes to the school each week.

There was very little racial diversity in the sample, however this reflects the fact that according to 2010 census data, Rockport is close to 99% white and the state of Maine is about 95% white. Only two of the fifty respondents reported a race other than white: one respondent

identified as Asian and the other did not specify. There is not enough information to draw conclusions about race, especially in a state with such little racial diversity. However, in my own experience, there seem to be a dominate number of white people involved in classical music. This is an area that could benefit from further research. The gender of respondents was also homogenous. About 90% of the respondents were female. However, I was given a list of email addresses that the music school uses to stay in contact with families, so the gender of respondents was preset. Growing up, I noticed that most often, mothers played a more active role in the weekly music lessons of their children, compared to fathers. For example, they often drove their children to lessons. The descriptive statistics provide a broad overview of the respondent demographic, however the most important and meaningful findings from the survey lie in the responses to the open-ended questions.

Several overarching themes emerged from responses to the open-ended questions. Parents were asked to describe why they decided to enroll their children in the music school and also why they thought a music education was worth supporting. Parents initially enrolled their children in music lessons for very different reasons. Many parents wanted to expose their children to the arts. Others commented on the way music can be a form of self-expression and can help boost self-esteem. Some respondents commented on the psychological benefits of music study such as improved brain and skill development. Other respondents commented on the lack of musical opportunities in the public schools as a reason for turning elsewhere for music instruction. Many schools in the area only offer chorus and band programs that start in middle school and continue through high school. Schools tend to invest a great deal of time and focus on drama and sports programs, rather than on music programs. The majority of the respondents felt that music contributes to a well-rounded education and wanted to provide this

opportunity for their children, however there are more nuanced opinions and reasons that can be examined more closely. One respondent explained how she began studying music as a child and found the experience to be very enriching. She wanted to provide the same opportunity for her own children.

I studied music as a child and in high school and college. My goal was never to become a professional musician, nonetheless, music has been an incredibly rewarding part of my adult life, and I wanted to give that gift to my children.

The parent was given the opportunity to learn an instrument in her childhood and believed that she should provide the same experiences for her children. One parent emphasized the benefits of learning music in a group setting.

Other than private lessons and programs like Bay Chamber, students in our area have very little access to music education in the public schools. Unfortunately, access is limited due to income to a large extent. I would love to see more in school programs, and not just in the wealthier school districts. It combines intellectual and hands-on and can be done as a group.

This quote is important because it demonstrates how the lack of music in the public school system is a prominent barrier to children's opportunity to engage with music. Students who wish to study music at an advanced and serious level must look beyond limited programs offered in the schools. This means that parents must turn to community organizations like Bay Chamber that offer private instruction and orchestral opportunities for a fee. There were many other reasons why parents supported a music education for their children. Many parents expressed a desire to nurture their child's talent by offering music lessons. One parent acknowledged this and the myriad other values that music can instill.

My son has always been musical; it seemed natural for him to try music lessons. I hope they instill values of culture, art, history, community, and self-awareness.

Conversely, one parent mentioned that she supported music lessons even though she did not

think her child had natural talent. “I for sure, think music adds to their life...even though my children are not naturals.” This point is important because it emphasizes the value of the process of music engagement rather than focusing on music as a profession. This mindset reflects the approach of the El Sistema model of music education. It stresses the importance of joy and the many positive impacts music can have without emphasizing the goal of becoming a professional musician. Another parent, who explains the ways music education can enhance many aspects of everyday life, describes the positive aspects of music.

Whether or not a child "does" anything in the long run with music, they will always take something positive from the experience. Musicianship skills can be carried into everyday life. For instance: listening. Listening is one of the most important components of being a good musician (in my opinion), which is also a sadly underutilized skill in this modern world of over stimulus.

Many of the reasons that parents listed reflect the intentions to build their children’s cultural capital—an overarching theme in the survey responses. One upper class parent described the kinds of benefits music study can have.

Serious music study provides the best all-around investment for any subject. It opens up development opportunities ranging from analytical skills, physical coordination, work ethic, expressive opportunities, music and world history, teamwork, and myriad other advantages that no other coursework can provide. And after a little hard work, there's lots of fun!

The benefits listed by this parent are skills and values that Lareau would attribute to an upper-class family that adopts the concerted cultivation model of child rearing. The average annual income of the respondent was over \$200,000, which would place this parent’s family in the upper income category for Midcoast Maine residents. The language that the respondent uses reflects a high level of cultural capital and also alludes to the emphasis that is placed on transferring cultural capital to the child. Another parent of similar class standing had expectations that her children would learn how to play an instrument.

My idea, as a parent, was that my kids would be involved in a band or orchestra, to play instruments and to play in a group. They started with violin, then piano, then wind instruments and their interest has continued through college.

The expectation that her children would be involved in music reflects the desire to provide structured opportunities. Lareau explains how parents who adopt the concerted cultivation approach often build in extracurricular activities to enhance their child's education and development and to contribute to a daily routine. Another upper-class parent commented on the importance of fostering an "appreciation for the role of the arts in personal life and an interest in supporting the arts as a consumer as well as a producer." This quote expresses the value of supporting the arts as a community member in society. Becker explains the importance of the arts in society and believes that all parts of art—distribution, production, *and* consumption are part of a broader collective action. It is interesting to note the use of language by upper-class respondents. There is a greater emphasis on the skill-set that can be enhanced through music learning. Conversely, many middle-class survey responses stressed the importance of having an appreciation and love for music so that the arts could continue to be supported and recognized in society. Many of the upper-class respondents used language in their responses that reflected their desire to provide their children with a well-rounded and structured education.

In addition to the reasons for music study, parents were asked to comment on the kinds of values learning an instrument instills. Although many scholars provide their own explanation of these values, I wanted to learn how parents perceived music education. Discipline and perseverance were unanimously emphasized. Many parents added the importance of developing a sense of community that is formed through music and the value of playing with others. Other commonly listed values were self-expression, work ethic, concentration, coordination, creativity, enjoyment, increased confidence, poise, leadership, commitment to learning, and achievement.

Nearly all parents mentioned the joy that music brings and the value of having an appreciation and love for the arts and music. Some parents commented on the benefits that music can have on child development. One parent stressed the importance of music in nurturing a well-rounded child. “Generally speaking, music education is a vital part of developing the whole child and enriches their way into adulthood.” This is a significant quote because it emphasizes the role extracurricular activities have in creating a well-rounded child. Some of the respondents emphasize the importance of having exposure to the arts at a young age, while other parents mentioned the benefits of having an adult role model and the rapport that builds between student and teacher.

I think that music education is extremely important for children. They do receive some in school but I value the one-on-one relationship between the teacher and student. I feel that they benefit more from having private time to explore with the music in the direction that they want to go. I also think the structure is wonderful as well. It is great to have another trusted adult that they can look up to and emulate.

Lareau stresses that many children that are raised using the concerted cultivation method are comfortable socializing with adults. Providing settings where students frequently socialize with their elders allows children to easily and comfortably interact with adults. The preceding quote is representative of this tendency.

Very few parents commented on the stigma associated with classical music. Perhaps this is because most respondents were well-versed in the arts and felt comfortable reaching out to find opportunities for their children to further their music education. However, one parent commented on the way her daughter was criticized for playing classical music by her peers in the public school.

My daughter thrived with the flute early in school, was bullied in public school by older girls who resented her talent, so, she dropped it and switched to string instruments.

The child's experience in school is an example of the preconceived ideas people have about classical music. Although the motivations for the bullying were unclear, the stigma associated with learning the flute caused the student to switch to a stringed instrument.

There was no survey question that asked about the affordability of music instruction at the Music School, however one respondent commented on how the expense of lessons forced her to stop paying for her child's music education. She was not offered scholarship from the school and could not afford to continue paying for her child's lessons. The experience that the parent shared is important because it raises the question of affordability. The parent mentions how the lessons became too expensive, even for a middle-class family.

We enrolled two of our under-10 aged kids in lessons and it became prohibitively expensive relative to the amount of time we expected that we would continue enrolling our children in the program in order for them to get a good footing in terms of piano comfort/proficiency.

Although Rockport is a wealthy town, there are many surrounding rural towns that are much less well off. Despite the music school's commitment to providing scholarship to those in need, the cost of lessons still serves as a barrier for some families that cannot afford to pay the cost of weekly lessons.

If scholarships by Bay Chamber are made available to children, they are not extended in any meaningful way to children of upper-middle-class, working parents for whom the fees charged are still too high in light of the array of other activity costs charged throughout the Camden-Rockport area. If music education, even, top-tier music education, wants to more prominently/extensively establish itself in the community, it needs to be made more affordable for all (not just the children of parents who prioritize it to the exclusion of all other educational offerings).

The above quote is an important reminder of the way music lessons can seem unaffordable, even to middle class parents who want to provide their children with more than one extracurricular activity. Perhaps organizations like the Bay Chamber Music School need to consider the affordability of their programs to middle class families, in addition to families that are living near the poverty line.

The preceding responses and explanations help define why parents provide music education to their children. Respondents pointed to the many different ways they began to provide music instruction to their children. Some parents knew that they wanted to expose their children to music and others allowed their children to begin lessons because they showed an interest in music at a young age. Parents felt that music would enhance the education of their children by providing an opportunity to develop skills like discipline, cooperation, motivation, work ethic, and focus. Parents also emphasized the sense of community and joy that music can bring, the importance of music as a mode of self-expression and self-fulfillment, and the value of building an appreciation and respect for the arts through the hard work of learning an instrument. In the words of one parent, “music is a way of giving to others and bringing beauty into the world.”

The work of Lareau is referenced frequently throughout this paper because of her compelling and widely cited argument for different strategies of childrearing. Her work supports the conclusion that concerted cultivation can lead to music education. However, one study by Brändström provides additional insight about the propensity of students to study music. In his article *Music Education as Investment in Cultural Capital*, Brändström (1999) examines how middle school aged students in Sweden engage with music through participation in music schools and generally in their everyday lives. He concludes that there are socio-cultural

predispositions that explain why certain children gravitate toward the study of an instrument. For example, familial support and a basic appreciation for music were important factors for determining a student's interest in learning music. In addition, he argues that one's habitus plays a prominent role in a student's attraction to music. Like Lareau, Brändström argues that cultural capital plays an important role in access to music. We can see this reflected in many of the comments from parents that took the survey.

What follows is a second case study that focuses on several music programs for youth in the Oberlin area in Ohio. I interviewed two professors of music education at Oberlin. In addition to their teaching responsibilities at the conservatory, they both run their own education initiatives that are separate from the college and that reach out to the young generation of musicians in the surrounding area. The interviews emphasize the importance of music learning in the lives of children.

Case Study: NOYO, MusicPlay, and the Community Music School

There are many opportunities for music study in Oberlin. The Conservatory of Music houses several different education programs for young, pre-college students. The Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra Program (NOYO) has been offering orchestra training to youth since 1969. The program provides ensemble experience to students between the ages of eight and twenty-two in Oberlin and the surrounding area—from Toledo to Cleveland. The program obtains financial assistance for the organization from grants, foundations, and revenue earned from tuition payments. Many of the instructors and coaches also teach at Oberlin. According to the most recent census data, Oberlin has a population of about 8,300 and the median household income is \$48,336. However, 25% of the community is below the poverty line. The median income figure is high in part because of Oberlin College professors that live in the community. Only three public schools in Lorain County offer strings programs beginning in fifth or sixth grade. The schools let students choose their instrument and provide instruments for the students to play. The NOYO program serves as an interesting contrast to the Bay Chamber Music School because it has been a fixture in the community for such a long time (for over 45 years). Costs to participate in the orchestra are less than at the Bay Chamber music school. The fee for joining NOYO is \$300 for the year as opposed to \$350-\$550 per year at the Bay Chamber music school. Financial aid at NOYO is awarded based on need. In addition to the NOYO program, there is a community music school that provides private instruction to instrumental students of all ages. One-hour private lessons in all instruments at the Community Music School cost \$42 per hour, compared to \$62 at Bay Chamber, however need-based scholarships are awarded to qualifying students. In addition to private lessons, the school offers classes in eurhythmics, music theory, chamber music, and a summer music camp.

I interviewed Dr. Joanne Erwin—a professor of music education at Oberlin Conservatory. She served as the artistic director and conductor of NOYO for twenty-two years and is currently on the advisory board. We spoke about the merits of a music education. Erwin expresses similar sentiments to Gilda’s about the value of music education and the opportunity for collaboration.

Music education is a lifelong enriching activity. I especially appreciate the human interaction in ensembles. With the electronic age and people becoming so much more retracted to their own personal electronic devices and even with schooling being much more computer based, I see music and the PE class to be the place where kids can still have some human interaction and experience “how do you deal with other people?” kind of issues.

She also comments on the “intrinsic joy” of participating in something that yields results that one can see and hear. She explains how music teaches students that putting effort into something will lead to progress and self-satisfaction. She believes that these principles can be transferred to anything in life. In addition to the NOYO program, Oberlin houses a string preparatory program where students from the community take private lessons from conservatory students. Lessons cost fifteen dollars per hour. Partial scholarships are available and are awarded to approximately one fifth of students enrolled in the program. Many students who study with a private teacher are also involved in the NOYO programs. Erwin commented on the steps that NOYO takes to reach out into the wider community.

We do outreach concerts in a variety of places, like at the county fair and at festivals. We have kids stand out on the streets during Family Fun Day and we do a petting zoo, where we let them all try to play the instruments. We do school tours, where we go play in the schools and we play a variety of music, it’s not just classical music.

The quote demonstrates some of the ways music is brought into the wider community to raise awareness about education programs that offer music instruction. NOYO emphasizes to families

that money should not be a barrier to participating. However, money does not act as the only impediment to music access. Erwin comments on how to attract underserved populations to classical music. In her experience, families have reservations about private instruction that have little to do with the cost itself.

I think it's not that low-income families can't [afford private lessons], it's more are they interested? The interest really has to be right in front of them. So I think it is really about accessibility. The comment I get most often is, "Oberlin is really far away." When I actually get them to come here for something they are like, "Oh, that's not so far." But, for some it is transportation. Some families don't even have a car so they can't get here.

Erwin highlights various barriers to studying classical music. She emphasizes how many families are worried about the distance of travel or being too far removed from the music community. Erwin touches on an important point about why some lower class families may be unaware of music programs in the community.

In addition to distance being a barrier to music classes, Erwin explains that perhaps some families have not developed an interest in or awareness of classical music. There are many reasons why some families lack an initiative to explore the arts. Bernstein (1971) provides a theoretical paradigm that compares different forms of childhood socialization and what kinds of socialization that lead to upward mobility. She distinguishes between two general types of codes—elaborate and restrictive—that mediate childhood socialization and give it either context-specific or context-free meanings. The elaborate code is universalistic and is specific to the middle and upper class. It is less tied to a specific context and upper class children tend to speak and think in it. The elaborate code corresponds to nonspecific rules in socialization and is suited to the generalization and attribution of universal meaning. Restricted codes on the other hand, are particularistic and are more endemic to working class children. They enforce context-specific or context-bound meanings. The two codes create differences in the ability of children

to adequately socialize in different environments. Lower class children are not able to comfortably express themselves outside of the localized context they are used to. Conversely, upper class children are able to navigate different social realms and environments. This gives upper class children the means and access to advance in society, but creates disadvantages for lower class children. The restricted code may help to explain why lower class children are less likely to develop an interest in classical music. There are fewer possibilities and opportunities in their environment that would create an incentive to step outside their local surrounding—one that is familiar, comfortable, and safe. This may also be true for parents, who may be unfamiliar with the codes and less likely to encourage their children to participate. Factors such as travel distance, may act as an excuse for the parents not wanting to involve their kids.

Later on in our conversation, Erwin talked about the skills and values that studying an instrument teaches. Erwin comments on the intrinsic joy of doing something that produces a result one can see and hear.

Students learn how hard work and perseverance can lead to pleasing results—they learn that if you put effort and time into something you can see improvement. This is an important form of recognition that can be applied to many different components of life.

The many skills learned from studying music that Erwin highlighted can be related to Belfiore and Bennett's (2008) discussion of the transformative power of music. The authors offer evidence that learning an instrument can have positive ramifications in other areas of a student's life, beyond the subject of music. This point about the impact of music was widely acknowledged in the survey responses discussed earlier.

My conversation with Erwin highlights the struggle of many arts education programs to be recognized by the wider community. There are several barriers that stand in the way of studying music. In addition to cost, Erwin mentioned concerns about distance and a general lack

of awareness from underserved communities. This may have to do with a lack of cultural capital that prevents music from being a consideration among some families. Lareau and Bernstein discuss values that are endemic to families with more cultural capital. Perhaps lower-class families do not emphasize exposing their children to the arts because they possess different forms of cultural capital. Those raising their children using the natural growth approach would be less likely to support structured extracurricular activities for their children than parents using concerted cultivation.

In addition to interviewing Erwin, I met with Dr. Peggy Bennett—a professor of music education at Oberlin Conservatory. Bennett oversees several music outreach initiatives in the Oberlin area. Her insight and experience with education are invaluable and helped to inform my own research. Like Erwin, Bennett is involved in the Community Music School at Oberlin. She teaches an early childhood class called MusicPlay for children between the ages of three and five. Classes are offered once per week in two separate sessions attended by children and their parents. Each forty-five minute class costs five dollars and there are twelve classes offered each semester. Bennett's classes have a unique approach that focuses on the fun in music.

I take an approach that is based on playfulness. I believe the best learning happens when children feel safe, when they feel respected, when they are treated with dignity and when they are totally engaged in playfulness with their bodies, their voices, their minds, their eyes, and their ears. Sometimes that playfulness is actually a singing game that we use and sometimes it is even reading activities that are just treated as a puzzle for them.

Bennett is deeply invested in bringing music to the young generation. Her classes are upbeat and emphasize the joy that comes with music making. Bennett believes that music should be a vital part of one's education.

I believe everybody should study music and the best place to start is in childhood. And when I say study music I am not necessarily meaning studying music in order to be a soloist on a concert stage. In my opinion studying music can be

toward the goal of becoming a music maker. That is what the children are that I work with—they know how to make music.

This is an important point because it raises the issue of elitism and genius in music that was mentioned earlier in the literature review. There is a common perception that music can only be made by people with talent. However, Bennett stresses that everyone can make music even if it is just through simple song. Through her work, Bennett is trying to break down a stigma that causes people to question whether or not they can be music makers.

Bennett also discusses the benefits of private instruction. She believes that there is merit in studying an instrument one-on-one with a teacher because of the close personal attention that the teacher can give to the students—a rare thing for most kids. This is also something mentioned in the survey responses.

It is wonderful to get private lessons and it seems important to bring that whole private lesson experience into fruition if there is an ensemble for a student to play in. But aside from that, what students get from private study is that personal attention. It is like having a personal trainer, rather than going to exercise class where the person leading the class isn't necessarily looking at you. But with a personal trainer he or she is watching to make sure you are doing it accurately and correctly so that you don't develop health problems and monitoring what you can and cannot do.

The quote emphasizes the way teachers can carefully guide students by giving them personal attention. Bennett also commented on instruments of study that are less talked about such as drums and guitar. She emphasized how many schools are trying to offer programs that are tailored to the interest and cultural background of the student population. For example, some public schools in the southern United States are introducing mariachi bands into their music programs. This allows kids to experience either less traditional kinds of music or more culturally relevant music, depending on the location of the school and the cultural demographic of the surrounding community. Bennett tries to incorporate these ideas into her own teaching. In her

MusicPlay classes she exposes her students to many different styles of music like world, folk, classical, and popular music. This allows students to learn how to distinguish between the sounds of different musical genres.

Our conversation turned to the question of accessibility of and exposure to music in the wider community. Bennett does not advertise her MusicPlay program because enough families learn about it through word of mouth to fill each class. Because of this, the classes attract parents that are already invested in the education of their children. This may be a problem because if low-income parents are not accustomed to the classical music network, it is less likely they would be informed about the program. This social capital and networking issue may be an important factor in the process of accessibility. Bennett commented on the reality that many families are not thinking about the benefits of a music education. However, underserved families may not know where to turn to become informed.

Bennett is optimistic about the future of classical music. She commented on the many organizations in places throughout the U.S. that are working to lift the barriers that keep people from approaching classical music. Many institutions are offering classes at a cost that is initially affordable, but also offering scholarship for those who still struggle to pay. Bennett mentioned several impediments she has noticed that keep people from engaging in music.

Barriers could be the finances themselves. Another could be location of a facility that is near and accessible to them. Another could be the time that it takes from the very busy and fatigued parent to bring the child to the facility and stay there with the child. Another can be knowing the value of that, to the child. Frankly, I think some parents bring their children to Music Play because they think their child has a natural inclination toward music. Some people bring their child to Music Play because they just want them to do music, even though they may not think about what that means. Others may have actually seen the array of responsiveness that is targeted and stimulated when the child is in music class. And still others bring their child to Music Play simply because the child loves it.

Bennett makes an important point about the time commitment on the part of parents in supporting and nurturing a child's music education. Many single, working parents cannot carve out the time to bring their children to music classes. This is an important factor that was not mentioned in the other interviews.

Both Bennett and Erwin emphasize the benefits of a music education but they also acknowledge barriers that stand in the way of learning an instrument. Some barriers are social and relate to the kind of cultural capital that informs childrearing strategies. Some parents are more inclined to look for extracurricular activities that will enhance the education of their child, while others give their children the independence to explore the world without as much guidance. Other more practical barriers include the cost of music lessons, the distance it takes to travel to the site of instruction, and also the time commitment on the part of the parents. In addition, Bennett and Erwin allude to the way social stigma may prevent some families from engaging with classical music. The observations and experiences of Bennett and Erwin reflect many of the ideas that are synthesized in the literature review and the insight gathered from survey responses, however their personal reflections offer insights into some of the challenges facing classical music in the United States.

The Bay Chamber Music School and the programs affiliated with Oberlin Conservatory are important educational resources in their respective communities. Both programs are struggling to become recognized in the larger community and both are working to bring community engagement programs to the public schools and to a broader population. There are several notable differences between the two programs. The Bay Chamber education program is more expensive than the Oberlin programs. This may reflect the demographic of the two communities that each school serves because Rockport is a much wealthier town than Oberlin.

The programs in Oberlin attract a larger number of students and offer a wider range of classes. Both programs struggle to gain recognition in their respective communities. However, it is clear from each interview, that the programs in Maine and Ohio are trying to bring music to a more varied population. Bennett, Kelly, Joffe, and Erwin emphasized the value of learning a musical instrument and the joy that music can bring to children. In addition, they describe the poor accessibility of music to underserved families and highlight the ways they are trying to gather participation and interest from the wider community.

Conclusion

The equality of music education for children from different social classes and types of upbringings is an important consideration when thinking about the role of classical music and the arts in society. In hindsight, my research has reaffirmed the reality that culture is hierarchical. Some members of society are perceived to be a part of an elite or privileged group that is “superior” in their ideas of what art means. Other sections of society have less cultural capital, which serves as a barrier to access music and other mediums of art. Though there may be some conventions of art that only well-socialized members of society can enjoy, people who have little familiarity with art can still enjoy a concert or experience positive benefits, if given the opportunity to study music. Bourdieu argues that “a work of art only exists as such for a person who has the means to appropriate it, or in other words, to decipher it” (Bourdieu, 1873). Although his ideas may be debatable, every person should be given the tools to enjoy and experience art in a serious, meaningful, and tangible way. Education seems to be the most important determinant of arts involvement but if there are no opportunities available for children to engage in music then there is no way to further education.

It is interesting to compare large-scale social movements like El Sistema, with the missions of smaller education organizations like the Bay Chamber Music School. The El Sistema model is able to impact thousands of people in a way that does not discriminate against social class. Students in the El Sistema programs spend many hours a day receiving instruction and playing music with their friends. El Sistema is an important fixture in the South American communities and makes studying music a commonplace activity. Conversely, programs like the Bay Chamber Music School are much farther removed from the community. Students must pay separately for each activity such as private lessons, chamber ensemble coachings, and orchestra.

Most families commute a distance to the school for each class. Although students can receive excellent instruction, music study is considered to be an extracurricular activity that is not a necessary component of one's education. At the other extreme, are public school music programs, which offer one or two hours of music class each week—usually in the limited form of chorus or band. There should be a melding of all three approaches that includes more support for music in the public school systems coupled with greater collaboration between the public schools and private music education organizations so that all children can receive good training in public school, but also have access to private teachers for more serious study.

Although I was fortunate to have many resources to draw on to support and enhance my research, there are several aspects of the project I would approach differently in hindsight. The results of the survey were telling and constructive, however there are additional questions I wish I had included. If I had an opportunity to distribute a list of follow-up questions, they would inquire about education level and whether or not parents received financial assistance to help defray the cost of music classes at the music school. Data from these two questions would allow me to conduct a more thorough statistical analysis to find deeper relationships and correlations among variables. In addition, I would have liked to have the opportunity to administer a survey to the parents of students enrolled in the Oberlin music programs. It would be interesting to compare responses based on the different demographics of the two communities.

My hope is that the research and observations highlighted in this paper will help to inform how people think about the way classical music fits into society. There are many preconceptions about classical music, but the research highlights where many of these ideas originate. Perhaps we can begin to move away from the conception that classical music is most apt for a specific sliver of society. I have seen first-hand the effects music can have on

underserved communities in other parts of the world; it is a shame that in a country as wealthy as the United States, there is so little value and support for the arts. It is clear that everyone deserves an opportunity to experience the joy and beauty of the arts and the many benefits that come along with the participation and exposure to classical music.

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Appendix

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Gender

1. Female
2. Male

2. Race

1. White
2. Black
3. Asian
4. Native Hawaiian
5. American Indian
6. Latino or Hispanic
7. Other

3. What is your approximate average household income?

1. \$0-\$24,999
2. \$25,000-\$49,999
3. \$50,000-\$74,999
4. \$75,000-\$99,999
5. \$100,000-\$124,999
6. \$125,000-\$149,999
7. \$150,000-\$174,999
8. \$175,000-\$199,999
9. \$200,000 and up

4. How far is your commute to the Bay Chamber Music School?

1. Under 5 miles
2. Between 5 and 10 miles
3. Between 10 and 15 miles
4. Between 15 and 20 miles
5. Between 20 and 25 miles
6. Between 25 and 30 miles
7. Over 30 miles
8. Other (please specify)

5. How did you learn about Bay Chamber's Music School?

1. Email
2. Newspaper
3. Internet Search
4. Website
5. Family/Friend
6. Other

6. How important do you think music education is to your child's education?

1. Not Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Very Important

7. Why did you decide to enroll your child in music lessons?

8. What values (if any) do you hope a music education will instill in your child?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

General Information about Participant and Organization

- How did you come to work for Bay Chamber/Oberlin?
- What aspects of your job do you enjoy the most?
- What is the mission of Bay Chamber/Oberlin?
- Can you tell me why the education program was founded? What population does it intend to serve?
- How many students participate in your program?
- What kinds of programs do you offer for youth?
- Can you tell me about the progression of programs you offer in any given week?
- Do you offer any summer programs for community members? If yes, can you tell me a little bit about them?

Program Accessibility

- How much does it cost to study privately? To play in the orchestra?
- How many students receive a scholarship to participate in your programs?
- How many scholarships do you award annually, and for how much?
- Tell me about a time when you had to turn someone away because they could not afford. How often does this happen?
- How do your prices compare to similar education programs in the area?
- What steps does your organization take to make the education programs more accessible?

Community Engagement

- Could you talk about the kinds of community engagement projects you promote?
- What kind of feedback do you receive from community members who participate in the programs you offer?
- In an ideal world, what would community engagement look like?
- What kind of collaboration takes place between your organization and the local public school system?

Music Education

- What is the value of music education? Why do you think it is important?
- What are the benefits of learning to study an instrument at a young age?