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DISPELLING THE MYTH OF THE NON-SINGER:
CHANGING THE WAYS SINGING IS PERCEIVED, IMPLEMENTED
AND NURTURED IN THE CLASSROOM

A DISSERTATION

Submitted by

LOUISE M. PASCALE

In Partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

LESLEY UNIVERSITY

May 20
2002

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There is a wise African saying that reminds us that “it takes a village to raise a child.” Throughout the process of writing this dissertation, I was similarly reminded that it takes a village of family and friends to “raise this dissertation.” There are many in the village I would like thank.

A huge bundle of gratitude goes to the village elder, my mother Marian Gamble. She instilled in me a life-long love of music, supported me emotionally and financially, held a never-faltering belief that I could do it, and relentlessly pushed me to finish so she could sit in the front row at graduation.

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ABSTRACT

DISPELLING THE MYTH OF THE NON-SINGER: CHANGING THE WAYS SINGING IS PERCEIVED, IMPLEMENTED AND NURTURED IN SCHOOLS

Many American classroom teachers fervently claim not to be able to sing and are considered “non-singers.” Studies reported here reveal a paradox: put in a context where singing is approached from another perspective, those same people can and do sing. How did they come to think of themselves otherwise?

A close look at the terms “singer” and “singing” reveals the ways in which the meanings of these words are socially and culturally constructed. The consequences of the teachers as “non-singer” is examined, particularly as it relates to music education and general singing in school. Some of the problem lies in the roots of music education, based in a western classical music tradition reflecting an aesthetic that values improving vocal technique, reading notes and performing. My study shows that when singing is redefined in broader terms derived from community singing (a new aesthetic) the “non-singer” becomes a myth. Approaches are suggested for creating schools that nurture and thrive on an environment in which everyone sings and everyone is a singer.

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Introduction

I entered the Music Workshop course with trepidation. Of all the courses in the Creative Arts in Learning Master's program, I feared this one the most. My experiences with music have always been negative ones. As I entered the classroom, memories surfaced of the time I was told to mouth the words so I would not throw the rest of the class off key and when I was laughed off the stage after and friend and I attempted a rendition of "Rolling Over the Billows." After that, was convinced I should not sing.
(K. Gillette, fifth grade teacher, final paper, March 25, 2001, Boise, ID.)

Purpose of This Study

Everyone has strong feelings about "singing."¹ It is not a neutral subject. In my experience, the minute the concept of "singing" is brought up, anyone involved in the conversation personalizes it and is eager to share stories about their singing ability and to express their opinions about whether or not they qualify as a "singer."

It is common for the reactions to be extreme. Some people shy completely away from singing, to the point of running from the room at the mere suggestion that they might be asked to participate in singing in public. Others have an opposite reaction and experience singing as an enjoyable activity. These people "know" they can sing and are confident they are "singers."

This research study stems from a paradox with which I was confronted. In my experience working with teachers, most of whom are the ones who "run from

¹ I differentiate two meanings of singing. "Singing" (in quotes) refers to the larger concept of singing and how people conceive singing. Singing (without quotes) refers to the activity itself.

the room” at the thought of having to sing, I discovered, that after a short time, they were singing despite the fact that they kept telling me they couldn’t. It occurred to me that this “phenomenon of the non-singer” was, in fact, simply a myth and that it would be, for many reasons, beneficial to dispel it. I created this study partly to do just that.²

The primary purpose of this study is to present a case and a viable process for changing the ways “singing” is perceived and implemented in schools across the United States. Classroom teachers, music specialists and their relationship to each other and to singing in schools are my focus. This study creates, through the research presented and literature reviewed, a strong argument for making significant pedagogical and philosophical shifts in ways singing in schools is currently considered.

In order for this change to occur and the paradigm shift to become a reality, the first step to take is to understand the phenomenon of the “non-singer.” What does “non-singer” mean? Where do beliefs about singing originate? Why do the majority of classroom teachers not sing with their students?

“Singing,” as it applies to education, must be conceived in broader terms, viewed through multiple perspectives, and valued in aesthetic terms that go beyond the traditional framework. Historically, music education has defined “singing” through the perspective of western classical music that values

² The term “non-singer” is not exclusively mine. It is referred to at times in music education books, such as *Get America Singing....Again*, (MENC, 1996) but rather than considering it, as I do, as a phenomenon that deserves further investigation, research and study, it is thought of in most sources as a problem that needs fixing.

performance, perfection and virtuosity. I'm suggesting another aesthetic for "singing" which values diversity, individuality, group collaboration and relationships. I want to dispel the myth of the "non-singer." This other aesthetic eventually leads to the creation of a school community where everyone sings because everyone knows she/he is a singer. The implications are far-reaching. An educational community is created where every voice can be heard, every perspective appreciated, and every member of the community valued.

It is my belief that we are all singers. Those who identify themselves as "non-singers" do so as a result of the cultural and societal messages they have received over time about what it means to be a "singer" or to "sing." Their voices have been silenced not because of faulty or defective vocal chords, but based on unexamined decisions, determined through one's culture and societal perspectives, about what constitutes a "singer" and what it means to sing.

My experience working with music in a wide range of educational communities for the past three decades has shown that, when given the choice, and when singing is redefined and experienced through a new perspective, people sing. The Boise teacher quoted at the beginning of this chapter proves this point and provides a good example of the transformational process. At the conclusion of the forty-five hour music course³ she confesses,

We sang together and I found myself saying, "Hey, this isn't so painful after all." At first I admit that I did sing very quietly so no one could hear me, but I slowly released my voice from its thirty-year self-imposed confinement and found I was soon singing out so anyone could hear me. I felt overcome with joy. I have changed my idea of

³ The course, *The Music Workshop*, is a required component of the Creative Arts in Learning Master's in Education program at Lesley University.

what singing is and this has left me with the desire to explore my personal musical possibilities and share them with my students. (K. Gillette, fifth grade teacher, final paper, March 25, 2001, Boise, ID.)

Personal Experiences that Influenced This Study

I've always thought of myself as a "singer" and certainly never labeled myself a "non-singer." I always had positive experiences with singing and grew up in a family who sang together. As a family, we sang in the car and, since my mother played the piano and my father played the violin, I participated in a lot of music-making at home. Singing was also part of my school, church, and summer camp experiences. In my professional life as a teacher, I have always included singing as an integral part of my pedagogical practice.

At present, I teach adults, most of them teachers, but prior to working with teachers, I spent many years⁴ working as a music specialist with children of varying ages and abilities. The classroom teachers with whom I worked expected me to sing with their students as well as engage them in other musical activities. Most typically, they did not participate, using the excuse that they couldn't sing. I found that the teachers I worked with would eagerly await my arrival and often express gratitude to me for providing musical experiences for their students, explaining to me that I was delivering a needed service that they felt they were incapable of offering.

I spent many years feeling quite satisfied with this arrangement. I was pleased with the teachers' interest in music and believed I was, after all,

⁴ My professional work has been as artist-in-resident, music specialist, classroom teacher and teacher trainer.

delivering a fundamental service that would otherwise not be offered. It never occurred to me to inquire about the teachers' lack of confidence in their own musical ability or about the insecurity each of them confessed to having about their own singing, or their singing with their students.

In all honesty, this scenario worked to my benefit. Music specialists, myself included at that point, often spend inordinate amounts of time defending their position as music specialists, worrying that their jobs will be seen as unnecessary or unimportant and thus be cut from the school budget. I was grateful that the classroom teachers with whom I worked made it clear that I was offering a service that they themselves could not provide, and their testimonies provided the important rationale I needed to insure my continued employment.

I made note of the fact that classroom teachers were not singing but I didn't spend any energy attempting to change the situation. The classroom teachers treated me as the "specialist." They presumed that I had more experience and training in teaching children to sing than they did and therefore the "job" of singing was left to me. That job, they told me, was not the responsibility of the general classroom teacher.

Most often, classroom teachers left the room when I arrived. They did not feel comfortable participating, and were embarrassed to sing with their students, believing they were unmusical. I heard similar stories from other musical specialists who seemed resigned to this situation and believed it was unchangeable. I was reminded that this attitude of resignation is still alive and well during a recent conversation with the Music Education Department Head

from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He made it quite clear to me that it was next to impossible to change the attitudes of music specialists or classroom teachers around the concept of singing.

As my work shifted from working with children to working with adults (primarily teachers), my attitude about the non-singing classroom teachers shifted as well. For the past fifteen years I have almost exclusively taught teachers, through venues such as professional development workshops and/or graduate school programs.

Whatever course I teach, I always include singing as a major component of my teaching practice. For example, when I teach the first course of the Master's program, *Integrating the Arts into the Curriculum*, one of my main goals is to build a cohesive community of participants, since the students who enroll in this program form a cohort that works together for eighteen-months.

We begin the day with a song. I interject singing games throughout the weekend course to pick up the energy and bring the group together and we always end with a song. In my other courses I use singing for reasons such as building morale, strengthening the class community, enhancing listening, providing cultural awareness, enhancing cooperation and raising the spirit and energy of each individual and the group.

Over time, as my work with teachers has developed and transformed, my philosophy about singing has broadened and been redefined. When my role was no longer the music specialist, my perceptions shifted about who can sing and how and why singing should occur as an everyday classroom activity, led not

only by the music specialist but also by the classroom teacher. I have become deeply committed to engaging everyone in the act of singing and, therefore, I introduce every group of teachers to a variety of singing activities.

Instead of ignoring or dismissing the “non-singer,” as I had previously done in my role as the music specialist, I am now very interested in broadening classroom teachers’ and music specialists’ perceptions about “singing.” In the process of accomplishing this task, I continue to gather more and more information, particularly from classroom teachers, about their feelings and beliefs about “singing.”

These experiences have led me to be more and more interested in finding out why teachers are not singing with their students. What stops them? Why and how did they determine they couldn’t sing? Each time I work with a new group of teachers, I personally witness the enormous benefits of having everyone sing together. We simply sing together and as we do so the group dynamics change and a positive energy is created. We become an ensemble, aware of one another and carefully listening to one another.

As part of my teaching practice when we sing together, I quite deliberately do not put any emphasis on enhancing technical musical skills or learning voice technique. I do not use special musical terms that might tend to alienate those unfamiliar with musical jargon. I concluded, after working with many, many teachers that most classroom teachers do recognize the value in singing together and believe it needs to be included, not only as part of the music curriculum, but part of the general classroom curriculum. The task I set for myself was to

unravel the meaning of the “non-singer,” to find out why they thought they couldn’t sing and to develop a way to get them all singing with their students. Once I imagined the possibility of more students and teachers singing together in their classrooms, and the possibility of the entire school becoming a singing community, I was determined to develop viable strategies for turning the possibilities into realities.

Identification of the Problem

In the past, when I worked with a group of teachers and they quite literally bombarded me with what they hoped were convincing non-singer statements, my first impulse was to persuade them otherwise, trying desperately to negate any bad feelings or beliefs they might have about singing. But I discovered that they were equally as determined to persuade me that what they were telling me was undeniably true; they *really* couldn’t sing. Their incredible sense of knowing about their lack of singing ability made a profound impact on me. They were certain, without doubt that they were “non-singers.”

With each new group, I faced exactly the same scenario: teachers tried to convince me they couldn’t sing and I tried to convince them that they could. I tried assigning a book for them to read that strongly advocates that everyone is a singer. But they were unconvinced. They simply “couldn’t sing” and they resisted changing their attitude.

Finally, my curiosity and frustration got the best of me. I realized I needed to find a way to make sense of this phenomenon, first simply to understand it and

second to change it, or help shift the paradigm in a substantial way.

As soon as I took time to really ponder the problem, I recognized that I actually had no idea what the teachers meant when they said they couldn't sing. They spoke from an experience that was completely unfamiliar to me. As I mentioned earlier, I had never defined myself as a "non-singer." I needed to find a way to understand what was underneath the meaning of phrases such as "I can't sing" or "I don't have a voice." What in the world could those statements really mean?

The situation was even more perplexing because, as mentioned earlier, the paradox I faced was this: despite a lack of confidence about singing, in the case of every group of teachers I worked with, I *witnessed them singing*. They participated in the singing activities. From my perspective, they all *sang* and thus, at least for me, they all qualified as "*singers*." Our voices blended together and we became a harmonious group.

On the one hand, the teachers were telling me they couldn't sing; they were resigned to this fact and as a result would never consider singing with their students. On the other, at least from my perception, they could and did sing. In order to shift this situation, I knew I needed to do more than simply "convince" them they were singers. It was becoming clear to me that my definition of a "singer" differed from theirs and I needed to understand their meaning in order to help change their attitude and perceptions.

The Research Study Sequence

I began a process of searching for a deeper understanding of “the phenomenon of the “non-singer.” This is described in-depth in SECTION ONE: The Essential Meaning of the Non-Singer.” I created a set of questions for those who thought they couldn’t sing: What do you mean when you say you are a “non-singer?” How do you “know” you can’t sing? What is it exactly that you can’t do? Why do you say things like, “I really don’t have a voice?” and Where do you think these beliefs came from?

I wanted to examine the component parts of the word “non-singer,” hoping it would provide insights not only into what “non-singer” meant but also “singer.” In conjunction with the information I was gathering from the teachers, I began to read about the role of singing in education. I attended music education conferences and read conference proceedings, eager to discover any and all references to singing in the classroom or recognition of this problem.

The conclusions reached from the research on the meaning of singing led logically into another research study. In the second study I examined the meaning of “singing” from other cultural perspectives. The data from the second research study and my experience in Ghana are presented in SECTION TWO: Singing in Cultural Contexts.

I wanted to hear from people whose experiences with singing were formulated outside a western framework. How is singing defined from a non-western framework? Do other cultures have non-singers? To broaden this cultural analysis, I relate my own experience studying music in Ghana when I

faced the task of learning music of another culture. My personal experience provides evidence that reinforces the fact that culture and society provide powerful messages in understanding a concept such as “singing.”

The next step in the process was to find out what role singing played in United States school settings in the past and present. **SECTION THREE:** *Singing In Public Education* explores the roots singing in America’s public schools. How and in what ways did music become part of public education? How did music educators define singing? How did they perceive the role of singing in educational settings? Did they perceive a role for the classroom teacher in singing with children?

The community singing model, which occurs in various forms throughout the history of the United States, emerges from the historical review and becomes a useful model for considering singing from another perspective. **SECTION FOUR:** *Community Singing* presents a history and analysis of community singing and outlines ways its attributes help to formulate the articulation of another aesthetic for singing in schools.

Although music educators are certainly very committed to getting every child to sing, I quite quickly recognized that the pedagogical methodologies used to accomplish that goal differ greatly from those I practice with teachers. This difference, I soon came to realize, stems from a difference in perception around the activity of singing.

An example of this contrast is an experience I had in a local elementary school in the Boston area. This experience, for me, was crucial in developing my

study. I was then a visiting artist-in-resident and spent one day per week at this school, singing with various classrooms. On one occasion the head of the music department and I were walking through the hallways and we heard the voices of young children, singing in one of the classrooms. Immediately the music specialist turned to me and said with disdain, "Don't you just hate that."

"Hate what?" said I.

"That singing," she said. "They're out of tune. They sound terrible. I wish the teacher would not sing with them at all and leave that job to the music teacher."

I was shocked by her statement and simply turned to her and said. "I don't hate it at all. I'm glad they're singing. They sound great to me."

It was perhaps that moment that was the turning point for me. I realized I perceived the singing in a very different way than most music specialists and my pedagogical approach to singing differed greatly as well. Not only did I think the children sounded fine, I was also overjoyed by the fact that they were singing at all and that the classroom teacher was singing with them. I realized that the music specialist's view of singing could easily discourage most classroom teachers from uttering even the slightest musical sound.

I supported the idea that all classroom teachers should sing with their students. I also supported the idea of community singing, i.e., singing together for the sake of building an ensemble, not perfecting the voice, developing vocal range or staging a performance. I realized I had subscribed to an "aesthetic"

about singing that was not the traditional one, but one I felt needed to be recognized and valued.

SECTION FIVE: Dispelling the Myth of the Non-Singer begins with a description of a pedagogical methodology based in a new aesthetic for singing, which I find successfully dispels the myth and shifts attitudes about what it means to sing. This approach is presented in the format of a "virtual transcript" of a master class, which includes a sequence of activities, reactions of students and personal commentary about the underlying philosophy and pedagogy.

This approach provides the opportunity for teachers to experience singing in new ways. Classroom teachers who initially consider themselves "non-singers" and do not sing with their students change their attitude about singing, once it is redefined. Music specialists, who have approached singing only from a monocultural perspective, consider the possibility of expanding their approach, and recognize the value of approaching singing as seen through a wider cultural lens. They also witness the transformation of the non-singing classroom teachers, something they hitherto dismissed as impossible or important, and begin to see a benefit in supporting them.

The final chapter in this section begins with a description of the "ideal" school community, where everyone is a singer, where singing is integrated naturally into every classroom, and where more than one aesthetic for singing is valued. Following this description are suggested strategies for creating such a school environment. These strategies are directed specifically to the music specialist, classroom teacher and administrator.

Singing and other forms of music-making have intrinsic value in education with far-reaching benefits that are inhibited by a monocultural approach. Shifting the paradigm allows for every individual voice to be heard. Diverse cultures and ethnicities can be recognized and supported. The imposed silence can be broken. This new model embraces a wider perspective, providing a venue for expression of the personal voice and the group voice, and providing recognition that singing and music making is rooted in the history, culture and society of all people.

SECTION ONE

THE ESSENTIAL MEANING OF BEING A NON-SINGER

Chapter 1.1

Examination of the Words "Singer" and "Non-Singer"

Defining the Problem and Setting up the Research Project

As I have said, through my personal experience working with teachers I became more and more interested in finding out why teachers were not singing with their students. What stopped them? Why and how did they determine they couldn't sing?

As a first step, I made a list of the assumptions and preconceptions I had constructed over time, from my experience, about "singers" and "non-singers." These came from my own personal and professional history as someone who has always personally enjoyed singing and has always included singing in my professional work as a teacher. This initial step allowed me to be mindful of my preconceptions and thus hopefully more understanding of the experiences of others. The following is my list of assumptions and preconceptions:

- Non-singers are very convinced that they can't sing. They often are insistent about it.
- Non-singers often relate a story to me about a person from the past (often a music teacher) who told them they couldn't sing and kicked them out of the chorus. This negative experience caused them to stop singing and lead them to believe they couldn't sing.
- I most often hear non-singers say phrases such as:
 - "I just can't sing."
 - "I have a terrible voice."
 - "I can't carry a tune."
 - "People laugh at me when I sing."
- Non-singers seem initially unwilling to sing with a group and never want to sing alone.
- Singing is a very private activity for non-singers.
- Non-singers do not want their voice to be distinguishable in the group.

- Singing at camp is often more positive than singing in school or in church.
- I believe people who say they cannot sing, really can sing. I believe that they think they can't sing because they think they don't sound like some well-known popular singer.
- I believe non-singers have preconceived criteria about singing and decide they can't sing when they don't fit into those criteria.
- When people have been humiliated about their singing voice, they avoid singing in public.
- The non-singers I have encountered are primarily white men and women, between the ages of 20 – 60 years old.
- The non-singers I work with when I teach eventually do join in with the group and sing.

Research Methods

After naming my own assumptions and preconceptions, I set up a method to analyze what it means when some people refer to themselves as “non-singers.” I wanted to interview people who unequivocally define themselves as “non-singers.” I planned to gather data from questionnaires, interviews, and written anecdotal evidence.

I initially thought I would use a grounded theory approach for my research design. It was a method I was familiar with and I liked the idea of actually generating or discovering a theory of a phenomenon that relates to a particular situation.

However, as I read more about the phenomenological approach it seemed to be the best fit for my interests. The phenomenological research method provides a way to understand individuals by entering into their field of perception in order to see life as these individuals see it. (Bruyn 1966, p.90) In order to understand the phenomenon of the “non-singer,” I needed to interview people

who unequivocally define themselves as “non-singers” and have a lived experience with this phenomenon.

I realized, however, that, given my goals for this project, it would be impossible to stay completely within the bounds of the set structure of phenomenological research as described in several of the research texts. (Creswell 1998) (Glesne 1999) I chose to adapt the method and designed my research as a *modified* phenomenological study that included parts of a grounded theory approach as well. These modifications will be discussed in more detail at the end of this section when I share my findings, explain my insights and learnings, and reflect on how the process worked for me.

Questionnaires

In September, 1999, I created a questionnaire that I distributed to fifty-two people from two different groups. Both groups were comprised of students, ages approximately 19 – 23, primarily White, female and middle class, who were enrolled in graduate or undergraduate school.

One group of students was enrolled in an anthropology course entitled *Folks Songs as Social History* at Boston University and the second group was enrolled in a course entitled, *Using the Arts in the Classroom* at Clark University. I chose these two groups to work with because as a doctoral student and faculty member at Lesley University, I was able to regularly observe both these classes. I could easily make contact with the students over a semester-long period, set up follow-up interviews and actually observe them singing in class.

I distributed a survey to everyone in each of the two groups early in the semester, before they engaged in any singing activities with me or became acquainted with me. There were two questions on the survey: 1. What does it mean to be a singer? 2. Are you one? (Refer to Appendix A, pp.223-229 for the complete survey and all the responses.)

There were a total of nine out of the fifty-two students surveyed who stated that they were *not singers*. Of the nine people who identified themselves as “non-singers,” all were women and all were White with the exception of one. I contacted each of them and four of the nine agreed to be interviewed.

In my first analysis of the responses to the survey I noticed that, although I was searching for an understanding of what it meant to be a “non-singer,” the data provided revealing insights into the meaning of what it meant to be a “singer.” People who define themselves as “non-singers” feel they lack the qualities inherent in being a “singer.”

A “singer,” according to those who filled out the survey, needed to possess some very distinct qualities. Listed below are samples of responses from both those who considered themselves “singers” and those who considered themselves “non-singers.” Some of the respondents answered with great certainty about which category they fell under while others revealed some ambivalence about whether they were “singers” or “non-singers.”

A. Examples of responses from the survey of those who considered themselves to be "singers."

To be a singer you need to be able to: perform, be outgoing, sing on key, be willing to practice, be confident, be willing to spend time and effort on singing, project (your voice). I am a singer.

(Clark University student, 9/27/99)

A singer can exist on two different levels: professional and informal.
(Boston University student, 9/23/99)

A singer is anyone who musically expresses themselves via their voice. Yes. I think I'm a singer. Not a very good one but I sing all the time. Many people wouldn't consider me a singer because I'm not the best.

(Boston University student, 9/23/99)

Most people (myself included) would intuitively feel that "to be a singer" one should somehow be professional and/or trained in some way. I would consider myself to be a closet singer because I sing often and with the intent of using proper technique but I am not a performer.

(Boston University student, 9/23/99)

For me, a singer is someone who can relay a story to me and make me feel it. I guess I could be a singer. I have sung before, however, I am not so sure if I made anyone feel.

(Boston University student, 9/23/99)

B. Examples of responses from those who considered themselves to be "non-singers."

A singer uses music to express themselves and their feelings. I am not a singer.

(Boston University student, 9/23/99)

A singer is someone with the vocal talent to be spontaneous and take musical risks. I wish I was a singer, but my voice isn't too fantastic.

(Boston University student, 9/23/99)

You are a singer if you have a pleasant voice and people want to hear you. I sing but I am not a singer.

(Clark University student, 9/27/99)

You need to have a great voice and hold a tune. NO! (I'm not a singer.)

(Clark University student, 9/27/99)

Singers are able to follow a tune well, have a pleasant singing voice and understand music well. No. (I'm not a singer.)
(Clark University student, 9/27/99)

The responses from both the "singers" and the "non-singers" provided excellent data about ways people define a "singer" and how they see themselves fitting or not fitting into that definition. I gathered additional data from written anecdotes I had received from Lesley University students I had taught in previous courses. Their comments also provide clarity into the meaning of a "singer." Here are a few examples collected from these data.

I can't read music so I figured I was doomed. I'll never be able to sing.
(Middle school teacher, North Attleboro, MA, March 1999)

My chorus teacher in elementary school told me I was off key and couldn't be in the chorus. I was crushed and ever since that day I never sang in public.
(Fourth grade teacher, Wakefield, MA, November, 1999)

I had a teacher who told me I was an alto and needed to sing quietly. I knew that meant my voice wasn't good enough to be a soprano. I grew up thinking I could not sing and I only sang to myself so no one could hear my voice.
(Fifth/Sixth grade teacher, North Attleboro, MA, March 1999)

After gathering and reviewing the data from the questionnaires and the written anecdotes, I compiled a list of the most commonly mentioned qualities named as essential to being a "singer."

A singer is someone who:

- * is confident
- * sees singing is part of their soul
- * is innovative
- * doesn't worry about singing in front of people
- * sings to convey a message
- * sings to entertain others
- * can sing on key

- * has a song inside that must be sung
- * can relay a story musically
- * likes to sing regularly
- * uses her/his voice to make music
- * has a large repertoire of songs
- * has vocal talent
- * has a good voice
- * is able to follow the tune

- *has a pleasant voice
- *believes that people want to listen to your voice
- *can read music

- *can express themselves and their feelings
- *has a soprano voice

Interviews

After reviewing the questionnaires I selected those people who, when asked if they were a “singer,” answered unequivocally “no.” Some said they wanted to be singers and expressed regret that they did not have the qualities necessary to qualify them to be in the “singer” category. Others said they sang and considered themselves “singers” but only when they were alone, never in public. In public they were “non-singers.”

I chose four individuals to interview who represented the singing experience of the larger group I had contacted through the questionnaire. One had musical training, the other three did not. Two experienced singing in school choirs; two did not. Three sang as children, one has no memory of singing as a child. Each of the interviewees I selected described a “singer” differently and their responses were typical of those of the larger group. Each of the interviewees also had a representative range of reasons for believing they could not sing, and all were convinced without a doubt, that they were “non-singers.” (Some did not use the term “non-singer” but indicated in a clear way that they believed they could not sing.)

I met with each of them and explained my research project. I made it clear to them that this was not a requirement of the course they were enrolled in and they were free to decline to participate. They each agreed to be interviewed

and expressed an interest in the project. All four were women and all were White, with the exception of one woman who was from Barbados.

I scheduled the interviews over a three-week period and interviewed each of the four individuals for approximately 45 minutes. I tape-recorded each interview and then transcribed the recordings. I began each interview by reading their initial response to the questionnaire and then asked them to explain their response to the question on the questionnaire: "Are you a singer?"

I compiled a set of questions for the interviews and referred to it on occasion. Most of the time I created my questions based on the content and flow of each interview, keeping in mind my main focus through the interview process was to understand each interviewee's meaning of "singer" and experience as a "non-singer." I wanted to learn, through this study, about the experiences, beliefs and feelings of the "non-singer." Why do people choose to self-describe themselves in that way?

Here is the list of questions I initially compiled for the interviews:

1. What do you mean when you say you are not a singer?
2. Is there a particular context or theme that accounts for this view?
3. Are there particular feelings around being a non-singer?.
4. How and when did you first become aware of being a non-singer?
5. Do you know why you became a non-singer?
6. Is there anything difficult or easy about being a non-singer?
7. If you are a non-singer, what, to you, then is the meaning of being a singer?
8. What do you mean when you say you cannot sing?
9. Do you, or did you ever, want to be a singer? Do you think it's possible to be one?

Analysis of the Data

I transcribed verbatim all the raw data as recorded for each interviewee and then analyzed each transcription, using a phenomenological methodology developed by Colaizzi, which I modified. (Colaizzi 1978) A phenomenological method was appropriate for this study because, in a phenomenological study, the focus is on understanding a concept or phenomenon and on understanding the meaning of experiences of individuals around this phenomenon. This study focused on understanding the phenomenon of the “non-singer” and understanding the meaning of the experiences of individuals who claim to be unable to “sing.” I modified the phenomenological approach in the final phase of analysis. I choose to analyze individual stories in more depth rather than only construct a composite description of all the interviewees.

For the purpose of reporting these data, I refer to the four interviewees under the names Suzyn, Jessica, Amanda and Onika. (Details of each step in the phenomenological approach and all relevant data can be found in Appendix B.)

After analyzing the data and going through several preliminary steps, I organized each interviewee’s statements into themes. This step I found to be quite useful because it provided a comparison study of the singing experiences of the interviewees. The following represents a summary of that process.

General Themes Determined from the Data

A. Early singing experiences

- I sang all the time as a kid. That’s a happy memory. (Suzyn)
- I’ve always appreciated music. It’s always been part of my life. (Suzyn)

- I tried to sing when I was younger. It didn't pan out. (Jessica)
- I was never good at singing. (Jessica)
- They made me a munchkin in the Wizard of Oz play. I was just one of those people in the crowd. That's how I know I am terrible. (Jessica)
- I don't remember singing as a kid. (Amanda)
- I learned a lot about music: theory and pitch. I learned to hear if people are in tune together (Amanda)
- I sang in middle school. It was a group. I could hide. It was fun. (Onika)
- In high school the people who could lead songs were chosen for chorus. I didn't get chosen and went out for volleyball. (Onika)

B. Experience/beliefs about being a non-singer

- One event caused me to stop singing. (Suzyn)
- I became just a chorus member. No more solos. I thought this was a message that maybe I'm not so good. (Suzyn)
- I decided I'm not made to sing. (Suzyn)
- I was in the chorus and the teacher made me sing high and low for placement. She kept having me sing. She knew I was terrible. (Jessica)
- I don't have a good voice. (Jessica)
- Everyone's eyes are on you when you sing. I'm too shy. (Jessica)
- I don't sing cause I'm bad. (Amanda)
- I can't get the tune or pitch. (Amanda)
- I get so nervous in front of a crowd. (Onika)
- A singer is someone who can lead songs. (Onika)
- Maybe I got an unconscious message when I wasn't chosen to lead songs. So, I gave up chorus. (Onika)

C. Current experiences with singing.

- My boyfriend says I have a good voice but I don't believe him. (Suzyn)
- Sometimes I don't sing very loud. (Suzyn)
- People laugh at me when I sing (Jessica)
- I don't sing with anyone. (Jessica)
- I sing and people laugh. (Amanda)
- I sing with little kids. They don't know the difference. (Amanda)
- I'll sing with little kids cause they sing along. And everyone's voices are squeaky (Onika)

D. Current beliefs about singing.

- I'm envious of singer. They are comfortable singing. (Suzyn)
- I think when I sing that someone is listening to me and going to criticize me. I'm self-conscious. (Suzyn)
- I don't think I'll ever be a singer. It's part of my personality now. (Suzyn)
- I guess it (singing) could be developed but it's too late. (Jessica)
- I really just can't sing. (Jessica)
- I wouldn't sing a solo in front of people. I'd feel embarrassed. It's too hard. I'd be thinking I'm bad. I'm not on key. (Amanda)
- I can't sing on key. (Amanda)
- I'd love to be able to sing. (Amanda)
- I think there's some kind of break between my vocal chords and my brain. The sound just comes out flat and the notes aren't right. (Amanda)
- I can't really hold a tune. (Onika)
- My voice cracks somewhere in the middle, beginning or end. (Onika)
- There are two different categories of singers – playing around and performing (Onika)
- I won't lead songs. (Onika)
- I couldn't be a singer because I can't be in front of people. I'm too shy. (Onika)

Following the final step required of the phenomenological approach, I created a *composite description of phenomenon*. This overall description, (Figure 5, Appendix B, p.246) was created from the integration of the four profiles and also included integrating the profile of the meaning of the phenomenon from my perspective as the researcher.

Composite Description of Being a Non-Singer

There is definitiveness, a "*knowing*," that informs non-singers about defining themselves in such a manner. This knowing does not come from their early childhood experiences with singing. In fact, they often remember happy times singing either with their family or in an elementary or middle school chorus.

Non-singers use a consistent language to describe themselves that includes *definitive-type statements* such as: "I know I'm terrible." "I just can't sing." "I'm bad." "I know I'm not made to sing." Some of these statements seem to be not connected with any one overt negative experience of someone telling them they could not sing, but rather from a self "knowing" about the abilities singers must have to really be singers. It is connected with abilities that they believe they do not have and are connected with overt *messages* they received at some point with the experience of singing.

Not being chosen for the solo, being uncomfortable in front of an audience, not being chosen to lead songs and a belief that they are singing out of tune are all descriptors of the non-singer. Singers, on the other hand, possess the ability to sing a solo, lead a song, and sing on pitch. Non-singers feel these abilities are unattainable to them but they are very envious of singers for possessing them. They would love to be singers.

Non-singers are *shy and embarrassed* at the thought of singing alone in front of people. They feel very self-conscious and do not like the idea that people will be listening only to them. They envy the comfort a singer has with singing in front of any group of people.

Although I found it somewhat useful to follow the phenomenological method and construct the composite description cited above, I faced some conflicts with the process. Throughout the research, I was greatly committed to keeping the individual voice of each interviewee. This final step of the phenomenological methodology, although informative in one sense, was also

limiting and devalued the individual voice. I questioned the validity of making one valid, definitive statement about what it means to be a “non-singer” when I based the statement on the information gained from four informants. I felt the need to return to the data once again for deeper analysis.

I returned to the transcripts and selected core statements made by each of the four interviewees. As I identified these, a common thread emerged linking the experience of “not being chosen for a solo” and “being unable to sing on pitch” with the decision to declare oneself a non-singer.

The core statements were:

Jessica: “I was just part of the chorus. That’s how I *knew* I was no good.”

Onika: “I wasn’t chosen to lead songs. Maybe I got an unconscious *message* that I wasn’t good at singing.”

Suzyn; “I must have had talent once; I was chosen for solos. Then I just became a chorus member. No more solos. This was a *message* that maybe I’m not so good.”

Amanda: “I learned a lot about music and I *knew* I couldn’t sing get the tune or sing on pitch. I really can’t sing.”

The underlying theme was a “knowing” or a “message” about their ability as singers. There was also a theme around the abilities they each linked with being “non-singers.”

At first glance, I was puzzled by the abilities they connected with singing. I could not understand, from the data, where they received these messages, and was unable to draw a conclusion or construct a theory. None of the interviewees were directly told they did not have a good voice. Yet they seemed convinced that through particular lack of abilities such as not getting selected to sing a solo,

or lead a song, that they were “not good,” “really couldn’t sing,” thus were a “non-singer.”

Amanda’s experience was slightly different because she had received musical training but she also made statements that indicated overt messages about what it meant to be a singer. Through her musical training and band experience, she determined she could not sing on pitch and therefore was a non-singer. This again noted a lack of ability. All these named abilities seemed to be self-determined at first glance.

I revisited the data and carefully read over Onika’s transcript. Onika was the only one out of the four who was not White. She defines herself as bicultural. She is from the Caribbean, born in Barbados. She moved to the United States when she was four years old. She mentions in her interview that she and her family continue to listen to Calypso and Solka music (music from Barbados) and she considers that “her” music.

The music from the Caribbean is the music she listens to when she cleans her house. It is the music that makes her feel happy. When I asked her to explain why she believed she could not sing, she seemed perplexed. She didn’t know exactly why she thought that, and was unable to name the reason. But then she paused, looked somewhat surprised and suddenly announced, “Well, I guess it depends on what I’m singing whether or not I’m a singer. When I’m here I’m not a singer. When I’m singing my music in Barbados, I’m a singer. When I sing that music I’m a singer.”

I sat quite literally stunned when Onika made her connection to Barbados! Onika's statement was the essential piece of information I was searching for. Her statement provided me with a perspective I had not considered and gave me a much deeper understanding about the phenomenon of the "non-singer."

"Singer": A Cultural and Social Construction

Based on Onika's statements, I determined that the meaning of terms such as "non-singer" and "singer" are constructed directly out of a cultural and social context. The four interviewees received cultural messages about what it means to be a singer in a western, White cultural context. These cultural messages include three elements:

- *someone who sings solos
- *someone who leads songs, and
- *someone who can sing in tune.

Onika considers herself to be a "non-singer" in the United States because she says someone who is a singer in American culture is able to lead songs and perform and she feels she can't do that. Therefore, she is not a singer. She came to these conclusions from her experience singing in school and attending African-American Baptist Church services.

However, In Barbados (a culture that has a presumably different social construct around the meaning of singing), she consider herself to be "singer." She says that Solka music has songs that are fast and it doesn't matter what you sound like. She is comfortable singing them. They are fun to sing. She sings a lot in Barbados and she is a "singer."

During the semester I was able to observe the four interviewees singing. I listened to each of them to determine if, as they claimed, they sang “out of tune” or “had no voice.” It was my perception that none of the four of them “sang out of tune,” “had no voice,” or “sang badly.”

The conclusions from this research study reveal that the meaning of “singer” and “non-singer” are constructed by beliefs that are formed by the culture and society in which we live. Onika’s experience, particularly, made me question what messages, if any, are constructed around “singing” in other cultures. Is the phenomenon of the “non-singer” part of other cultures? What, if anything, determines a “singer?”

This study’s data suggest that cultural messages received by the interviewees around “singer” and “singing” were constructed in a way that is exclusive, and limiting. Can “singing” be framed in new terms, terms that are more inclusive and multidimensional so that everyone is a “singer?” Is that possible? Does that occur in other cultural traditions?

SECTION TWO

SINGING IN CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Chapter 2.1

Analyzing Singing from Four Cultural Perspectives

As a result of the conclusions drawn from the research described in the previous chapter and the questions that emerged from that study, I designed another research study to analyze the ways singing is understood from other cultural perspectives. Are there other cultural perspectives around the phenomenon of singing? Is the meaning of “singing” wholly dependent on the formation of the “non-singers?”

Victoria Moon Joyce, in her conference paper *Bodies that Sing: The Formation of Singing Subjects*, (Joyce 1999), points to the obvious:

It is said that in a world where everyone makes art, there are no artists. So it would follow that, in a community where everyone sings, there are no singers. The creation of singers requires exclusionary practices. In order to have singers, a culture has to produce non-singers. The formation of singing subjects is wholly dependent upon the formation of non-singers. (Joyce 1999)

I was interested in interviewing individuals who had grown up and spent the early years of their life in a cultural setting outside the United States and were willing to be interviewed about their experiences and cultural perceptions about “singing.”

Interview Subjects

I identified four individuals who spent the first fifteen years or more of their life in another cultural setting. They represented perspectives from the Americas, Africa, Eastern Europe and Western Europe. The Western European

perspective, I predicted, would be the most similar to the United States, and I included it in order to compare and contrast it to the non-European data.

Western Slovakia, Puerto Rico, Ghana and Germany are the four specific cultural contexts represented in this study. The four interviewee's ages range from 20-75 years old. Their class backgrounds range from working class to upper-middle class.

The following is a brief description of each interviewee:

A. Darina – Western Slovakia

Darina was born in Western Slovakia, near the Vienna border. Her earliest memories of singing were from her mother, who sang to her all the time. Darina immigrated to the United States in her early thirties. By then she had finished her college education and received a teaching certificate.

For the past nine years, she has been a music specialist, teaching elementary age children. She currently teaches music in an elementary public school in Leominster, Massachusetts.

B. Natalia – Puerto Rico

Natalia is a Puerto Rican woman in her early twenties and is currently enrolled at Boston College. She grew up in an upper-middle class family in Puerto Rico. Her mother is from Spain and her father is Cuban. She attended Catholic, private schools for her elementary and secondary education.

Although Natalia traveled a great deal and visited her mother's family in Spain and traveled through parts of Europe, she had never lived in the United States before coming to Boston College as a student. Natalia loves Puerto Rican

music, and enjoys both dancing and singing. She says she finds being in the United States difficult because she misses hearing and participating in the music of her country.

C. Shabaash – Ghana

Shabaash grew up in Dzodze, a town in the Volta Region of Ghana. He is from the Ewe ethnic group. He received his elementary and college education in his hometown. He received his teaching certificate from Dzodze Teacher Training College. The school and college curriculums were based on the British/Western tradition.

Shabaash was a classroom teacher for eight years before he went to study at the University of Ghana in Ghana and Bretton Hall University, England. He was an instructor at the University of Ghana for nine years. He left for the United States in 1992 as a student. He obtained his Masters and Doctoral degrees at Kansas State University.

Shabaash is currently an Assistant Professor in the Creative Arts in Learning Division of Lesley College where he teaches several courses in Drama: Drama in the Classroom, Drama for Social Change, Drama for Empowerment.

D. Werner – Germany

Werner, 75 years old, Jewish, and born in Mannheim, Germany. He was forced to leave his birth country when he was fifteen due to the Nazi occupation. He remembers always being interested in music. He began taking the violin when he was six years old and switched to the cello when he was ten years old.

After immigrating to the United States at age fifteen, he continued studying the cello. He was the co-founder of the Newton Symphony and also a member of the Sharon Symphony. Today, Werner continues to be passionately involved in music. He teaches a music appreciation course through Brandeis University and is in his fourteenth year of playing cello with the Boston Civic Orchestra.

Cultural Assumptions

My own cultural framework became quite apparent early on in this study simply by the way I set up the research. My intent was to have each of the four individuals I'd selected speak about their experiences and understandings of "singing." In the case of the interviewees from Ghana and Western Slovakia, the act of singing is actually not separated from other forms of music-making, such as dancing and playing instruments, so my research question about the meaning of "singing" was in itself problematic. This was an important piece of learning and led me to notice the ways I, myself, was caught up and functioning out of my own assumptions and western perspective.

Throughout this research study I was constantly made aware of my own cultural assumptions and aware of other cultural perspectives around the meaning of singing. I discovered that the concept of music being all-pervasive is usual in many non-European cultures. The literature I reviewed during the course of this research study concurred with my data findings and supported the final conclusions I reached at the end of the study.

In Bali, as Christopher Small, in *Music, Society and Education*, points out:

Music is not separate from everyday life. Music, as well as all the arts, is an integral part of life. This is so much so that the Balinese have no word for art or artist because the arts (music, dance, visual arts, poetry, drama) are considered, not a separate activity but simply a part of the Balinese concern for doing things as well as possible." (Small 1980, p.38)

Research Methods

I interviewed each of the four individuals and the interviews ranged from sixty to ninety minutes. I explained my study and asked each interviewee to talk about the memories they had about singing as a child, what singing meant to them and how it was used in their life. Similar to the process I used when conducting the interviews for the research study on meaning of the "non-singer," I compiled an initial set of questions. I varied the questions during the process of the interview and adapted questions in response to each of the interviewee's statements.

I analyzed the data, following the steps in my modified phenomenological method, similar to the research previously reported on in Chapter 1.1. I followed these steps:

1. I read over each transcribed interview several times to acquire a general feeling and understanding of it.
2. I then extracted the significant statements, phrases or sentences that directly pertained to the experience or meaning of singing in a cultural context. (Refer to Appendix C, p.247)
3. The next step was to organize each interviewee's statements into themes I felt the statements fell under. In this step I included only the non-repetitive statements under each of them. (Refer to Appendix C, p.247)
4. In Step 4 I created a profile for each individual interviewee from the data results mentioned above.

5. In the final step I reviewed the data and made conclusions. (I did not construct a composite description because I felt it would be a true representation of the data collected.)

A summary of the experiences and beliefs about singing gleaned from each interviewee, I determined, fell into five general themes. They are:

- Childhood/Family Experiences
- School Experiences
- Cultural Experiences
- Cultural Beliefs
- Types of Songs

The following chart, on pages 39 and 40 provides a summary of the themes that were determined from data collected.

	Darina - Western Slovakia	Natalia - Puerto Rico	Shabaash - Ghana	Werner - Germany
Childhood Exp. Family Exp.	Mother sang all the time. Teachers, grandparents, parents sang. Sang a lot	Mother sang all the time. Father played Cuban music. Sang songs.	Singing was natural. Grew up hearing whole family sing. I heard music and joined in.	Formal training: violin/cello Exposed to music. Father sang, mother played piano Grandfather sang
School Exp.	Sang in school. Sang folksongs No formal teaching of singing. All teachers sang and played instruments.	Did folkloric music. Wasn't in chorus. Used singing to learn	Became non-singer based on British/Western education system Expectation you had to have trained voice and needed to be a singer. School did not favor traditional music	No musical instruction.
Cultural Exp.	Never met anyone who couldn't sing. Everyone sang. Always encouraged to sing. Government supported music. Always singing and dancing in the villages.	Music always a part of socializing. Everyone comfortable singing, even though some are better than others. Singing is common Even if we thought we couldn't sing, we sing just for fun.	Always music on special occasions. Children watch/listen and pick it up. No expectation of how to sing. Everyone participates some way Singing taught orally Any person can begin music-making. Singing is everywhere Comfortable singing cause we can join in on any level No restrictions. Singing open to everyone.	Opera, symphony, choral groups for everyone, Encouraged to get into music. Music was everywhere. Everyone went to classical concerts Imported international performers to perform.

	Darina – Western Slovakia	Natalia – Puerto Rico	Shabaash - Ghana	Werner - Germany
Cultural Beliefs	<p>Natural to sing. Everyone can sing. Singing is important. Folksongs are known by all. Everyone participates in music-making and is encouraged to. Singing have always been part of our people. Songs mirror thinking/feeling of people.</p>	<p>Music/dancing in my blood. There is no audience. Singing/dancing is how to identify with the culture. Music makes us feel proud. Songs are a way to communicate.</p>	<p>Singing combined with dancing/drumming. Music is part of life. I'm not a professional but I can play with anyone. No one is considered a non-music maker Singing is inside of me. No restrictions. A lot of freedom No one ever says your voice is bad. No distinction between performer and audience. Singing is good for your health, bodies. Good for society. Brings us together. Singing is Entertainment. Singing socializes people. Singing educates our people. Songs have meaning. You can use any voice you want. Natural to participate.</p>	<p>You need a good ear to play or sing If you have no talent, be a listener If you're out of tune, forget it. Everyone wants to make music. If you can't do it well, don't do it Challenge to play well. Worthwhile and gratifying to play well.</p>
Types of Songs	<p>Songs about types of work – spinning, shepherding, grass cutting, mining. Political Play songs Nature Anthems</p>	<p>Cultural identity Religious</p>	<p>Songs for: hope, men's life, death, loss, happiness, enliven the soul, political songs, lullabies, relationships, attitudes about men/women, praise, encouragement, warning, inspiration, motivation, awareness, consolation. Songs have messages Nonsense songs</p>	<p>Opera</p>

Final Analysis and Conclusions

As a final analysis, in order to reach any conclusions, I reviewed the profiles and analyzed distinct commonalties and differences under each theme category that seemed to be significant and worth noting.

Childhood/Family Experiences

Each of the four interviewees had positive childhood and family experiences with singing. In each case one or both parents sang with and to them, and in three out of the four cases the experience with singing also included singing with other family members. Only Werner (German) received formal, western musical training on an instrument during his childhood.

School Experiences

With the exception of the interviewee from Germany, the other three interviewees experienced singing in their school setting. It is important to note, however, that the Darina (Western Slovakia) and Natalia (Puerto Rican) were taught folk music from their culture and each felt this was a positive experience. Shabaash (Ghanaian) was introduced to songs from outside his culture (from a British/Western tradition) and the experience was a negative one. Due to this experience, he labeled himself a "non-singer." The school he attended did not support learning traditional Ghanaian music.

Three of the four interviewees received no formal musical training in their school experience. Shabaash (Ghana) received some formal training in note

reading and singing through his school experience in Ghana and that was based on a British/Western educational system.

Cultural Experiences

All four interviewees experienced music as a social event. Darina, Natalia and Shabaash (Western Slovakia, Puerto Rico, and Ghana) experienced singing, in particular, as an activity that involved everyone. Everyone could participate and was encouraged to participate.

Although Werner (Germany) also experienced singing as a social event, he perceived it as an event that he was not directly involved in. He went and listened to others sing. Singing, for Werner, meant the performance of opera or other kinds of choral singing and from his perception there was a separation of performers and audience. Participation was defined in terms of listening, as an audience member, not engaging in the act of singing itself.

Cultural Beliefs

Each of the four interviewees believes strongly that everyone wants to make music. With the exception of Werner (Germany), the other three view singing as an activity that is a very natural thing to participate in. It is part of life. It is important. Singing creates an identifying factor for the culture. There is no distinction between participant and performer.

Werner, however, views singing from a very different perspective. He makes a distinct separation between participant and performer and firmly

believes that if a person does not have talent they should be a listener only and not engage in singing. The German cultural perspective is the only perspective, of the four, that distinguishes the category of “talented,” thus creating a “non-talented” category.

Types of Songs

The Ghanaian and the interviewee from Western Slovakia respectively name many specific types of songs sung in their culture that relate to life, work, nature and politics. Natalia (Puerto Rico) specifically notes songs that enhance cultural identity. For Werner (Germany), songs were defined in the genre of opera. For Werner, singing, was a performance art, to be performed only by “talented” singers.” Those who were not “talented” could enjoy the songs by listening.

Common Concepts

There were common concepts that, although were not addressed directly in the interviews, were implied by each of the interviewees. From an analysis of the data I noted three very significant concepts. They are:

- *the concept of making distinctions between performers and participants
- *the concept of making the distinction between a professional and a non-professional
- *the concept of making distinctions between the talented and the non-talented

Statements such as “Everyone is comfortable with singing,” “ We were always encouraged to sing,” “It is natural to participate,” and “There is no distinction between the performer and the audience” indicate a strong cultural message of inclusiveness about the act of singing. It is intended for everyone and it is encouraged and accepted that everyone can and will sing. In this cultural framework, there is no distinction between the participant and the performer.

On the other hand, statements such as “Opera, symphony and choral groups were available for everyone to attend,” and “If you have no talent, be a listener,” indicate a mindset of exclusiveness and a definite clear distinction between participant and performer. There is a judgement about who should sing and who should not.

The word “professional” appears only two or three times in the interviews. The Ghanaian refers to himself as a non-professional but says he feels comfortable playing with professionals. He does make it clear that it is culturally appropriate to participate in any musical group. The concept of “professionals,” from the Ghanaian perspective is not exclusive and does not diminish others who are professional.

Werner, although only mentioning the word “professional” once, does often distinguish members of chamber music and opera groups (professionals) as musicians who can play or sing well as opposed to those who can’t. He points out that well-known international performers were often invited to come

There is a strong underlying belief that everyone, in fact, can sing. There is no mention of qualifications that are linked to being a "singer."

In comparison, there were statements made from the German, the closest cultural link to an American perspective, indicating a clear distinction between "talented" and "untalented musicians." These statements are:

"You need a good ear to sing."

"If you have no talent, be a listener."

"If you're out of tune, forget it."

"If you can't do it well, don't do it."

Werner's statements, typical of a western classical music response, qualify and construct a perspective of the categories "singer" and "non-singer." His statements suggest that if you do not fall under the "singer" category, it is best that you do not sing at all but rather listen to those who are talented and very good at it. There is no suggestion in his statements that singing is a natural or common phenomenon to all people.

Conclusions

It is clear, after reviewing the data, that the experience of singing is valued on many levels in different cultures. Singing can provide meaning to a cultural group through various venues: worshipping, celebrating, mourning, socializing, teaching and learning. Singing and/or music-making are also valued for more human pursuits, such as self-growth, self-knowledge, and enjoyment.

Cultural context plays the essential role in how and why singing is defined and valued. For some cultures, what I refer to as the "doing itself," provides

meaning, such as participating in communal sings, large drumming sessions and group dancing. There are no other requirements. In other cultural contexts there are conditions of achieving certain levels of "musicianship" that are necessary for the music-making to be of value.

This study complements my previous research study that illustrated how beliefs and assumptions are constructed around the meaning of singing. Through this exploration of the phenomenon of singing from four different cultural contexts, I conclude that there are definite cultural messages that are conveyed about the act of singing. Only one in my limited survey, the German perspective, supported the phenomenon of the "non-singer."

In the case of three of the interviewees from Ghana, Western Slovakia and Puerto Rico, the cultural messages suggest singing as an activity that is possible for everyone, without judgment, without restrictions, without qualifications. In the case of the interviewee from Germany, the only one from a western music tradition, the concept of the "singer" is much more delineated and there are specific cultural beliefs held about what it means to be a "singer."

Chapter 2.2

Reflections on Ghana:

Experiencing Another Cultural Perspective of Music-making

The conclusions drawn from the last research study examining cultural origins of ideas about singing led me to recall an eye-opening experience that, I believe, provides a vivid illustration of music making from differing cultural perspectives. This experience occurred in Ghana when I enrolled my “western classically trained self” in an African dance and drumming course at the University of Ghana.

As I signed up for the course, several thoughts crossed my mind. How difficult can it be to learn African drumming and dance? Certainly, I can master the basics. I’m a musician. I have a lot of experience with traditional American folk dance, and I understand the basic elements of music. I certainly should be able to learn basic African drumming and dance. What I was to learn was how my cultural framework was, in fact, creating an obstacle for learning and understanding another way of being and doing.

In 1997 I attended a three-week course in African music and dance at the University of Ghana, in Accra. The main purpose of this course was to provide students with intensive instruction in African drumming and dance. In addition to daily hands-on instruction, each day I attended a lecture by the well-known and respected J.H.K. Nketia who focused his attention on providing information to us about the relationship of music to Ghanaian culture. His lectures enlightened us

on subjects such as the connections of the music to language, religion, and to men and women's roles in society.

I approached this course full of confidence and an eagerness to learn. My life has been filled with musical experiences and certainly I felt I was equipped to learn this new musical style. I knew I had an understanding of music and musical terms. My background includes knowledge of classical piano and choral singing. I majored in music in college. I have spent many years participating in various folk dance groups. Although I had never specifically taken drumming lessons, I felt confident that my many years of music study would carry me through.

My western "roots" and the effects of my culture on my "musical knowing" showed up by surprise within minutes of the first drumming lesson. I was completely unaware of the ways in which characteristic western rhythm patterns, with an alternation of strong and weak beats were a vibrant and living part of my being. Stepping outside this rhythm seemed next to impossible for me.

Murray Schafer, in *The Thinking Ear*, (Schafer 1986, p.66) connects this strong sense of *knowing* westerners hold about timing and rhythm to the invention of the mechanical clock. He reminds us that, previous to the invention of the mechanical clock, all other means of measuring time (water clocks, sand clock, sundials) were silent. "The first time in history, duration was divided into proportionate time-cells which sounded." (Schafer 1986, p.66)

In further support of Schafer's theory, the shift that occurred in the

European consciousness by the post-Renaissance period⁵ is worth noting. It highly affected the ways people approached the arts. A major philosophical shift was the creation of a logical perspective of man's relationship to the universe. This manifested itself in music through logical metric rhythms and tonal harmony. These two elements have been the dominant technique of western music for three centuries. (Small 1980, pp.11,13)

My entire being, I realized, was locked into a time clock that could not be altered, no matter how hard I tried. Schafer would explain this difficulty grasping African polyrhythms (combinations of two or more independent rhythms, occurring simultaneously, whose metrical accents do not coincide) by explaining that I was literally "spellbound by the audible ticking of the mechanical clock. And that societies which show the greatest rhythmic aptitude (African, Arabian, Asian) are precisely those for which the mechanical clock is of little importance." (Schafer 1986, p.65)

I am not sure if I completely agree with Schafer's premise that the cultures he mentions actually regard the mechanical clock as irrelevant or unimportant but I must confess that I was definitely culturally tied to a logical, regular, metric beat. During the first few daily drumming lessons, I eagerly sat with my *jembe* (a medium-sized African drum) tightly held between my knees, listening intently to every drum pattern presented by the instructor and trying to make sense of the rhythmic patterns. As each pattern was played I would stop and request the

⁵ The Renaissance period generally refers to the humanistic revival of classical art, literature, and learning that originated in Italy in the 14th century and later spread throughout Europe. The period of revival is roughly between the 14th – 16th century.

instructor clarify precisely which meter the pattern fell under. "Is it in 3/4" I asked? "Or perhaps 4/4? Or maybe 5/4?" (These numbers refer to the length of sound in relation to the underlying beat. For instance, waltz time is in 3/4 meaning there are 3 beats to a measure and the quarter note gets one beat. A march is in 4/4. These are considered, from a western perspective as common or simple meters, whereas 5/4 time is considered to be an symmetrical or irregular meter and is not typically found in western music.)

The instructor listened intently to me as I struggled to "fit" his complicated rhythms into a framework that made sense to me. He was very accommodating and generously agreed wholeheartedly with whatever suggestion I came up with. He did this by simply adjusting his rhythmic beat (slowing down or speeding up) to fit any meter I suggested.

After several futile attempts at this logical and scientific method of making rhythmic sense out of these drum patterns, I had an epiphany. I realized that I was completely and utterly asking the wrong question. I was desperately trying to make Ghanaian polyrhythmic drum beats fit into my western mechanized, straight-metered framework. And it wasn't working.

The moment of truth was memorable. I sat stunned, realizing how hard I was working at trying to understand African music through a western cultural lens. I had created an impossible task. The other students in the class, I observed, were going through a similar process. Many of the students, who were self-proclaimed *percussionists*, (another western construction) spent their time busily trying to notate each drum pattern. This was, of course, a totally western

cultural approach since the drum patterns are learned orally and passed on through practice and observation. None of the rhythmic patterns are written down. (The concept of being a "percussionist" does not exist in Ghana because the culture does not separate drumming from dancing or singing or any other kind of music making. There is one word that encompasses it all. Anyone who drums also dances and sings.)

Ghanaian culture values the fact that drum patterns are learned over time from community and family members. Learning a rhythmic pattern in isolation, by reading notes off a written page is not only *not* valued in Ghanaian culture, but goes against the cultural value of music-making as a community process.

Each day during my drumming lesson, I tried to let go, as much as humanly possible, of my western musical assumptions and beliefs as well as my musical experiences and societal values. Only then was I able to begin to open myself to understanding African rhythms from a new cultural perspective. This alternative approach did help my learning process although I continually struggled with the temptation to comfortably fall back into my old cultural patterns of knowing.

During the three-week course, I decided that I might benefit and more deeply understand the artistry and musical purpose of Ghanaian music by actually removing myself from the participant role and instead become an observer, an audience member and learn through intense listening.

Again, my western cultural beliefs were affecting my musical values. In making this decision, I assumed that Ghanaian music was constructed much the

same as western classical music. I assumed that the performers were separate from the audience and thus choosing to play the role of the silent audience member would be appropriate and of great benefit to me.⁶

This decision, I soon learned, was not at all a good one and went completely against the Ghanaian cultural norm for “making music.” I came to realize that I could not honestly “learn” Ghanaian music without participating, since participation is integral in the definition of making music in Ghana. I again adjusted my way of thinking and doing and participated and actively made music.

In the end, although I could not possibly claim to have mastered African drumming or dancing, I did enjoy myself and was able to successfully drum in polyrhythms. More importantly, I gained enormous insight into my own musical roots and my ways of “knowing” and my embedded assumptions about musical learning.

Later, upon my return from Ghana, I discovered in my readings that Chernoff, in *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, directly addresses what I soon came to discover was an error in my assumptions about the relationship of audience and participant. Chernoff points out that:

It is a mistake to *listen to* African music because African music is not set apart from its social and cultural context. The community dimension is perhaps the essential aspect of the music and there is not distinction between the audience and the musicians at a musical event. (Chernoff 1979, p.35)

⁶ A major concern of western classical music is communicating a personal idea from the composer via the performer to each individual listener. It celebrates the autonomy and the essential solitariness of the individual in post-Renaissance European society. (Small 1980, pp.28-29)

Recently, in an extensive interview with Shabaash Kemeh, a native Ghanaian, he too spoke directly about the cultural difference in how westerners and Africans see the role of audience and participant in the act of music making. He spoke about the inclusive, participatory nature of music making in Ghana:

When there is music, when people are singing, drumming, and dancing, anyone who is around participates. You are watching, singing or you are dancing but everyone is involved. There is no distinction between the performers and the participants. (Kemeh, 1999)

Music making, I discovered, is not separate from everyday life but an integral part of it. This does not mean, however, that there are not expert performers or professional musicians in Ghana. Professional musicians, unlike western culture, are not set as a measurement for everyone else to live into but rather are considered to have a gift that all in the community share. Professional musicians do not imply or elicit comparison but rather evoke celebration and honor.

The relationship between the performer and the listener is entirely different from that of a western cultural perspective where the listener is essentially an inactive member of an audience. In Ghana, the performer and the listener are intimately connected within the community. Everyone, in some way, is considered "part" of the music-making, whether a person is dancing, singing, drumming or listening. Listening is considered an active activity.

It was completely out of my realm of understanding and experience to consider that, in Ghanaian music, the listener must be actively engaged in making sense of the music. The music itself does not become the concentrated

focus of an event, such as a concert does in the western classical tradition.

Chernoff emphasizes that African music should not be studied out of its context or as music. African music is not complete without a participant who is equally involved in the music-making. (Chernoff 1979, p.50) I came to realize this was absolutely true.

In the daily course lectures, J.H. Kwabena Nketia confirmed what I witnessed time and again in the musical sessions and in my visits to the villages located outside the city of Accra. Ghanaian music, I discovered, reveals a great deal about the culture and community life. The word "music" in the Ewe language includes all aspects of music-making, singing, dancing and drumming.

Music, with its all-inclusive meaning, is always integrated into all aspects of life. Whatever role one holds in the community, music plays an integral part in defining it. Music is integrated into domestic life, work chores, funeral rituals, child caring and play and is not conceived apart from its community setting and cultural context. Music is about entertainment but it also brings people together. When there are moments of loss, for instance, the community comes together to support one another. It does not need to be a formal invitation. There are so many songs about relationships, songs about hope, lives of men and women and their attitudes towards each other, songs about death, happiness, celebration and songs to enliven the soul.

Music making in Ghana is a community or group activity and is continuously integrated into the culture. The music focuses on people's activities and speaks to a need to recognize important moments of an individual's life or

life of the community. Music is essential to life. The concept that music is connected to people's relationship to society was strongly reiterated in Nketia's lectures. He once made the profound and bold statement, in one of his publications, that "a village that has no organized music or neglects community singing, drumming or dancing is said to be dead." (Nketia 1966, p.20)

This community dimension is perhaps the essential aspect of Ghanaian music. This was made obvious to me over and over in the process of learning Ghanaian drumming and dancing. Neither of these activities emphasizes the individual but rather the group and the rhythms seemed to achieve an integration of music and community.

I attempted to learn the drum rhythms or new dance steps by counting very carefully, on my own, trying to come in "on the correct beat." I realized, after some time, that the Ghanaian musician or dancer does not "find his entrance" by coming in on a beat, in isolation, but understands his part totally in relationship to the whole, to the other instruments and to the dancers.

This Afrocentric approach represents a powerful example of the ways the beliefs of the culture and society are reflected in the musical tradition. The individual in Ghanaian society is not emphasized, but rather each person contributes to the whole, with each musician adding his own part to the total polymeric fabric. Once I learned to play the music properly, it was extremely difficult to play my part unless the whole ensemble was playing because each

rhythm depended on the other.⁷

Connected closely to the community dimension in Ghanaian music is the concept of repetition. Soon after my first drum and dance lessons in Ghana, I was struck by the repetitive nature of the music and by the way it was taught. As I listened to and played drum rhythms over and over or watched and imitated particular dance steps again and again, I noticed in myself a growing sense of impatience and eagerness to move on to something new. Over time, I began to question my reaction. Where did this impatience of mine stem from? Was this yet another indication of a cultural difference, a culturally learned response?

I realized that this method of learning – differing from a more western approach involving musical notation, tape or video recording – required intense concentration, memory development, and a willingness for me to take an interactive role in the learning process. I actually became a partner in the creative process, which I noticed created a bond between my instructors and myself.

Everyday, in addition to the drumming and dance lessons, I visited a local school and observed the children out on the playground. I was very curious about the ways in which music is integrated into a child's school day. Singing games, I discovered, are an integral part of the schoolyard activities. And repetition plays an important role in these games as well.

⁷ In a traditional western classical approach to music, the listener audience and the performers receive a product but have no involvement with the creative process. They listen to a composition that is complete before they approach the work. The performers must be content with recounting the composition rather than directly experiencing in the creation of it. The audience passively receives it. (Small 1980, p.30)

Gathered in a large circle of approximately thirty, the children play singing games that always involve each child or pairs of children going into the center to do a special dance while the others clap and sing. Each game, which can last for over twenty minutes, does not stop until each child in the circle has had his/her turn in the middle. I noticed that, although I was ready to move on and learn a new game, the children's attention remained acute. I never perceived anyone in the group looking bored or impatient. My sense of *timing* was indeed coming from a western perspective.

In *Music Society and Education*, Christopher Small addresses some common western assumptions and expectations held by those trained in a western musical tradition. He suggests that the only way to truly learn another music, on its own terms, is to reject western assumptions and hold an open mind.

His suggestion, I must interject, is not easy. First, one must actually recognize the assumptions and realize the impact they are having on the learning process. The next step of "rejecting them" proves to be quite challenging. He suggests that the western assumption about timing needs rejecting. I saw this in my Ghanaian experience.

The idea of music as the conscious articulation of time is an assumption that should be rejected in order to hear African music on its own terms. Westerners always know or expect to know where one is in relation to the beginning and the end. The idea of music as a linear progression in time from a clear-cut beginning to a fore-ordained end is a western expectation. (Small 1980, p.36)

Some of my impatience or eagerness to move on stemmed from expectations I held about timing. Once I was aware of that and could shift

my thinking, I remained open to new possibilities and new experiences about music making.

I went to Ghana with the primary purpose of learning African music and dance. I returned from Ghana with a profound appreciation for the ways in which culture and society affect our musical belief system. Certainly, I gained a window into understanding the Ghanaian musical system and its relationship to society and culture very different from my own. More importantly, the experience enhanced my own curiosity about western musical traditions and how they grow out of particular western cultural and societal beliefs. I saw that western musical traditions had framed my musical belief system and wondered how they might also frame the philosophy and pedagogy of music education in the United States.

SECTION THREE

SINGING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

Chapter 3.1

The Roots of Singing in America's Public Schools

As we've seen from the previous discussions in Sections One and Two, the phenomenon "singing" from a western perspective, is wedded to a multitude of assumptions and beliefs and has taken on, over a period of time, complex meaning. It is associated with subtle nuances, such as valuing the high, lilting soprano voice over an alto. It's connected to varied philosophies and strongly held convictions, such as improving vocal performance through various note reading methods and even exclusionary practices, such as selecting out the "better singers" and suggesting that others refrain from singing at all. How has this perception of singing from a western framework affected the pedagogical practices of music education throughout its history?

Three authors, in particular Edward Bailey Birge⁸ and Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, have compiled two quite comprehensive and widely-read accounts of the history of music education in the United States. These books document the stages of development and roots of music education in this country, beginning, in the case of Mark and Gary, with a brief survey of music education from the Old Testament, ancient Greece and the early Christian era to the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment.

These and several other history texts present the reader with a fairly clear

⁸ Birge's *History of Public School Music in the United States* (1929) and Mark and Gary's *A History of American Music Education* (1992) are recommended texts supported by MENC.

roadmap of the major trends and directions that evolved in public school music in the United States. In reviewing these historical accounts, I found that, for the most part, these authors present an historical view of American music education, but lack any critical analysis of the path taken by music educators. The picture painted is always a rosy one, implying that all decisions made were correct ones and the outcomes always positive.

In fact, there is almost a heralding of the decisions made and the path chosen by past leaders in the field of music education in the United States. This is understandable because there is much to celebrate about the ways in which music education has developed in America and transformed over the years. What is missing, however, is a critical analysis about the choices that were made and the direction that was taken in formulating a philosophy of music education. I purpose to offer one such analysis in this chapter.

As an example, Birge in *History of Public School Music in the United States*, (Birge 1937, p.143) unequivocally affirms the path followed by music education. He interprets the chosen method, teaching children to read music as "a necessary and indispensable step in the evolution of school music," (Birge 1937, p.143) and one which solidified the music profession's place in the curriculum. He says that discovering a method to teach children to read music and to sing were the outstanding achievements of music education.

Birges' congratulatory statements are ones I discovered reoccurring in most historical accounts of music education. Partly, it was that sense of absoluteness and certainty about them that enticed me to do further research on

the topic of singing. Birge's emphatic statement "...proving that practically all children could be taught to read music raised the school music profession" (Birge 1937 p.143) made me wonder if anyone in the history of music education ever considered another approach to educating children about music. If so, what were these alternatives?

Some very problematic cultural and societal assumptions are embedded in Birge's remarks. One is the belief that all children can sing if they are taught. This cultural assumption is based solely on a western frame of reference. In some cultures, it would not be a consideration to teach children to sing. It would be a natural phenomenon. The problem lies in a non-recognition and consideration of any other perspective. Constructed from a narrow point of view, Birge's belief that children must learn to sing is one that had major effects on the ways "singing" and learning music are understood and practiced in this culture.

Most music education historians believe that promoting musical literacy certainly raised the music education profession to a high and secure place. Although it is true that musical literacy did legitimize the field of music education, historians who claim this to be true never take into account any other effects the promotion of musical literacy had on our perceptions of singing or making music, in general. This viewpoint directly connecting musical literacy and singing is supported by a society that strongly valued, and continues to value, a linguistic approach to learning and prioritizes note reading above all else, believing these methods the best pedagogical approaches to educating children musically.

I believe that most music educators today would not consider this pedagogical approach as problematic. It is an approach that has been unequivocally supported for over two hundred fifty years by music educators across the country. My goal is not to dispute this approach but to bring awareness to, recognize and critique the cultural and societal assumptions on which it is based. These ideologies and beliefs can then be untangled, so we might discover what lies beneath them. Only then can we go beyond a narrowly defined framework and implement new approaches to music education that embrace a multi-ethnic, multi-musical perspective. This calls to mind the notion that "most music education in the world is organized around the great tradition of western classical music. And that this has enormous limitations in terms of flexibility (emphasis mine) in responding to new social and artistic realities." (ISME 2001) Basing the successes and goals of music education purely on musical literacy supports only a western conceptual framework and ultimately limits the perspective and musical experiences one has, particularly in the realm of singing.

It is not my intent to repeat yet another historical account of music education. I intend to present both a critique of typically reported history and also to add a new perspective – one that focuses specifically on the phenomenon of singing in music education. I hope to disclose assumptions and cultural biases that have been perpetuated and left unchallenged and unquestioned over the course of several hundred years. By unearthing these assumptions, it may be

possible to enhance music education and widen our overall philosophical and pedagogical perspectives.

I'm going to use a metaphor – a taproot to represent the historical development of music education. A taproot grows initially as a typical root, and like any other root, brings stability and nourishment to a plant. It is small at first but continues to grow deeper and deeper into the soil. Taproots, unlike other roots, rarely encourage secondary root systems but rather gather their strength by growing vertically into the depths of the earth. Attempting to pull a plant out of the ground that is supported by a strongly implanted taproot is quite difficult. Taproots can penetrate the earth to such an extent that yanking one out of the ground is successful only with pure tenacity, sheer strength, many days of tiresome digging or perhaps by resorting to the use of some powerful chemical root destroyer. It's not an easy task.

The taproot of music education is deep-seated. My effort is not to yank it out, but to notice the direction it has taken and how it has sufficiently anchored itself into the foundations of American public school education.

Singing, as is understood in today's educational settings, settled into its role in American music education as a result of a number of significant decisions, made as early as the early 1600's. Each of these notable decisions, which I will describe, added to the growth and strength of what rapidly became a substantial taproot of the "phenomenon of singing" in education. Since most Americans have gone through public education, this taproot continued to settle comfortably

into the groundwork of music education and has had major and long-lasting effects on how we continue to perceive and experience “singing” in this culture.

Perhaps the most profound consequence of this strongly formed taproot, is that it left American society with a very limited perception of “singing.” This singular, well-supported root, albeit strong, impenetrable and closely connected with a number of cultural and societal assumptions, effectively narrowed the scope of our perceptions, our language, our philosophy and our teaching practices in the domain of singing in education. As educational practices became more and more embedded into the cultural framework of the United States, the possibility of encouraging stronger secondary “roots” became less and less of an option or even a consideration.

What role did singing have in the United States in its early development in the New England colonies? How did these concepts of singing become embedded into the educational mindset of classroom teachers and music educators as our history developed? I will begin this exploration of “singing,” with its various meanings and associated words, by examining how the meaning of “singing” was first constructed in the American colonies?

The Beginning of the Taproot: “Singing” in Colonial America

Singing for early New Englanders was related almost entirely to worship and the colonists primarily sang biblical psalms. It was no coincidence then that the first printed book in the English colonies was *The Bay Psalm Book*. The first editions of this book had no musical notation but rather had just the written texts

of the psalms. This was not an unusual format and was true of many of the earlier psalm books printed in England and other parts of Europe as well. People in the congregation were expected to refer to other tune books and learn the common tunes for the psalms that were sung in church. (Birge 1932, p.6)

The method of singing the psalm tunes in church services was a practice referred to as "lining out." A deacon in the church would read each line of the psalm and usually the precentor (the choir director) gave out a pitch to a prescribed tune. The "lining out" method or "old way," as it was referred by many, was very successful and encouraged those who were musically illiterate to join in the singing. The "lining out" method also had the benefit of emphasizing the words rather than the music which was important to early New Englanders who believed that stressing the words of the psalms was most essential and brought them closer to God. The practice of "lining out" was a commonly used method in English churches in the seventeenth century and was a logical carry-over to early New England worship settings.

Over time, problems, identified by church leaders, arose from the use of this "lining out" method. As early as 1721, the Reverend Cotton Mather was heard complaining "that our congregation singing has degenerated into an odd noise." (Mather 1721) This "degenerated singing" problem, some head clergy claimed, stemmed from the lack of musical skills of the precentors who would begin the tunes too high or too low or alter the tunes in some way that made it difficult for the congregation to follow. The outcome of this, some clergy believed, was to cause the singing to drag along and the congregation to

respond unmusically. Other clergy blamed the problem on the fact that New Englanders were simply too busy trying to survive in the New World and were not taking the proper time to practice the singing of psalms. (Birge 1937, pp.6-7)

The reason for these complaints is almost irrelevant. What is most important is to notice the complaints themselves. There were complaints and they were about the quality of singing. The taproot was beginning to burrow itself into the soil of American culture and society.

By the mid-1700's church leaders were diligently working at finding practical solutions to improve the problem of "bad singing" by the members of the congregation. As a result, one solution that emerged from the clergymen for improving the vocal performance was to systematically select out the "better singers" from the rest of the congregation. By doing this, only the "better singers" would be allowed to sing. The others were directed to sit and listen. This seemed, I'm sure, like a very logical solution and one that would quite easily solve the problem.

The "better singers" once selected, were allowed to sit together, forming what would soon be "the choir section." Historical accounts note that these more musical singers earned their title by demonstrating that they were able to add embellishments to the tunes and sing faster and higher⁹ than other less talented members of the congregation. It is unclear exactly who selected the "better

⁹ The "soprano syndrome" as I refer to it, or value put on singing higher, continues in the present day, for many women, as an integral part of being a "good singer." A fifth/sixth grade classroom teacher wrote in her final paper: "In the seventh grade I was told I was not a soprano but an alto. I believed that meant my voice wasn't any good so I grew up thinking I couldn't sing." (Fifth/sixth grade classroom teacher, Topsfield, 4/23/99)

singers" or who determined the set of criteria for qualifying as a "better singer." We can assume it was the lead clergy since they were the ones who voiced the need for raising the quality of singing in the church service. They wanted their congregation to sound better in the presence of God.

Out of a genuine effort to "improve" singing, an exclusionary process was instituted. The selection process had the direct intention of ridding the parish of those who apparently were unable to demonstrate the skills needed to be an acceptable church singer. The indirect result was to exclude the majority of the congregation from participating in singing at all.

This seemingly reasonable solution had the profound effect. A language and philosophical belief system about "singing" was forming, and with it the inclusion of the category of "better singers" and consequently its counterpart, the "non-singer" category. Those not qualifying to be in one category were presumed to be, by default, in the other. "Singing" was being defined in particular aesthetic terms.

While continuing to focus on the singing "problem," other head clergy developed alternative solutions to improve church singing. One alternative solution, presented by Reverend John Tufts, a minister from Newbury, Massachusetts, is well worth noting. In 1721, Tufts produced a small book of psalm tunes with the directions on how to sing them using a simple fasola

method.¹⁰ Theodore Finney, in an article in the *Journal of Music Education* (1966), is quick to point out that Tufts' book, *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes* "had special significance for American music education because it was intended to help children as well as adults learn to sing. " (Finney 1966) This book pushed the taproot significantly deeper into the soil.

After Tufts' manual was published and used in congregations, several other ministers, also driven by the desperate need to improve the quality of singing in their churches, produced other singing manuals. Each of these singing manuals played a role in laying the groundwork for formal music education. The solution these ministers found seemed at the time a reasonable one for improving "singing:" resort to a practice that urged people to learn to read music.¹¹ (Mark and Gary 1992, pp.66-67)

It is debatable whether Tufts actually invented or borrowed his notation system since similar notation systems had already been used in Europe for at least one hundred and fifty years prior to Tufts' manual. "Letter notation can be traced back as early as 1560 in a French psalter and also in England in that same year in John Day's edition of the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter." (Mark and Gary 1992, p.67) Notation had also appeared in Europe as a solution to

¹⁰ The fasola method substituted the first letters: Fa, Sol, La and Mi on the staff, for the seven notes of the scale. The letters represented pitches by their placement on the appropriate lines and spaces of the musical staff.

¹¹ Lining out became referred to as the "Old Way" while reading notes was known as the "Regular Way". A debate over these two methods became known as the "rote vs. note" controversy. Reverend Thomas Symmes wrote a pamphlet favoring singing the "note" or "regular way" and argued that this method guaranteed "proper pitch, turning the voice in its proper place, giving every note its true length. (Mark and Gary 1992, p.69)

preserving music so musicians were able to play compositions just as composers intended them to be played. (This too is based on a western cultural assumption that music played correctly is to be played exactly as it was first composed.)

We can see how musical literacy had taken hold, and gained great importance, and, most importantly, was linked directly with the concept of "better singing." The wish to improve singing in the church and the resulting solution of promoting musical literacy had the consequence of giving the "taproot" a healthy feeding, creating an aesthetic around which "singing" is embraced and practiced in music education in public schools today.

The Growth of the Taproot: The Singing Schools

As early as 1721, musical literacy was being highly promoted by the lead clergy. Anyone interested in being an upstanding member of the church realized the need to learn to read music. A movement towards promoting musical literacy gained momentum and singing schools ¹² cropped up across New England to fill the need of people who desired to improve their skills in singing.

The singing school movement had a major impact on America's singing history. Music teachers, or singing masters, held classes in communities and those people who could afford it and wished to learn to sing and read music enrolled in the classes. This type of singing school was not unfamiliar to many of the colonists since similar type choir schools had been in existence centuries before in England. (Mark and Gary 1992, p.71)

¹² "Singing schools refers to a movement in which music teachers, or singing masters, held classes in communities where people desired to sing by note." (Mark and Gary 1992, p.71)

Similar to the European schools, the New England singing schools served both a musical and social purpose. The singing schools certainly prepared people to be effective members of the church congregation but also provided them with an opportunity to get together and sing outside the church setting. The singing schools also provided a livelihood for the singing masters.

The singing schools operated simply and effectively. Itinerant singing masters would arrive in town, set up their singing school in a convenient, local place and advertise through ads in the newspaper or by posting notices on posters. They charged a fee for their services and students were also expected to buy the tune books from the singing master. A school session ranged from ten to thirty meetings. (Mark and Gary 1992, p.72)

People attending the singing schools benefited by learning to read music and improving their voices. The culmination of each singing school ended in a singing lecture, where the participants gave a short concert led by the minister of the congregation. The singing school met with approval in the eyes of the clergy, since the students were participating in a spiritual activity. They were singing the word of the Lord. Not to be overlooked however, was the secondary benefit: the opportunity to socialize. (Mark and Gary 1992, p.74)

Although the church elders, in most cases, were not in favor of any kind of frivolity, socializing, in this setting, met with approval because it satisfied a religious need. Most of the music studied was religious although secular music was introduced as well. (Birge 1937, p.22)

One young man wrote:

At present, I have no inclination for anything, for I am almost sick of the world and were it not for the hopes of going to the singing meeting tonight and indulging myself a little in some of the carnal delights of the flesh, such as kissing and squeezing, etc., I should willingly leave it now. (Lowens 1964, p.282)

Although not highly promoted, singing, particularly by the clergy, was obviously recognized by those attending the singing schools as having many intrinsic benefits beyond enhancing spirituality. Singing had the capability to bring people together and building community. Group singing was a social activity that elicited pure enjoyment and created an atmosphere of companionship and camaraderie.

The singing school movement became a rural phenomenon as well, thriving first in New England and then moving to the south. The movement maintained popularity from the 1720's through the mid-1800's. The interest in singing schools lessened after the Revolutionary War when Americans began to restore relations with European countries. The economy grew and wealth began to accumulate and it became fashionable to enjoy the best of European culture. Singing the Yankee genre of music, composed by the singing masters, was less appealing and was perceived, by many, as inferior in comparison to the music of the great masters from Europe.

In addition, the public school movement (1830's-1870's) took hold and music education became part of the basic curriculum and offered free of charge. The need for singing schools declined but the singing masters moved into a new profession. They became the first music teachers in the public schools.

There is no doubt however, that the singing school movement played a significant role in influencing the adoption of a formal music program into the public school curriculum. The first public school teachers and the first public school music teaching methods descended directly from the philosophy and pedagogy of the singing masters. The ministers in the early 18th century promoted singing schools as a way to improve the quality of singing in their churches. They supported the "science" of note reading that replaced the old, rote way of learning the psalms. The scientific method was adopted by the singing masters and continued as the core of music education, proving to be the most valuable in gaining respect and acceptance for music in education.

By the end of the 18th century the taproot was firmly set. Any hope of conversation around creating a possible alternative or secondary root was non-existent. A formal system for teaching music, with a strong component of musical literacy, was firmly in place in the culture of American society and is accepted by the dominant culture as a legitimate path to follow in regards to "singing."

By the early nineteenth century an aesthetic for "singing" was formulated and firmly embedded in the culture. "Singing," particularly in educational settings, was directly associated with note reading, voice training and performance. But the overall emphasis in music education was on moral, physical and mental development.

At this point in history, (mid-1800's), it is important to note the ways in which the major focus and direction of music education linked closely to the

developments occurring in public education in America. "Social structures and values were changing in American society with the coming of the industrial age." (Miller and Doen 1994, p.25) The more local community focus gave way to a more impersonal social network. Person-to-person contacts were replaced with a more impersonal way of existing in big cities. Social problems and personal stresses increased. Education tended to be seen as the social cure for all the problems of industrial capitalism. (Miller and Doen 1994, pp.27-29)

Horace Mann and other leading educators had an agenda aiming at restoring moralism, citizenship, and cultural uniformity. Mann and his colleagues attempted "to maintain a set of common values and reestablish the older community of consensus on the new urban and industrial foundation." (Messerli 1972, p.249) Mann and others strongly believed the function of the public or common school was to "take children from the cities and give them an appreciation of what it is to be wise, true, lovely and pure." (Katz 1968, p.120)

Horace Mann, who was elected secretary to the Massachusetts Board of Education, presented in 1844 his Annual Report to the Board, containing a prominent section on the role of vocal music. He speaks of music having an intellectual mission, of improving mental, moral and social development. Music, he stated, "has the power to soothe, to tranquilize or enliven and express the highest and most rapturous joys which ever thrill the human soul." (Shepherd 1891, pp.445-463)

Educational reformers such as Mann greatly influenced and supported the philosophy and pedagogy of music education that was developing. Music

educators created a pedagogical approach that helped a child “achieve self realization through moral, intellectual and physical development, through singing classes that promoted social unity, inspired devotional feeling and religious values, and stimulate a desire to learn good music.” (Mark and Gary 1992, pp.113-115)

It must not go without mentioning that, at the same time in history in America, strong singing traditions, in various forms, were most certainly forming or already existed in some cases across the country. Community and family gatherings and social events often included group singing. These other venues for singing were fulfilling and certainly played an important and essential role in community building, storytelling and self-expression. A recognizable amount of repertoire of vernacular or “folk” songs emerged from these venues, but did not enter the public schools at this time. The repertoire used was European-based.

Each immigrant group added their contribution to America’s folk traditions. In the Southern Appalachians, the eastern seaboard, in the deep South, groups of people were creating new and uniquely American musical traditions. (Scott 1983) Singing familiar songs of their homeland created a feeling of security for many people new to American soil, connecting them to their roots and establishing a sense of emotional comfort. Many settlers in America attempted to establish a musical community like the one they’d left behind in Europe and settlements such as little Sweden, little Lithuania, little Italy popped up across the United States. Lomax remarks in *Folks Songs of North America*:

Isolation and frontier life attributed, in part, to the fact that many of these cultural pockets were not recognized by the

mainstream culture. In addition, the moral doctrines of the Puritans dominated the folk mores of pioneer America and created what was almost a "folk censorship." Singing and dancing were considered sins and many a vernacular song texts echoed the guilt felt by those who indulged themselves in such activities. (Lomax 1975, p.xvii)

One of the strongest and most powerful musical traditions in the United States was that of the African American. Slaves, brought to the United States from many parts of Africa, continued to dance and make music as their ancestors had done. Their songs were functional, as in their home country, and served to lift their spirits, assist their work and console them in times of suffering. In contrast to the dominant Anglo-American tradition, music-making of the Black culture was not a formally led event but a group activity, with many voices raised in song. Everyone participated, moving, dancing, singing freely. Music-making in the Black tradition was relaxed, richly blended and emotionally involving, not only with voices but with full body movement. This was something unheard of in the formal singing school tradition.

The decline of singing schools by the early 1800's was caused partly by the disrespect for Yankee musicians and Yankee music. (Mark and Gary 1992, p.89) Americans, soon after the Revolutionary War, were eager to restore relations with European countries and so they valued all things European. A new reform movement began that was adamantly against New England style music. Of Andrew Law, a New England composer in the early 1800's, it was written:

His knowledge of the great Masters of Music had grown and he sought to substitute serious, animated and devout music for the lifeless, insipid and frivolous and frolicsome combination of sound that were created by New England composers. (Mark and Gary 1992, p.89)

Although the literature does not address the issue directly, historic evidence suggests that the leading music educators were eager to support the sentiments of the mainstream culture, particularly as it pertained to the education of children. This translated into ridding the repertoire of "American folk music" and replacing it with not only repertoire but also methodologies of the newly, more scientific European way of thinking. (Volk 1998, p.25) "The singing material used in schools reflected the cultural standards of American society, which looked to Europe, particularly Germany, for "quality" music." (Navarro 1989)

Ridding the repertoire of "American folk music," is a phrase that requires further analysis, since as Lomax points out in *The Folk Songs of North America* "There just ain't no such animal." (Lomax 1975, p.xvi) American "folk" were a diverse group as was the music that they created. More to the point, those determined to rid education of "folk music" successfully enforced their biased belief that only one kind of music was valuable and worthy of using as an educational tool with children: western European classical music.

The powerful singing traditions of the African-Americans as well as other vernacular traditions that were flourishing across America from the Appalachian southern mountains, to the rural farms of Maine, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and to the western prairies were discounted. They were irrelevant and lacked substance and educational importance.

The Creation of Music Education in Public Schools: The Taproot Strengthens

Universal public education, by the early nineteenth century, was rapidly becoming a part of American society. Those interested in the success of this public school movement eagerly sought effective educational methods for implementation in schools. Many American educators headed to Europe to observe those who had developed successful and innovative educational theories.

A Swiss educator, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) was well known for his pedagogical approach to teaching. He advocated for an educational reform that permitted pupils to relate life activities to education. His two broad goals were to teach morality and citizenship and he promoted achieving those goals by enhancing children's moral, physical and mental abilities.

Two American educators, William Channing Woodbridge and Elam Ives, Jr., interested in music education, traveled to Switzerland and observed Pestalozzi working with students. They were impressed with his pedagogical approach and could immediately see how they could apply his teaching principles to music teaching in the United States. They returned and developed a new method for music instruction that they felt was superior to the singing school methods and was based on Pestalozzi's pedagogy.

Woodbridge began speaking in favor of this method across New England, eager to persuade others interested in implementing music education in the schools. The primary difference between this new Pestalozzian-based method

and the singing school method developed earlier was that children were encouraged to sing first before learning to read notes. Each of the basic elements and principles of music was taught separately and mastered completely before moving on. Singing still emphasized note reading and a mastery of basic skills but the child was a more active learner in the process by singing from the beginning. The Pestalozzian method nurtured that creative individuality of the child.

Woodbridge and Ives, Jr. were intent on adapting and developing a better teaching method for American music education and based their pedagogy on the Pestalozzian teaching principles. But it was Lowell Mason (1792-1872) who was credited with developing the general method of music instruction and who actually influenced the adoption of music as a public school subject.

Mason was acquainted with Woodbridge and Ives and was certainly influenced by their enthusiasm and success in teaching children to sing. He designed his own curriculum and used the Pestalozzian name in describing his teaching method in order to "authenticate his tie to Pestalozzianism, the magic word among the American educators of the day." (Mark and Gary 1992, p.126)

Mason prepared a book, *Manual of Instruction of the Boston Academy of Music, for Instruction in the Elements of Vocal Music on the System of Pestalozzi*, which begins by encouraging rote singing and works on improving the voice and correcting faulty tone production. There was a great demand for his method, which was adopted and practiced by a considerable number of teachers. (Mark and Gary 1992, pp.126-129)

Once Mason established what he felt was a workable and saleable method of teaching music, he used his skills as an effective promoter and shrewd businessman to single-handedly convince the Boston School Committee that vocal music in schools must be an essential part of the curriculum. He was most effective in doing this, not by preaching its merits but by demonstrating his techniques and successes with children with whom he'd previously worked. He actually brought them in to perform for the School Committee.

He very purposely illustrated that singing was a skill that could be acquired by all children if taught efficiently and scientifically. He was also quick to point out that teaching children to sing was "more difficult than learning Latin or Greek because it demands cultivation of taste that can only be brought about by industrious, patient and persevering practice." (Mark and Gary 1992 p.129)

Mason's singing pedagogy highly encouraged the use of a light rod for beating time on the blackboard which he firmly believed "affords variety and gratifies the pupils" (Mark and Gary 1992, p.128) and eventually leads to an improvement of the quality of singing. After mastering the basics, he suggested replacing the more rote-type learning in favor of the fasola approach.

The School Committee was impressed with Mason's teaching methods and his presentation made with the children. They also liked the fact that apparently the financial investment in music education was minimal. Mason demonstrated that music could be taught using only a blackboard. No textbooks were needed. Mason's efforts were successful and the Boston School Committee appointed him leader of the first music education program that began

in Boston in 1837. (Although they initially approved a small stipend for his first year of service, in the end no funds were available and he was forced to provide his services free of charge.)

After Mason began implementing the first music education program in the schools he soon initiated the idea of replacing all of the singing school music, which was composed primarily by the singing masters, with another genre of music. This newer and supposed "better" music was similar to the western European classical style of music with which many Americans were familiar. Mason realized a shift in musical taste in America was occurring as ties to England were restored after the Revolution. Yankee music, which had flourished before and during the Revolution, was now considered by the general public to be rather crude and lack gentility.

Mason found a niche for himself composing songs to be used in schools; these songs fell somewhere between the classical music of Europe and the more robust music of America. He and his music educator colleagues made the decision that American children were not capable of understanding the more sophisticated European classical music, and the American folk music (Yankee music) was frowned upon by the general public. (Mark and Gary 1992, p.90)

He composed a genre of school music that has more recently been criticized by some as bland and polite. Allen Britton, *Music Education: An American Speciality*, suggests that:

music education in the United States tended to create a world of its own with its own people, music and thought patterns. Mason's genre of composed music aided in creating this separation through his

composed polite, more insipid music that replaced the more virile, native music. (Britton 1961 pp. 214-215)

Mason considered the German tradition to be of the highest quality and "included melodies by Mozart and Beethoven, as well as a few German and Swiss "airs" (folks songs) in his first song books." (Volk 1998, p.27) He was most concerned with presenting melodies for teaching that were beautiful and uplifting and emphasized lyrics that "purified the thoughts, feelings and associations of the young." (Mason and Webb 1856, p.ii) He went so far as to suggest to families that they only sing songs "that are pure in sentiment and truthful in musical taste. Avoid Negro melodies and comic songs for most of their tendencies is to corrupt both musically and morally." (Colwell 1985, p.22) Mason's teaching philosophy focused on introducing children to the higher forms of classical European music once they had mastered note reading.

However, there is perhaps another and more obvious reason Mason began promoting this newer genre of public school music. Mason was a clever businessman and saw a lucrative financial opportunity. He created a need and consequently opened a huge market for new music that he and his colleagues could satisfy, which they did.

Mason, along with three of his colleagues, created the first graded series, The National Music Course, which was published in 1870 by Ginn Brothers of Boston (soon it became Ginn and Company) and it became the model for future graded series. This sequential approach to music reading through all the grades used song material based primarily on German folk music. In the introduction of

this series, the editors strongly suggest which type of music is appropriate for use in the classroom. The introduction states:

Singing as it happens is often hap-hazard and not genuine rote singing. The latter is the most important part of instruction, without which there can be no real improvement in vocal music. The Ginn series does away with all hap-hazard singing and preserves all the freshness and energy of all "singing as it happens" without any of its vicious qualities. (Brothers 1870, p.iii-iv)

This new genre of school music became the foundation for music education and has been utilized in educational settings from Lowell Mason's time to the present day.

To his credit, Mason's persistence and commitment to music education laid the groundwork for securing a place for music in the basic school curriculum. From a music educators' perspective, Mason is a hero. He created a strong rationale for music in the schools and through his tenacity and persistence, began a music education program based on a strong foundation from which the future of music education could continue to grow and develop.

His achievements also had other effects. Mason's noble efforts had adverse effects on the understanding and experience of singing from the general classroom teachers' perspective. Music education's secure place, thanks to Mason, was based solely on highly valuing the teaching of musical literacy and was based in a philosophical approach, embedded in Western European values, that limited the experiences children had in the realm of singing.

Allen P. Britton's provides one of the few critical accounts of Mason's work. Although he recognizes Mason as the most important historical figure in music education, he is one of the only historians who critically reviews his work,

indicating factors that are problematic, particularly to future music education programs. Britton claims that:

Mason exerted himself over a long period of years in promoting a teaching method the principles of which he did not understand, holding before him as the bible of the method a work he had plagiarized from a non-pertinent source. The collections of music he published for school use consisted to a large extent of song, abstracted without credit from German songbooks. For over one hundred years thereafter, school songbook combined such music with natively produced material in similar style. (Britton 1958, pp.206-207)

Singing, in Mason's pedagogical framework, was defined using particular parameters that proved to be solely based on a western framework, exclusionary and narrowly defined. These parameters included the following guidelines:

- Children sing properly only when taught properly. (Properly is defined by the teaching method that was proposed by Mason and his colleagues.)
- Obtaining musical literacy through rote singing of particular genre of European-based songs should be emphasized
- Singing links directly to performance, which is an expected outcome of learning to sing
- Learning to sing is possible but difficult and demands persistence and perseverance
- The songs to teach singing should be of a particular "polite" genre so as not to interfere with the goal of learning to read music. More complex music can be introduced at a later time.

As a result of these various parameters, a certain constructed perception of singing was implemented in schools. At first in the mid-1800's classroom teachers were assigned the task of teaching singing to their students and the music supervisors (the former singing masters) made weekly visits to classrooms to provide assistance to the classroom teachers and give suggestions for new lessons. (Mark and Gary 1992, pp.152, 173.)

The Development of Professionalism

By the 1880's there was a concern by school personnel and music instructors that the singing had become much too entertaining and not educational. They were singing but not learning to read notes. In reaction to this concern, Mason and other created the graded music series to provide a more scientific approach for teachers to use. There were exercises for drill.

As the music education curriculum developed, more and more technical skills were needed which required additional training to teach the lessons. This bolstered the need for more specifically trained music specialists. (Grade school teachers usually received basic vocal music instruction as part of their training but it was only covered basic musical skills.)

By the late 1800's, many professional organizations formed specifically for music educators in response for the need for more training and eventually certification. The National Education Association was persuaded to approve a Department of Music Education. The MTNA (Music Teachers National Association) was the first association of musicians in the United States, formed in

1876. These professional organizations greatly benefited the music specialist who sought support for their profession. They constantly felt the need to justify their existence to school boards and administrators who continued to discount music education as a core subject.¹³

For classroom teachers, however, an adverse effect occurred. General classroom teachers soon threw up their arms in despair, realizing that teaching their students to sing was altogether too complicated. It demanded skills they did not have and had no time to learn. Thus music specialists who were specifically trained and now certified were in great demand.

By the end of the 19th century, classroom teachers had almost completely stopped and were even discouraged from teaching singing to their students. They happily turned over the baton over to those who, they truly believed, were clearly more skilled and talented in this endeavor: music specialists. They quite naturally internalized as truth that the music specialists qualified as “singers” and they fell into the other category, “non-singers.” Most interesting to note, for the purpose of this historic critique, is that as music education moved into the twentieth century, the methodologies and materials of the music curriculum, as established by Lowell Mason, remained essentially the same. Music education, like education in general, reflected a European viewpoint that:

...was heavily influenced in German and Western European education methodology, especially that of Pestalozzi and Froebel. Music educators were primarily concerned with teaching notation for efficient sight reading, promoting good vocal tone through the medium of the European masters and some German and British folk songs. (Volk 1998, p.31)

¹³ The first normal school for training music teachers was established in 1884. By 1920, a four-year degree program was developed at Oberlin Conservatory. (Mark and Gary 1992, p.221)

The twentieth century opened new doors for the music education profession. Raising the standard of musicianship and educational practices among music specialists was highly encouraged. Many music education professional organizations grew in strength and stature as a way to cope with the growth and development of music education in the public schools. School music went beyond the confines of vocal music, and instrumental music was introduced and encouraged in schools across the United States. By the middle of the twentieth century the arts gained government and foundation support. New approaches and methods to teaching music were explored utilizing new equipment and technology.

During the 1960's, three European musical doctrines and one from Japan permeated musical practice in American schools: those of Carl Orff (German), Zoltan Kodaly (Hungary, and Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (Swiss) and Suzuki (Japanese). These methods became extremely popular with a large number of music educators who began integrating these techniques into their curriculum. The goal of creating a "vital musical culture and an enlightened musical public"¹⁴ was the continued goal of music educators across the nation.

With the taproot firmly planted, music education has become a separate entity, with its own musical genre, its own philosophy, pedagogy and practice. Classroom teachers were "relieved" from their task of teaching music. Historic accounts report this outcome as positive and rightly so, for the music educator.

¹⁴ Charles Fowler, a strong arts advocate, coined this phrase which is probably compatible with the philosophy created by previous music educators such as Mason.

Music education has established itself as a credible subject, needing credible musicians to teach it.

The historic roots of music education continue to weave their way into the pedagogical practices and philosophies of music education programs of the twenty-first century. Music education struggled to make its debut in public schools in Boston in the early 1800's. Lowell Mason worked hard at convincing administrators that music could be justified as a legitimate subject of study and should not be considered simply a recreational pastime. Mason and those who followed in his footsteps were dedicated to proving his point, passionate about communicating the value of music for all children.

Today, music educators find themselves in a similar situation. Those who teach music, whether it be middle school band, high school orchestra or elementary general music, feel passionately that their subject is worthy, valuable and essential to every child's education experience. When Lowell Mason created the first music program and developed a basic philosophy by which to teach, he designed a curriculum that was adaptable to the pressures of the current society and culture in order to prove music's worth. Today's music educators face the same dilemma. Must they adapt to the latest trends in education or can music stand alone, appreciated and valued in its own right?

Beyond all else, even when music educators are arguing among themselves over the merits of a particular philosophy or teaching method, every music teacher agrees that music must be an essential part of every child's education. In a recently published music curriculum by McGraw Hill, there is an

introductory page that most succinctly states the beliefs of music educators across the country:

Music is inseparable from the very meaning of education. No one can claim to be truly educated who lacks basic knowledge and skills in music. Music is deeply embedded in our daily lives. As music educators, we must continue to defend our programs because through music we express the joy and wonder of life. We make music because we are human. (Winslow, Dallin et al. 2001, pp.1-2)

Where does this critique of history leave us in relationship to singing? It is clear that music educators continue to believe that every child should be exposed to music programming. I firmly agree with the mainstream music education philosophy that states that music must play an essential role in every child's education. Music does, I believe, allow for expression of joy and wonder. The question is which pedagogical methods should be used to "expose" children to music? Must music education be only in the form of educating children in the basic knowledge and skills of music?

At present, exposure to any musical activities is, mostly, left to the responsibility of the music educator. Classroom teachers, more than ever, are not singing with their students. The gap between those in education who sing and offer musical activities to their students is greater than ever. The "non-singer" mentality is alive and well in educational communities and is not being addressed in music education circles. Singing continues to be considered a complicated skill that must be learned, requires training in breathing, vocal technique and diction, and a basic knowledge of note reading.

As the review of the history of music education has illustrated, one philosophical and pedagogical approach for teaching singing in public schools

was firmly established in the United States so much so that I called it a "taproot." For the most part, there was little consideration to any other way of teaching singing. However, in communities across the United States, another successful model for singing existed. This model, which I will refer to as "community singing," does not provide a model for "teaching singing," but does provide an interesting alternative to the well-established "taproot" or public school model and is worth exploring further.

SECTION FOUR
COMMUNITY SINGING

Chapter 4.1

The Community Singing Movement

By the early 1900's the United States was populated with diverse cultures which were creating rich musical traditions. Many of these traditions were strongly based in a community singing model. This type of singing, unlike the type of singing promoted by music educators and practiced in schools across America, was less formal, less structured, focused on group participation and founded, created and conducted by the singers themselves.

There are many powerful examples of the kind of singing that focused on strengthening community, providing emotional and spiritual expression and recognizing and responding to the individuals participating in the group. A few examples are: gospel singing in the black churches, singing gatherings by English, Irish and Scottish immigrants in the Appalachian mountain regions of Kentucky, and Illinois Ozarks, and the community singing in the Georgia Sea Islands, by those who were direct descendents of Africans enslaved in the Southern United States.¹⁵

Regardless of the importance of these effective singing gatherings occurring across the United States and their potentially powerful influence in the community, these and others like them were not acknowledged or studied in terms of music education. There is only one community singing model that has

¹⁵ For more information about specific songs from these groups refer to (McIntosh 1974), (Thomas 1939), (Barnwell 1998), and (Jones, 1983).

been recognized in music education historical overviews. It is referred to in music education historic texts as "The Community Singing Movement." All others are discounted and left without mention. Given the monocultural perspective historically adopted by music educators, it is not surprising that the many other models of community singing, particularly those occurring outside the dominant white culture, were completely unrecognized and unappreciated.

The particular community singing movement that became recognized and promoted by music educators occurred over an approximate thirty-year period, beginning right before World War I and continuing through World War II. Singing in this movement was done simply for enjoyment and for bringing people together. The "amateur spirit" referred to by historian Edward Birge (Birge 1937) brought a very important and new cultural perspective to the act of singing in public schools.

The support this particular movement received from leaders in music education, and the ways these leaders specifically articulated the benefits to music education, shows its influence on public education. It is particularly important to focus on the ways this movement managed to effect a change not only in the ways singing was perceived in music education, but also in the ways singing was taught.

The Music Supervisors National Conference, a gathering of one hundred fifty music educators (all white men) from twenty-three states, was held in Cincinnati in 1910 with the sole purpose of finding ways to promote good music

in the public schools.¹⁶ Leaders of music education from across the country attended this conference, and the two major themes were the importance of educating every child in music and engaging every child in singing. But this group of music educators was faced with the dilemma of how best to accomplish these goals. How could they get every child in America singing in a way that was pedagogically sound? They were clear in voicing disdain for what they called "hap-hazard" singing¹⁷ and insisted that singing be directly connected to reaching particular goals and building specific vocal skills.

In 1913, Peter Dykema, a music educator and was a recognized leader of the community singing movement, urged all music specialists to get entire schools singing together in community settings. With the encouragement of other community singing enthusiasts, he created a list of eighteen songs he felt were an appropriate repertoire for group singing. This list was published and distributed to music teachers with the firm suggestion that they concentrate on teaching those selected songs to students in an effort to create a common repertoire for group singing.

At the same time, with America's involvement in World War I, came a desire by the American public to demonstrate their support and patriotism through song. There was a need to create social solidarity and people were eager to come together in groups, small and large, to sing. It was evident that,

¹⁶ (Mark and Gary 1992) This Conference played an important role for the profession of music education. In 1934 the name was changed to Music Educators National Conference (MENC) and this organization continues to be an embodiment of the spirit that had sustained music educators across the country for almost eighty-five years.

¹⁷ In Chapter 3.1, p. 84, the Ginn Brothers, authors of one of the first music graded series texts, makes a comparison of rote singing to non-rote, referring to the later as "hap-hazard."

for many, community singing heightened the morale of the civilian population as well as military personnel. The general public felt a need to sing.

It is interesting to note how similar the response was after September 11, 2001. Many Americans felt the need to sing patriotic songs and group singing occurred at public gatherings such as sports events, in movie theatres and at musical and theatrical performances.

Soon trained song leaders were organizing singing gatherings across the country, encouraging people to sing together. Groups of people gathered in schools, churches, civic clubs, chambers of commerce, movie theatres and factories with the sole purpose of singing. For example, factory workers were allotted time on the job each week to sing and thousands of men and women joined together in song. Moviegoers sang together before watching the movie, singing along by following the lyrics with the "bouncing ball" on the screen that rhythmically moved from one word to another, indicating when and what to sing. (Mark 1992, p.241)

The community singing movement made an impact on many leaders in music education and some began to shift and expand the ways they perceived the role of singing in schools. The leaders of the community singing movement had a clear underlying philosophy about how and why group singing should occur.

Four prominent leaders, (Peter William Dykema, Augustus D. Zanzig,

Will Earhart, Harry Robert Wilson)¹⁸ came forth during this period (approximately 1915 – 1944) and each was committed to a similar goal of getting everyone singing for the sheer joy of singing. Each of these leaders was quite explicit in their belief that community singing was not about teaching predetermined musical skills or working towards a public performance. There was a clear goal of wanting to make everyone feel as if they were a "singer."

Although none of these four leaders put emphasis on connecting the values of community singing to singing in public education, there was encouragement, particularly by Dykema and Zanzig, to enlist music teachers in supporting the concept of community "sings" in schools. One major distinguishing factor of the community singing movement was the spirit of "amateurism," a term actually meaning "a lover of" a pursuit carried on for the love of it and not for financial compensation.

In order to understand the community singing movement completely, it is important to explore the premise that set community singing apart from the traditional ways that singing was perceived by the dominant culture and society. It is in the spirit of the true amateur that community singing has its roots. The word "amateur" has been misunderstood and misinterpreted in music education, and is often associated with mediocrity or careless performance.

During the height of the community singing movement, the concept of amateurism was celebrated. Group singing was comprised of "amateurs," in the

¹⁸ More specific information about these song leaders and the community singing movement can be found in the following texts: (Birge 1937), (Zanzig 1932), (Zanzig 1933), Earhart 1942), Wilson 1942), (Eisenkramer 1963), and (Mark and Gary 1992)

true sense of the word. These amateurs created a group, based not ability or skill, but on attitude. Singing was done for the experience of music itself, nothing else. The community singing movement had no *non-singers*. It made no divisions between the singer and the non-singer. Everyone sang and everyone believed they could sing.

Although there are some leaders in the field of music education who strongly claim that music education was, in fact, built on a philosophy similar to that of community singing, the basic amateur spirit of the community singing movement never successfully attached itself to the taproot of music education. There are some obvious differences in philosophical and pedagogical approaches between the concept of community singing and singing in public education and these need clarifying.

One such difference is aptly demonstrated through the teachings of Lowell Mason, the founder of music education in the United States, who believed that every child was musical and every child could learn sing. Mason, who referred to himself the “father of singing among children in America”, (Mark and Gary 1992, p.130) created the basic philosophy of music education, based not on the assumption that everyone naturally could sing but that everyone could be taught to sing.

This perspective alone demonstrates an enormous difference between the philosophical thinking of the music educator and the community singing leader. Teaching someone to sing directs the focus on skill building and technicalities of

the voice, and not on the human benefits of singing, which was the case in community singing.

Edward Bailey Birge, in *History of Public School Music in the United States*, (1928), attempts to link community singing with music education. He suggests that the singing schools, which were the roots of music education, were the same roots that led to community music.¹⁹ He boldly claims that:

out of public school music sprang community music. The original singing school was the community learning together, old and young, the elements of music and the songs which could be used by the same people in the church. (Birge 1932, p.225)

It is certainly true that singing schools did, in fact, attract community members, of all ages, from near and far, to come and sing together as did the community "sings." And community "sings" were similar to singing schools in the fact that both included the important elements of recreation and socializing.

But I do not agree with Birge's interpretation that music education was formed from the same concept as community singing. Birge completely overlooks one of the most important concepts of community singing when he associates the activities of the singing schools in the 18th century to that of community singing in the 20th century. He fails to recognize that the primary objective of the singing schools was for participants to receive training and instruction from the singing teachers on the elementary rules of singing and the rudiments of reading notes, with the final objective of improving the quality of

¹⁹ The singing schools, explained in more detail in Chapter 3.1, began in the mid-1700's and continued to flourish up until the Revolutionary War (1783)

singing in the church. It is also worth mentioning that all participants paid a fee for this service.

This was not at all similar to the objectives of community sings which were for the pleasure of the event itself and were open to all the public, not just to those who could afford to attend. There was no emphasis on attaining musical skills or goal to perform.

Public school music education has roots that are strongly grounded in the singing school model. These roots are not based on the same philosophical premise as community music, but instead are based on a philosophical model that emphasized teaching children to sing properly, improving vocal technique, mastering music literacy and performing.

This comparison of philosophical approaches is useful, not for the goal of choosing one approach over another but rather as a framework for recognizing the differences in approaches and allowing for merits of each one.

Birge missed this fact when he claims that practically all of the beginnings of music education in the Boston schools could be classed as "community music." (Birge 1937, p.225) He believes this to be true because the participants, in his mind, were predominantly amateurs and the amateur spirit pervaded it all. It is probably true that the participants, all children, were amateurs. They certainly weren't professional musicians. The amateur spirit, however, was quickly discouraged as more and more emphasis was put on specializing the profession and working towards performance and perfection.

I firmly agree with Birge when he does finally conclude that, by the beginning of the 20th century:

professionalism came to the front and created a musical class consciousness, and the typical music student, dreaming of a musical career as concert soloist, drew away from amateur enterprises. The solo church quartet largely displaced the traditional chorus choir. School-music withdrew to the four walls of the schoolroom and began to hunt for a solution of how to teach all of the children to read music. (Birge 1937, p.226)

Birge suggests that the amateur spirit continued through choral societies, town bands, YMCAs orchestras, and massed singing groups in shops, industries, and lodges such as Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions clubs. (Birge 1937, p.160) He seems to finally acknowledge a clearer understanding of the difference between the community singing movement and the goals of music education when he adopts a viewpoint often voiced by other community singing supporters:

This renaissance of the amateur spirit in music is an expression of democracy. It affords the opportunity and encouragement of each person old and young to use the music that is in him in cooperation with others. Music, like all the fine arts, has its aristocracies, but in its community expression it is increasingly democratic. (Birge 1937, p. 226)

Although music educators were eager to link aspects of community singing to public school singing, there were basic elements underlying the philosophy of the community singing movement that differed from public school singing. These differences are significant and need clarifying.

The Value and Purpose of Community Singing

The basic elements that were woven into the community singing model included beliefs about the value and purpose of singing together, opinions about

the repertoire appropriate for group singing, and an opinion about who qualifies as a singer.

Regarding the purpose of community singing, Zanzig, one of the movement's recognized song leaders, felt strongly that the dominant musical culture in the United States was and had always been too passive, too dependent on specialized professionalism without roots in the everyday life and feelings of the people. (Zanzig 1932, p.v) In the introduction of a 64 page book, *Community and Assembly Singing* (1933) a guide written primarily for those interested in taking on the role of song leader in the community, Zanzig notes the main purpose and value of singing together.

Community singing, Zanzig stresses, is meant to be for the participation of everyone, regardless of his or her musical ability, and should not be directed toward giving a concert. He criticizes the traditional approach to singing for leaving the audience out. In his opinion the audience is indispensable and a dominant factor in music making. He promotes the idea of putting no restrictions on singing at all. Everyone participates, everyone is involved. (Zanzig 1933, p.5)

Zanzig's philosophy of actively involving the audience and thus, in a sense, dissolving the separation between audience and performer is atypical. The more typical philosophy is to distinguish the roles of audience and performer, seeing audience members as inactive, passive listeners. The community singing model fuses the two categories and creates one – the participant.

Zanzig's belief system around this issue of audience and participant more closely relates to the non-western cultural perspectives, such as I experienced

when I visited Ghana. Zanzig's approach points out a great disparity between what singing meant in "community singing" and in music education.

Will Earhart, whose book, *Meaning and Teaching of Music*, was published ten years after Zanzig's, broadens the list of reasons for singing together and does so in a most passionate manner. He suggests that singing, above all other arts, has spiritual and humanistic benefits.

In his book, written primarily for the music educator, he emphasizes the difference between community singing, and singing as it is constructed by music education. Radically, he advises music teachers to teach spirituality as well as musical skills. He suggests that music enhances imagination and creative thought, which lead to a more humanistic approach to education, a concept Earhart strongly promoted. (Earhart 1942, p.220)

Earhart believed that singing allowed for a person's interest, understanding, ability in musical expression, and "aesthetic musical delight" to be enhanced purely through the act of participation. (Earhart 1942, p.220) As with Zanzig, Earhart emphasized participation over all else as the most important quality.

"Why sing?" was the question asked by Harry Wilson, another major player in the community singing movement, in his book, *Lead a Song!*, published in 1942. (Wilson 1942) At the top of Wilson's list of answers to his question was "personal expression." He supported the idea that people of all ages can find satisfaction in expressing themselves through song. His list of benefits for singing together is extensive: It is soothing, stirring, uplifting, and renewing of the spirit. It is a satisfying experience for the body and soul. From his own

experience singing, he concluded that it produces beneficial emotional and physical changes. (Wilson 1942)

He also gives credence to the obvious, but sometimes overlooked or even ridiculed notion (particularly by music educators) that singing is downright fun and should be valued for that fact. He quite blatantly chides music educators:

[If] the study of music becomes too technical or too philosophical it often impairs its richest values. Singing should retain the spirit of recreation because it will then hold values that realize the aims of recreation. (Wilson 1942, p.35)

Zanzig, like Wilson, appreciated the “fun” of singing together and also put it high on the list of reasons for people to sing together. Like Wilson, he too insisted that there was no reason for music educators to scorn community singing because it was not about “musical taste.” It was about having a good time. Singing, simply for the joy of it, “fooling” as he sometimes referred to it, was essential for providing the inner source of nourishment to people. (Zanzig 1933, p.40)

Imagine the primary goal of singing being to nourish people for the other aspects of their lives. If this defines the meaning of community singing, how could anyone question its worth or dispute its place in education?

Wilson is quick to point out that the stress and strain that often comes with preparing for public performances is not an integral part of community singing. He begins by referring to Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address (1863):

Singing is of the people, by the people and for the people. It is democratic to the core. Educational and social values are present but they are secondary. There is no harm in singing just for fun. I frankly feel sorry for the person who cannot occasionally forget his lofty

standard of music and join in with a group in making music just for fun. (Wilson 1942, p.34)

Zanzig similarly emphasized that striving for excellence in performance should not win out over excellence in feeling. (Zanzig 1932, p.42)

When Peter Dykema wrote Edward Birge a letter in 1940, he spoke directly to issues addressed by Wilson. He specifically reiterated that three reasons why he felt people should sing together: First, it is a great aid to sanity of emotional life and hence to all life. Second, it tends to broaden sympathy and understanding of our own lives and the lives of other people. Third, it so wonderfully stimulates sociability and comradeship and fellowship. (Birge 1932, pp.21-22)

A sense of freedom of spirit, sociability and feeling are themes that form the basic elements of community singing. These elements could be said to constitute the basis of another aesthetic – the *aesthetic of community singing*. Although the leaders of the community singing movement did not use the term “aesthetic,” they were clear that the type of singing valued in community singing settings was set apart and given a different meaning from singing as it was valued or named in music education settings.

How were the terms “singing” and “singer” defined
by the community singing leaders?

The meaning of the words “singer” and “singing” in the realm of public education was directly connected to learning to read music, mastering vocal skills

and performing. There were two categories created as a result of this underlying philosophy: singers and non-singers.

In community singing, the scope of what it meant to be a singer focused on the process of singing and not on the technique. Anyone could join a community sing and these sings often included groups of people who had little experience singing. There were no categories of singers. Everyone was a singer. This is a very important distinction between community singing and singing in music education.

In the context of community singing, a "singer" was largely defined as anyone, young and old, who participated in the group. (This is reminiscent of my musical experiences in Ghana.) The emphasis was on bonding with the group and creating group expression. To be a singer did not mean acquiring technical skills or learning specific musical concepts. Rather, it meant being part of a human emotional and spiritual experience that fostered enjoyment, fellowship, socializing, recreation, cooperation, collaboration, companionship, and emotional release. Community singing meant building social solidarity, building morale, refreshing the spirit and making beautiful music together.

As an example, in the mid 1900's, my mother, now in her 90's, regularly attended "grange" sings held monthly in her small town in Pine Plains, New York. The Grange, an organization for local farmers, sponsored these community gatherings which included singing and dancing. Mother recalls that everyone in the town, adults and children, would gather for these social events, which always began with group singing.

When I asked what songs she remembered singing, she listed folk songs such as *Old Kentucky Home*, *Old Black Joe*, *Old Folks at Home* and patriotic songs such as *America* and *America the Beautiful*. She was quick to point out that whatever the song was, it was easy and familiar to everyone and didn't take "learning." "We just sang for fun. We already knew the songs so we didn't need to practice." she said. "That's why it was fun." The informal conductor was the woman playing the piano. After about an hour of singing, the chairs were cleared out of the way and the rest of the evening was spent doing lively square-dances.

What was the community singing repertoire?

The repertoire used for community singing promoted social and emotional goals, and included vernacular or folk songs that were more directly connected to people's life experience. The songs were easily learned and had meaningful lyrics. It was inherent in the philosophy of community singing that music was a part of life and vernacular songs should be honored since they represented the life of the people across America.

As the community singing movement took hold, the demand for more community singing material arose, particularly for recreational purposes and the "promotion of community good-will and fellowship." (Dykema 1919) Dykema had been instrumental in selecting a short list of eighteen songs for distribution (published in 1917), with assistance from members from the National Conference of Music Supervisors. The booklet was called *55 Community Songs*, and

according to the notes, it was suitable "not only at community gatherings but also in schools, especially in upper grades and high schools." (Dykema 1917)

By 1919, community groups across the country expressed an interest in obtaining more material and the committee, again led by Dykema, published a second volume, *Twice 55 Community Songs: The Green Book*. (Refer to Appendix D, pp. 264-265 for a copy of the indexes from *55 Community Songs* and *Twice 55 Community Songs*.) The preface of *Twice 55 Community Songs* note that an appreciation of singing has risen in every place where community singing has taken root. It was for this reason *Twice 55* was published. There was an unmistakable demand for a greater scope in material to meet the improved abilities of the singers, which occurred by providing more opportunities to sing. (Dykema 1919, preface)

The *Twice 55* songbook aimed to meet the demand by bridging the now-familiar community sings events with choral societies. It included a wide range of folk songs, (*Gentle Annie, Old Folks at Home, Li'l Liza Jane, Billy Boy*) holiday songs, (*Deck the Halls, First Nowell*), patriotic songs (*America, America the Beautiful, The Star Spangled Banner*), spirituals (*Nobody Know the Trouble I See, I Ain't Gwine Study War No More, Go Down, Moses*) as well as more difficult material directed towards choral singing such as song arrangements in four-parts (*I Waited for the Lord* by Mendelssohn, *Who Is Sylvia?* by Schubert).

Song leaders were continually reminded through community singing literature and guides that the major goal was to get people singing. Song leaders were told that if introducing more difficult and challenging repertoire caused

participation numbers to dwindle, then it was advised to move immediately to more accessible repertoire such as "folk" songs, humorous song, rounds and patriotic songs. (Wilson 1942, p.40) There was always the continued goal of having everyone feel as if they were "singers."

.What Was the Effect of the Community Singing Movement

On Singing in the Public Schools?

It is interesting to note that a good ten years before the community music movement played a significant role in American society, a small number of music educators expressed concern about the increased, singular focus in music education on reading notes. A few music leaders presented a proposal for establishing a new context for music education.

In 1903, Samuel Cole, at a meeting in Boston of the New England Education Association, stated his ideas about teaching music in public schools. The point of music instruction, he said, should not be about creating expert sight singers or individual soloists. Cole himself was the product of traditional music teaching and felt the traditional methods, such as emphasizing note reading, had hindered rather than helped him. It was his opinion that they became an end and not a means because they represented only the abilities of a few. He challenged music education to the more noble, grander, more inspiring goal of getting the great masses to sing and to making them love it. (Cole 1903)

The result of this new philosophical thinking, alongside the experiences of the community singing movement, resulted in the development, by the mid-

twentieth century, of a mission of music education that attempted to create a pedagogical framework that essentially *blended* traditionally-established viewpoints with newer concepts.

The new combined philosophy focused on showing that children could learn to read music without destroying a love for singing, suggesting that properly directed song singing would help rather than hinder music reading. Music educators took advantage of the collections of songs that were published during the community music movement and used them extensively in schools as a way to get every child in America familiar with similar songs.

In our own day, there are indications that the leaders in the music education field are giving way to supporting a more "singing friendly" atmosphere that at least accepts singing for the sake of singing, not only for obtaining skills. Although music educators indicate an interest in getting more children singing, the strong components of music literacy and vocal technique are not eliminated and continue to be the dominant thread that is interwoven into the process of teaching singing.

The desire of music educators to support a philosophical premise that serves and supports the spirit of amateurism continues to exist. Mark and Gary conclude their book, *A History of American Music Education*, with the claim, like Birge from the 1920's, that "music education of the twentieth century is committed to serving amateurs." (Mark and Gary 1992, p.374) The challenging question to ask is: Is that truly happening? I don't believe so, but I do believe it's

possible and the community music movement provides an excellent base for making it happen.

What is it about community music that has been and continues to be appealing to music educators? In what ways does it connect or support the basic philosophy of music education? Can community music serve as another model for singing together?

In 1995 the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) formed a committee to launch another campaign to "Get America Singing....Again! The members of this committee, similar to the committee that was formed to select songs for the first community singing songbooks, were also interested in establishing a "common song repertoire that Americans of all ages know and can sing." (MENC 1996, p.ii) They also had a second objective of rekindling the spirit of the community singing movement. A new songbook was published in 1996, created with the vision that it would be used at concerts and recitals, at a variety of public gatherings, in homes, in churches, at camps and in schools.

In the introduction of *Get America Singing....AGAIN!*, (MENC 1996) Will Schmid, President of the MENC, recognizes the fact that there are increasing numbers of people not singing, and that many adults refer to themselves as "non-singers." In the introduction to the booklet, Schmid begins by confessing that children who enter kindergarten would rather slap on earphones than sing. He strongly supports the basic concept of community singing, pointing out that what is at stake is not just singing but the very spirit of community in towns, cities, and

the nation. Schmid believes that the *Get America Singing.....AGAIN!* booklet is a solution to rebuilding community through song. (MENC 1996, introduction)

By the year 2000, MENC published an article in the *Journal of Research in Music Education (JRME)* called *Common Songs of the Cultural Heritage of the United States: A Compilation of Songs That Most People Know and Should Know*. This article was intended to clarify what it means to "know" a song and to clarify the repertoire of songs from the lists compiled in the songbooks: 55 *Community Songs*, *Twice 55*, and *Get America Singing.....AGAIN!* The author of the article, Kenneth M. McGuire, concludes that there is disparity between the songs that Americans actually know and those that "experts" say they should be learning.

The interesting factor about this research, in conjunction with MENC's acknowledgement of the increasing number of non-singers, is that leaders in the field of music education are recognizing that people are not singing and, more importantly, are genuinely interested in getting them to sing.

Since the early 1900's this issue of the "non-singer" has been discussed in music education circles, and various solutions from publishing songbooks to creating a new philosophy of singing have emerged as solutions. Most conversations center on the simple fact that there is a decline in group-singing in schools. Charles Elliott speculates on the problem in his article, "Singing in America, Reviving a Tradition." (Elliott 1990) Elliot believes it is truly a tragedy that community singing has suffered a major decline in recent years, a decline that has been to the detriment of society in general and of public school music

education in particular. He questions why the United States would abandon the tradition of community singing and speculates that although recent technological developments have contributed to its decline, his belief is that the finger points to the public school music teachers. They have not done their job. (Elliott 1990, p.25)

I think music educators such as Charles Elliot are correct. There is a problem. People are not singing. Children are not singing. And certainly, the general classroom teachers are not singing. Elliott reminds the reader that music education, for many decades has adopted the motto, "Music for every child and every child for music." (Elliott 1990, p.25)

This motto does suggest that music educators are earnestly interested in getting every child to sing, or from their perspective getting every child to "learn to sing." I find it interesting that there is never mention of engaging the classroom teacher or others in the school community in singing. The only problem stated is that children aren't singing.

Children aren't going to sing if their teachers aren't singing, particularly if their teachers claim they can't sing. That belief is not conducive to encouraging singing. Getting children to sing means getting classroom teachers singing and that means shifting the paradigm of the "non-singer" because, as is evident from the research in my small study, classroom teachers tend to define themselves as "non-singers."

Publishing more and more songbooks does not work. Nor does convincing people they are singers by telling them they are or telling them what

songs they "should know." Neither does creating a "blended" philosophy that attempts to weave the traditional "taproot" approach of singing (which emphasizes skill building and performance and separates singers from non-singers) with the more humanistic, community singing approach. These approaches do not get people who are convinced they can't sing, to sing.

Before moving to a proposal for solving the problem of the non-singer, first it is important to clearly articulate community singing in aesthetic terms. This process allows for comparing and contrasting this newly-defined aesthetic with the traditional aesthetic of singing now currently established, recognized and valued in public schools.

Chapter 4.2

Singing: Two Aesthetics

As we have seen in the previous six chapters, the solution to the problem of the “non-singer” in schools is a complex one. We have seen that leaders in the community singing movement, many of whom were interested in music education, promoted the establishment of community singing in school settings as well as other public arenas. They were dedicated not only to getting the general public, but school children, singing as well, and they pushed hard to validate the concept of community singing to public school music teachers. I think they were on to something really important when they began to articulate the qualities of community singing and promote the importance of integrating them into the school environment.

By the middle of the twentieth century, many leaders in music education were seemingly eager to perpetuate an ideology that instilled a philosophy of music education based on an “amateur spirit.”²⁰ They also continued to insist that music education be framed in the familiar philosophy established firmly by the “taproot.”²¹ They were clearly in a quandary.

²⁰ Mark and Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, state this clearly in their final chapter. (Mark and Gary 1992, p.374)

²¹ Chapter 3.1, *The Roots of Singing in America's Public Schools*, describes the formation of the “taproot” in detail.

The Problems of Blending Two Aesthetics

By the beginning of the twentieth century, a new philosophy of music education was emerging ²² that satisfied both those promoting community singing and those firmly embedded in the established aesthetic of singing related to note reading and skill building. The philosophy involved blending the two viewpoints. Instruction in "singing" continued to emphasize musical literacy and the obtainment of technical vocal and performance skills. Large singing gatherings were instituted as another venue for providing that instruction.

Although their hearts were in the right place, the solution of integrating the concept of community singing into the schools by "blending" the philosophies of community singing and music education was a terrible idea. It did nothing more than diminish the inherent values of community singing. All too quickly the essential nature of community singing was completely swallowed up by the more strongly defined aesthetic of singing. The emphasis on mastering musical literacy and vocal skills overpowered feelings of spontaneity and enjoyment.

This is not to suggest that the two ideologies cannot live side by side, happily enough. I believe they can. But blending them is not the answer. Each approach has qualities and values that are distinct and different and each has a particular purpose. One is not better than the other and they need not be in competition with one another. What must be recognized are the differences and values each brings to singing in schools. Blending them together does not serve either philosophy well.

²² This new philosophy is introduced by Samuel Cole in his 1903 address to the National Education Association.

Before pursuing in a more in-depth argument for articulating and valuing the aesthetic of community singing, I offer the following chart as useful in comparing the qualities and values of community singing and those of the traditional approach to singing in schools.

Two Viewpoints on Singing

<u>The Community Singing Aesthetic</u>	<u>The Traditional Music Education Aesthetic</u>
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Process emphasized	Product emphasized
Vernacular repertoire	Classical repertoire
Participation emphasized	Performance emphasized
Musical ability irrelevant	Musical ability important
Stresses social value	Stresses skill building
Spontaneous singing promoted	Organized drills/ techniques promoted
Excellence in feeling emphasized	Excellence in skills emphasized
Purpose is enjoyment	Purpose is performance, attainment of skills
Singing for spirit of fun and recreation	Singing for educational value
No restrictions on who sings or is a singer	Talent recognized and valued
Fosters emotional & spiritual experiences	Fosters acquiring technical musical skills
One category: singers	Two categories: singers/non-singers
Inclusive	Exclusive
Sing in a circle formation facing other singers	Sing facing a conductor

The “taproot” of music education lies deep in the cultural and societal roots of music education in this country. From this taproot a context for singing in education has been firmly established. This deeply-seated root stretches across not only the United States but Europe and Asia, and highly influences the way school children in communities, towns, suburbs and cities in many parts of the world understand what it means to “sing.”

This deeply-seated root is now becoming recognized by music education organizations as somewhat problematic. In a bulletin sent out in June 2001, calling for proposals for a conference on Community Music Activities, the widely-respected International Society for Music Education, (ISME), officially recognized the firm influence of western classical music on world music education programs. They admit that most music education in the world has been organized around the “great tradition of western classical music” and that this solid structure has its limitations in terms of flexibility. Music education programs are affected by these limitations. (ISME 2001)

By accepting an attempt to *blend* the two philosophies, music education leaders did, in all respects, show a commitment for and recognition of the value of community singing for children. The leaders of the community singing movement had been successful in articulating the distinct benefits of community singing. They emphasized how singing together was “an expression of freedom, a way to renew the spirit, release emotion and mental tensions, build morale and enable ordinary people to create beauty.” (Zanzig 1933, pp.5-6)

The leaders clearly named criteria that set community singing apart from the commonly accepted type of singing occurring in schools. Music educators witnessed the benefits of community singing and had a desire to incorporate them into the school setting. They earnestly believed that “blending” the two viewpoints had the possibility of “getting the great mass of children singing and making them love it.” (Cole 1903) W.C. Cole, at the Boston meeting of the New Education Association, in 1903, noted:

It is the mission of the new education to blend these two viewpoints and to show that children can learn to read music without destroying a love for singing, and further that properly directed song singing will help rather than hinder music reading. (Cole 1903)

Although the term “viewpoint” is used by these music educators, I believe they could, just as easily have used the word “aesthetic.” By doing so, the concept of community singing would have gained respect and value by the mainstream culture. Officially naming both the traditional and the community singing approach as aesthetics assigns importance and worth to each.

By the early part of the twentieth century, music educators came up with a solution for blending community singing into the music curriculum in an effort to build a singing school community. They promoted getting every child to learn to sing, and one method of doing that was to “teach every child about his or her cultural heritage through the fostering of a common body of songs.” (Elliott 1990, p.25) They began by using the songbooks published during the community singing movement. (See Appendix D, pp.264-265 for the index of songs from 55

Community Songs and Choruses and Twice 55 Community Songs, The Green Book.

Building a Singing Repertoire

It was the goal of music education to insure that students leave public school feeling positive about music and value it in their daily lives. Music educators wanted children to gain some familiarity with their cultural heritage, and they believed that could be accomplished by exposing students to group singing activities where they and learn songs representative of their history and cultural heritage. (Elliott 1990, p.26)

By 1996, MENC, building on the community singing repertoire, published a new book of songs: *Get America Singing.....Again!* (MENC 1996) This book reinstated and supported the old campaign for community singing and for establishing a common song repertoire. (See Appendix E, p.266 for list of songs in *Get America Singing.....Again!*)

These collections illustrate a sincere effort on the part of music educators to integrate community singing into the mainstream of music education. The result was that the concept of community singing came very close to making a major impact on the philosophy of music education but in the end, fell short.

Unable to let go, adjust or change the widely-accepted aesthetic of singing, and trying to blend two, music educators, in fact, tried "grafting" onto the taproot. The impact of this idea was that the distinct qualities of community

singing were integrated into the nature of the stronger root, and eventually would disappear completely.

Blending, a concept that introduced at the turn of the century, was not successful because the basic assumptions underlying the two aesthetics are incompatible. In community singing, for example, musical ability is irrelevant. In the traditional approach, musical ability is important and emphasized. Community singing does not categorize singers and non-singers, the traditional approach does. Community singing is process oriented; the traditional approach is the product-oriented.

The consequence was that the true essence of community singing was lost. Is it possible to hold the essence of community singing apart from the well-established, "taproot" aesthetic? I believe it is. This can be accomplished by formally validating community singing as a separate and distinct aesthetic. Articulating it as an aesthetic distinguishes its unique qualities and officially recognizes the value it brings to the school environment. It gives credibility to a way of singing that has, in the past, and in the present continues to be dismissed simply as "fun" or even "hap-hazard."²³ The possibility of recognizing two aesthetics for singing is not an impossible one. In addition to acquiring skills and vocal expertise, community singing fosters human experiences such as building community, renewing the spirit and fostering collaboration, companionship and

²³ Charles Elliot, *Singing in America: Reviving a Tradition*, *Music Educators Journal*, emphasizes this attitude mentioning that "teachers selected songs entirely for their value in teaching predetermined concepts. Singing for the sheer joy of singing was not highly valued." (Elliott 1990, p.25)

fellowship. The two aesthetics do not work in opposition but in fact, support, enhance and are complementary of one another.

Perhaps due to the nature of western thought, which seems to encourage the establishment of hierarchies, music educators have long-struggled with "either/or" dilemmas. Debates rage over whether one viewpoint or the other is "the best." There is never a discussion that both can exist separately but work together. In the case of community singing the solution was to "blend" the two viewpoints which essentially meant that the traditional method for teaching singing won out.

In the history of music education, there are many situations where music educators felt compelled to make difficult philosophical choices about how music should be taught in schools. As early as the mid-1700's there was great controversy over which approach to teaching singing was preferable and most academically sound. The rote versus note methods of teaching singing instilled great debate²⁴ and note reading or finally won out. Music literacy became an all-important goal and singular method for teaching singing in music education.

Again, one of the current debates facing music educators lies in the area of pedagogy. Recently much argument has ensued over which philosophical approach is best and should be adapted – the aesthetic or conceptual approach.. By the 1990's the favored philosophical basis for teaching music was "to show how and why music education is aesthetic in its nature and its value." (Reimer

²⁴ By the early 1700's there were two ways of singing psalm tunes, one was by singing the notes or reading music; the other was to repeat each musical line that was sung by a song leader. (Mark 1992, p.63)

1970, p.2) This has been the accepted approach by music educators for over fifty years. It has now gone out of favor by many and is considered wrong. Conceptual learning is the currently favored approach which involves not just sensing but performing, improvising, composing, arranging and conducting. Music educators feel they must make a choice between the two methods or pedagogical approaches.

A Solution: The Both/And Approach

In any case, I have yet to come upon anyone who suggests accepting a "both" rather than "either/or" approach. This means not blending two into one, but holding each separately, valuing the distinct qualities and elements of each. I want to boldly suggest, in the case of singing, that taking the "both" approach is the solution. It's possible and it makes sense. The two aesthetics can function in the same school, at the same time, and both can be valued in their own right. The final result will build a musical community that is strengthened in numbers and in spirit.

The emphasis put on "getting every child to learn to sing" has proven to be effective and there are no doubt thousands of students across the United States who can read music, participate in choruses, perform great musical works. These students are excellently trained in vocal technique. But it is also true that there are thousands of classroom teachers and students who do not sing and moreover, and therefore, fall into the category of "non-singers." Articulating

community singing as another aesthetic for singing can shift this paradigm and dispel the myth of the “non-singer.”

Community singing not only gets children singing, it gets everyone in the school singing: classroom teachers, administrators, aides, and parents. Participation rather than skill building is emphasized. The emphasis shifts from the goal of learning concepts to the goal of participating and singing for the sheer joy of singing; it opens up opportunities for a more diverse leadership at song gatherings.

The responsibility for leading the song gatherings does not fall only on the shoulders of the music specialist. The music specialist can “let go” of what’s being sung. She no longer is the “only one” perceived as able to conduct the sing-a-longs or choose the repertoire. Anyone can become the leader; anyone can select the songs: groups of students, teachers, school staff, parents. The possibilities are endless.

The aesthetic of community singing allows for not one taproot, but a wide variety of roots to settle anywhere and adapt to the local soil. School communities in Vermont and Maine may be interested in searching out songs of the sailors or lumberjacks, in California, songs of the Gold Rush or railroad songs. Those in the western states may learn songs of the cowboys. New Englanders may sing songs of the sea, or mill songs. Songs reflecting the various linguistic and ethnic cultures of each school can be naturally incorporated and tied to curriculum. What more lively way to help children understand the diverse society we are?

Inherent in the aesthetic of community singing is that singing gatherings can happen anywhere, led by anyone, because the emphasis is on participation. Classroom teachers will feel encouraged to sing with their students. Parents will be encouraged to share songs. Singing is open to anyone who is willing to participate.

Accepting the aesthetic of community singing can have a profound positive effect on the music education curriculum. Occasionally considered by some as a possible deterrent for "good singing," community singing engages everyone in singing and can only lead to an heightened interest in singing which in turn, leads to greater interest in choral activities and more formal singing opportunities. Community singing encourages life-long singing.

Culture and society have constructed a framework for the perceptions we hold about what singing is and who sings, particularly as singing is defined in education. This "taproot" belief system runs deep. Introducing another aesthetic of singing allows the opportunity for the entire school community and particularly the classroom teacher and the music specialist, to shift those long-held perceptions and accept that "singing" can be valued from more than one "viewpoint" or aesthetic.

Maxine Greene reminds us in *Releasing the Imagination* to be open to transformations and breakthroughs. She warns us that when the familiar paradigms continue to be used, our lives proceed in a narrow pathway, becoming a "cul-de-sac" or dead-end where the need for alternative possibilities are repressed or ignored. It is imperative to tap into the imagination and go beyond

what is supposedly fixed and finished to see beyond what might be called normal or "common-sensible" and to carve out new orders of experience. (Greene 1995, pp.18-19)

"To break through what is supposedly fixed" is not always easy and does take imagination and transformation. This shift in thinking about singing can be compared to the different ways western classical and "folk" or vernacular²⁵ music has been considered and valued in music education. Western classical music has historically been labeled by the culture as "good" music. The aesthetic associated with western classical music meets particular criteria. It has a recognizable form, it is written down or notated, and composers of classical music have long been recognized for their "greatness" in the music field.

Although valued by music educators for providing school children with an exposure to "our rich cultural heritage" (Elliott 1990, p.25), vernacular music has never had a specific aesthetic associated with it. Vernacular music is not associated with a particular recognizable form. Songs were not typically written down by traditional singers but recorded and transcribed later by those who collected the songs. Many composers of vernacular music are unknown. Usually vernacular music is sung informally, in small community settings, churches, camps, family gatherings. For the most part, it is not performed in a concert setting but in small, familiar groups where there is no formal delineation between audience and participant.

²⁵ I prefer using the term vernacular, meaning native to the culture or area, rather than "folk" which has a less specific meaning and has become a large, general term for a wide genre of music.

However difficult, the shift in the paradigm can be and should be accomplished. We can “carve out new orders of experience.” (Greene 1995, .19) With imagination, both aesthetics can be held equally in the minds of all educators. Supporting two aesthetics is not only possible, it is essential.

My experience of working together with classroom teachers and music specialists has proven that each is able to change their perceptions and shift the paradigm, coming to the realization that there is a fundamental need and a place for both. (Chapter 5.1 provides details) An astounding result of this process is that “non-singers” do, in fact, become a myth. They cease to exist. Everyone is singing. Everyone is a singer.

This chapter presents a solution that will, I believe, get Americans singing again. The solution proposed is quite the opposite concept to *blending* the philosophies of community singing and the traditional method of singing. In fact, it quite deliberately and emphatically separates them; moreover it suggests a formal recognition and articulation of “another aesthetic for singing,” creating a “parallel” context for valuing both.

SECTION FIVE

DISPELLING THE MYTH OF THE NON-SINGER

Chapter 5.1

A Teaching Model for Singing Together:

Presenting a “Virtual” Master class

Most music educators easily accept the fact that, in their assigned schools, they are responsible for instigating and implementing most, if not all, of the singing and other musical activities that take place. And unfortunately, due to budget and time constraints, these musical experiences are often quite limited. Most classroom teachers turn over total responsibility for all their students' music education solely to the music specialist. The classroom teachers believe that the contribution they are able to make towards their students' music education is limited to playing recorded background music during work time. Classroom teachers rarely, if ever, initiate singing activities. Why is this the case?

My research on the meaning of singing confirms that most general education teachers, although recognizing the value of singing and other musical activities, lack the confidence and/or training to implement such activities with their students. The research also reveals that most music specialists express frustration about that fact that classroom teachers rarely conduct any kind of musical activities with their students. Music educators confess that they are generally unsuccessful at convincing classroom teachers to change their attitude or practice. It is my belief, confirmed by the research data, that music educators are inexperienced or in fact, lack the incentive for developing ways to encourage classroom teachers to sing with their students.

This chapter provides a pedagogical approach, embedded in a philosophy that promotes the aesthetic of community singing, that gets everyone singing. It is a teaching strategy I have practiced in the courses I teach when working with teachers in a Masters in Education program in integrated arts (Lesley University, Cambridge, Massachusetts)

I have chosen to present this information in a format that reads much like a master class. I have written this teaching scenario as a “virtual transcript” of a typical music course aimed at teachers (K – high school classroom teachers and music, art, and physical education specialists). Inserted into the transcript are personal comments explaining how and why I chose to introduce a particular activity or present a song or activity in a particular way.

It is not my intention, in presenting this information, to present a “script” for others who work with teachers to follow verbatim. Rather, the intention is to present the information in a format that comes as close as possible to experiencing the course “live.” This allows for the reader to witness the approach, hear the rationale behind the approach, and listen to reactions from teachers. This approach illustrates how long-held cultural perceptions can and do shift, and demonstrates how alternative ways of practicing singing in education can be of great benefit to the entire educational community.

This chapter is about creating solutions and shifting this paradigm. What can be done to change the current practices of both music specialists and classroom teachers? Is it possible to transform the framework that is presently in

place? Is it possible to shift a mindset that is so ingrained in American culture and society?

This chapter is optimistic. It is not about what is impossible or what obstacles will be encountered. To borrow a phrase from Boston Philharmonic conductor Ben Zander, it is about “creating frameworks for possibility.” (Zander and Zander 2000)

I hope to present ideas that make it possible to transform systems and, more importantly, to shift deeply rooted ideas and beliefs, and thus open up possible solutions for transformation. This is not to suggest that this process will be easy. The paradigm that presently exists is deeply-rooted and has been in the process of settling comfortably into place for over two hundred years. I believe based on my experience, that the shift is possible. Paulo Freire affirms, “To change things is difficult but possible.” (Freire 1998 p.75)

Suggested Teaching Practices: Creating an More Inclusive Singing Community

Through this “virtual transcript,” I hope to provide the reader with specific examples that illustrate the kinds of teaching methods and activities I use when working with my students, many of whom have little or no experience with singing. These methods have proven to be overwhelmingly successfully in shifting the paradigm of how teachers experience singing themselves and with their students and what meaning they give to singing in the classroom.

The participants in the course I am using for this example are typical of the students I teach. The typical class size is twenty-four students and most of the

students are general classroom teachers, kindergarten through high school. There are also a few specialists (music, art, physical education) in the class.

The course used for this "virtual transcript" is *The Music Workshop*, a course that focuses on integrating music into the curriculum. It is a required course in the Creative Arts in Learning program.

In general, it is my experience that the majority of the students enrolled in the program share with me that, of all the courses they are required to take, they are most nervous about the music course. Most of my students bring with them many long-held fears and assumptions about singing and making music. The music specialists, of course, are quite relaxed about the music course and are often unaware or unable to comprehend the fear and hesitancy expressed by the classroom teachers about singing.

The presentation of this "virtual transcript " will be structured as if I was conducting a Master Class. This means that I will write out the dialogue between the students and myself and also add my personal comments (in *italics*). The intention behind using this particular format is to provide the reader both with a description of specific musical activities and with additional commentary. It allows me to provide a critique of the activities I present and an explanation of the thinking behind them.

My music courses always involve more than singing activities but for the purpose of this discussion, I have chosen to present only the dialogues having to do with singing activities. They are presented in the order they might appear throughout a semester-long course, offered in three-hour course sessions.

Key to transcript:

L = Louise/instructor

S = student

Italics = my personal commentary

[] = comments indicating logistics or reactions (These comments are similar to stage directions that would appear in a theatre script.)

[set up room with chairs in a large circle]

I always set up the chairs in a circle. This creates an atmosphere of equality where there is no obvious leader. Everyone can see and hear each other much easier than when sitting in rows. If we are going to create music together we must be able to listen to one another. A circle formation enhances this possibility. Also, I avoid, if at all possible, using chairs that have the desks attached or sitting behind tables. The desks or tables create an immediate physical and actually psychological barrier between students themselves and between the students and myself. Desks and tables also make moving around very cumbersome.

Introduction

L= Welcome to the music class. I realize that there is a wide range of experience and emotions about participating in a music course. There may be some of you who can't wait to sing and make music. For others, you may be quite nervous about this course for all sorts of reasons. To relieve the first wave of anxiety and fear for some of you, I want to let you know that it is not a requirement in this class to sing a solo.

[laughter and applause from students]

This response is a strong indication for me that some of the students have, indeed, imagined that they will have to sing a solo and have been quite nervous about it. Singing, for some of them, means singing a solo. I look to notice which heads are nodding and who looks most relieved!

L = Also, I want you to know that it is not a requirement in this course to know how to read music. In fact, we won't be learning to read music, which may be a disappointment to some of you. This course is not about creating music specialists. The focus of this course is to get you to a place where you all feel comfortable about music so that you feel capable of including it as part of your classroom activities. It's about exploring, thinking, experiencing and learning about what it means to integrate music into a classroom curriculum. It means, for many of you, possibly redefining music and thinking about music in new ways. And a large portion of the course is exploring the phenomenon of singing. What does it mean to be a singer?

Singer/Non-Singer Discussion

L= So I'd like you, as a beginning to this course, to get out a piece of paper and jot down your thoughts about these three questions. What is a singer? Are you one? How do you know that? Take a few moments and write down your ideas. Don't over think this. Just write down what comes to mind. We won't be turning these in but we will be discussing your responses in small groups.

[pause for about 10 minutes]

L = OK. Turn to a couple of people near you and compare notes. Listen to each others' responses.

L = (bring group back together) Is there anyone who wants to comment on this?

How did you define a singer? I'm curious about what came out of this idea about a singer. Are there people here who don't think of themselves as singers? (a few hands go up). Let's hear from some of you. Anyone want to share what you wrote down?

S (1) = I never really thought about it before. But I wrote down that a singer is a human being. We all have voices, so I guess I'm a singer.

L = GREAT! Wonderful idea.

S (2) = I think a singer is someone who can sing solos and makes pleasing sounds. I don't think I'm a singer because I don't feel comfortable singing alone.

L (3) = OK. A singer is comfortable singing solos and has a pleasing voice.
Great! Who else?

S(4) = Anyone who sings is a singer. I consider myself a singer cause I do sing along to music and in the shower but I don't sing publicly in a group. But I like to sing so I'm a singer.

S(5) = I sing in my classroom but I'm insecure about singing anywhere else. So I only consider myself a singer part of the time.

S(6) = I'm not a singer. But I like to listen to singing. I'm a good spectator.

L = This is a great discussion and perhaps what is most important in this

discussion is that we're simply having it! Notice the range of responses.

Singing is one of those things that we take for granted. We all assume we know the meaning of what it means to be a singer or to sing. We've heard those words and experienced singing in some form or another for most of our lives. And that is just the point.

The meaning of singing is in fact, loaded with cultural, societal and historical assumptions. Defining a singer as someone who can sing solos, or sing beautifully, or knows lots of songs, or can lead songs or can sing in a lovely soprano voice all grow out of a classical western way of thinking.

For instance, none of these things would make sense if we were having this conversation in Ghana. In fact, we wouldn't be having this conversation in Ghana. It wouldn't happen because the assumption in Ghanaian society is that everyone can sing. It is so much a part of the culture that it's a given. There are not "singers." There is not a category of "singer." Therefore, there is not the category of "non-singer." The category of singer is culturally based. Imagine that!

It is interesting that very early on, in the history of this country, the Puritans chose to separate out the "better singers." They were quite distressed about the sound of the church singing so they picked out the

better singers and essentially told everyone else to mouth the words. Then they found someone to conduct the singers.

None of these decisions were bad or ill intended but it's very important to recognize them as culturally based decisions because those decisions have affected all of us and how we think about the phenomenon of singing. In fact, it's affected how we think about all the arts. It has led us to a place where many of us have internalized a truth that says, if you don't do it well, don't bother. If you don't sound like, I don't know, some wonderful singer you know, Bonnie Raitt, then don't sing. If you can't dance like Baryshnikov, don't dance. And so on.

Music education in this country was first implemented in the mid-1800's by a man named Lowell Mason who convinced the Boston School Committee that all children could be taught to sing. It was an admirable goal and his dedication to achieving that goal led to the basic philosophy in which music education is based today. But notice that Mason based his philosophy on the idea that children needed to be "taught" to sing. This is a culturally-based assumption. Again, back to Africa, this idea would be crazy. You don't need to "teach" children to sing. They just do it naturally. It wouldn't even occur to them to actually formally "teach" a child singing.

Think about it. It's an interesting idea to begin to notice it. We need to begin recognize this paradigm. Then we can shift it and entertain other possibilities.

One of the main goals of this course is for each of you to expand your ideas and thinking about not only singing, but about making music in general. We will explore lots of ways to make music. These ways of making music might be ones that you previously have considered impossible or outside the realm of possibility for you as a teacher.

I want you to begin to take into consideration the possibility of valuing a whole new aesthetic. It is an aesthetic that values groups of individuals singing together, whether or not they are singing perfectly in pitch, whether or not the sound is rhythmically accurate, whether or not the words are clear and enunciated.

S(5) = It's interesting you are bringing this up. I've been trained as a classical singer but I do not consider myself a musician because I can't compose or transpose music. So I'm a singer but not a musician.

L = Ah...so you are quite possibility caught in this cultural definition too. This is a wonderful example and very interesting. I only suggest this conversation because as we go through this course I want you to begin to notice what you carry around that you grew up with. Sometimes it's very subtle.

People who don't sing aren't always the ones who got thrown out of the fourth grade chorus. [laughter from group] Sometimes it is much more subtle. There are messages in the culture that lead us to believe that. We decide we can't sing based on certain things we hear, see, observe, and experience.

That's why I asked the final question, "how do you know that?" How do you base your definition of a "singer" and "singing". That's the important thing to notice. Why and how did you decide. It's often very complicated.

This first discussion begins to set a tone for the class. I'm providing some clear goals and I'm also giving students a chance to voice their thoughts/ideas/fears/opinions. It's a relaxed conversation that we have together. My goal during this initial conversation is simply to get students thinking about their assumptions and to get them engaged in the conversation. I'm not looking for the "right" answer or response. I'm setting up a classroom environment that invites many possibilities. I make it a point of validating everyone's experience. This initial discussion is very important for the music specialists as well as the classroom teachers. For some music specialists, this is the first time they have actually thought about these issues or heard from those who have.

L = I got to thinking about these questions about singing and being a singer

initially because I was fortunate to go to Ghana a few years ago and spent time “making music.” I was struck by how differently they think about this concept of “music making.”

For instance, Ghanaians do have “professional” musicians but it does not negate the ability of anyone else. The professional musicians are considered to be blessed by the ancestors but it doesn’t diminish the rest of the people. Everyone is a musician; some are just chosen to do it professionally. Also, Ghanaians do not have distinct words for singer, dancer, drummer. They are all included in their word “musician.” They do not separate the words out. When I went to Ghana I was in a group with several people who defined themselves as “percussionists.” That is a foreign concept for Ghanaians. They don’t think in those terms. In addition, when there is music making in Ghana everyone participates somehow. There is not a division of audience/participant. Even if you are listening, you are actively listening. Everyone takes part in some way.

These are HUGE cultural differences and I believe it’s important to know about them, think about them, consider them to be other ways of knowing about music and about experiencing music.

The whole thing gets turned upside and I love that! I had a terrible time

initially when I was there because my western way of thinking got in the way. I tried to learn drumming by counting it and making sense of it by trying desperately to put it into a classical Western musical framework. I didn't succeed until I was able to recognize this. Then, as much as humanly possible, I put aside, my western training, and just tried to "be" with the music. This was incredibly hard. My body and my mind are inherently Western. But I knew I couldn't possibly learn to play African drums, sing African songs, dance traditional African dances without letting go of my "westernness." It was so hard. It was a good lesson for me. It's good to challenge things that we know so well, that we take for granted. Turn it upside down.

I believe it's important that the students hear about my experiences. I intentionally share the Ghanaian experience as a way to let them see that I too needed to shift my thinking and it was hard. I am as much a learner as they are. My ways of knowing are also embedded in a Western framework. This discussion helps in creating a safe environment.

Greeting Songs

L = Time to stand up, move and sing – imagine that. Time to "sing." Ah....take a deep breath (*this is to help out and reaffirm those whom I notice are a bit nervous*) and if you're one of those people who defined yourself as a "non-singer" remember that what counts is participation. I am not worried about

the sound or the rhythm or the words. Give it a try. Try and let go of previous assumptions you have about singing and experience this moment as something new.

Push the chairs back a little and make a big circle. Let's start with a few greeting songs. Some of you may be familiar with these songs which is great. You know we sometimes think we can't sing a song more than once. Of course we can. Children and adults love to sing the same songs over and over. Familiarity is wonderful. You know it.

These songs are about greeting one another. This first song is a Nigerian greeting song, *Funga Alafia*. It's a great example of a "folk song" because it has been changed, transformed, adapted to fit many situations. The words are easy – in a Nigerian dialect. They are: Funga Alafia, A shay, a shay. And you repeat that, over and over. That's all there is to it. Easy.

L = [sings first line] OK Let's try it. [group sings]

Fantastic. Now, let's try adding a little clap while we sing. Here we go.

[L demonstrate clap. Group claps and sings]

You greet your friends and neighbors a couple of different ways in this song, with your thoughts, with your words, with your heart and...this is my favorite, you shake your sleeves which essentially means, look, my friend, there is nothing up my sleeves. [demonstrate the movements to these

greetings] This idea is definitely culturally based. I can't imagine people in Boston saying that to each other!

[L. demonstrate singing and movements by having the group sing and practice the motions]

L = Now we are going to try to sing and while doing that scoot ourselves to the left, like this. [demonstrate a side step]

[group groans a bit]

L = My suggestion is that you just don't think about it. It's a little bit like patting your head and rubbing your stomach. It's perhaps too much to think about. If you get to thinking about it, sometimes you really can't do it. There are too many things happening at once. And it really doesn't matter anyway. Just try to keep moving!

I need to pause for a moment before we get started and just tell you about my favorite conductor, Ben Zander, of the Boston Philharmonic, who has a wonderful attitude about this. His philosophy about so-called mistakes is that you should celebrate them. So his response and his suggestion to any mistake made is just to say "How fascinating!" [group laughs]

I have my own philosophy that relates to Zander's. I believe you need to approach singing with the basic assumption that there is no one right way to sing but in fact, there are many ways to be right. So, if you think you are going the wrong way or singing the wrong words, just say to yourself,

“How fascinating!” and go on. It is important to participate, have fun, experience what it’s like to sing together. “Getting it right” is irrelevant.

I introduce this idea of “How fascinating!” to create safety and acceptance. I use this technique to actually try and convince them that there are many ways to be musical and no one way is absolutely right. This is the beginning of shifting the paradigm. Moreover, I don’t really care if they move one way or another or don’t sing the words as I sang them. The important thing is to participate and experience the group singing together. This approach is often contrary to their current understanding of music making. Most of them, music specialists and classroom teachers, have learned that there is only one way to sing. The “How fascinating!” approach always makes a group laugh, perhaps from relief from the pressure, which in turn enhances the relaxed atmosphere and also perhaps challenges their previous way of thinking about singing.

OK. Let’s go. Let’s try the whole thing.

[group sings and does the movements]

L = Now there’s one more part to add. [group groans a little]

This reaction is usually because many of them think they can’t possibly learn or do anything else and be successful. The question, of course, is what “successful” means. So intentionally keep it upbeat and moving before they have too much time to think about it

L = No, no. Don't worry. This is easy. You've got it now. You are going to greet people north, south, east, west which means you are going to jump out, to the right, left and towards the middle. (L demonstrates) Everybody try it. And remember, if you find yourself turning right when everyone else is turning left, just say, "How fascinating!" and turn around! [everyone laughs]

L = Ready. Here we go. Let's try the whole thing.

[group sings entire song all the way through]

L = GREAT! [group applauds at end]

Getting them up and singing early on in the class is important. By presenting an easy song, such as "Funga Alafia," they have immediate success. They experience the expectations I've laid out for them. Singing is about participation. It's not about "getting it right." It's not about developing technical musical skills.

[students often head back to their chairs at this point, eager to write down the words to the songs and make notes]

L = I do have song sheets with me which I'll hand out later. You can look at them at some point and jot down some notes to yourself but you don't need to worry about writing the words down. I suggest that if you want, bring a tape recorder to class, and we'll tape the songs. That's the best way to learn them. It is true that after a while, after we learn quite a few songs, they begin to meld into one and it becomes very difficult to retain the

melodies or the lyrics. Taping the songs does help in learning them and you can play the tape over and over while driving your car.

I intentionally move along quite quickly at this point. I teach the song, which has a simple melody, without much explanation. I sing a line, have them echo me but I do not emphasize perfecting melody, rhythm or pitch. I do use my hand, as if conducting, to indicate the melody going up or down. The visual does help some people. I chose a pitch that is low enough that it is comfortable for everyone in the room. The fact is, although many children's songs are pitched in a high range (soprano register), the majority of adults and children have voices that fall into the middle or alto range.

I am aware of their faces and their bodies. I notice whether they're relaxed and having fun. My goal is for them to look at one another when they greet each other. That's the main point – making connections. They need to become acquainted with the people in the course.

L = Let's learn the other greeting song: *Hey There, Neighbor*. This is one that was written by a woman in Canada. It's not a traditional song but a rather new song. You need a partner so turn and face someone. Shake right hands, left hands. You're going to pull your arms back and forth, wiggle your hips. (L demonstrates movements and sings song, line by line)

Let's try the whole thing. One, two, here we go..... [group sings]

GREAT. [song ends and they all clap]

Oh. There's a second section to this song that is chanted and gives you a chance to get a new partner. [they groan again, thinking it's too much for them to master. L demonstrates second section, having them echo it] OK? Great.

Let's do the entire song. You know the song now, so enjoy it. Look at your partner and greet them. That's the goal of this singing game.

Start with your first partner and then we'll change partners. [group sings, changes partners. Groups sing the song about 5 times to allow several partner changes]

All right. [everyone applauds.]

They are applauding for themselves, I believe. They are quite pleased they sang the song, had fun and "got it right". They're proud of themselves! Nothing like having total success.

[everyone sits down in chairs]

L = That is such a great song. Many teachers use that as a ritual to begin each day. The kids love it and always want to sing it. I dare you all to try it at the next teacher's staff meeting. [everyone laughs] You know how teachers come to those meetings and slump in their chairs. They're tired and don't want to be there. Give this a try. They won't want to get up at first. They might be hesitant just like some of you were, about singing.

But they will get up and try it and then they'll surprise themselves and have a good time, just like we did.

Notice what happened to this group after two songs. We're laughing, we're relaxed, we've greeted each other, we're actually breathing and having a good time. And it only took about 15 minutes! There is a something almost magical about the collective experience that occurs with singing.

L = A basic philosophy of mine is that we need to begin by enjoying music, having fun, singing together. That's where to begin. I noticed that some of you, by the end, had actually invented new words to the "*Hey There, Neighbor*" song! [students laugh] That's OK. In fact, that's great. It really doesn't matter. You'll do that when you go back and share this song with your students. And that's great. Make it work for you. Maybe you'll need to adjust the words. Make the song your own. It's about singing together. It's not about "getting it right". What's right, anyway?

For centuries, traditional or folk songs have been sung, transformed, changed and adapted for different groups and occasions. You'll need to make the songs you sing work for the group of students you're singing with.

If our students experience this kind of "music-making" then there's the

possibility that sometime in their future, they will join the chorus or band.

They know that music is fun and enjoyable. That's where we have to start.

I emphasize this idea of owning the songs. Making them theirs. I really want them to let go of the idea that they aren't getting it right so they better not sing it at all. They always look at me rather skeptically at first when I say, "Who cares?" I'm not sure they believe me at first, but they do come to believe me and they in turn try these songs out with their students.

[pass out songsheets]

L = I have a philosophy about songsheets and I do avoid using them, particularly with children. There's this amazing phenomenon about giving people words to read. The minute you pass out the words people become buried in them. Even if it's the world's most simplest song. Their heads go down.

L = Recently, at my son's wedding, I lead two hundred guests in a three- part round. Going against my better judgement, I passed out the words to the song, thinking it would save time in teaching since I was actually teaching the song as part of the wedding ceremony. The lyrics were simple enough as was the melody.

*Go now in peace,
Go now in peace,*

*May the joy of life surround you ,
Everywhere, everywhere, you may go*

Within minutes everyone was singing beautifully and the sound of two hundred voices reverberating throughout the church was joyful. I did notice, however, that most heads were lowered, their eyes glued to the text. Before the final “performance” of the round, I suggested that they all put their papers down, look up at the bride and groom and sing directly to them. The result was astounding. The sound was fuller and was sung with meaning behind it. Everyone’s faces were vibrant and full of life.

I most often teach the words aurally. Although I do recognize that it’s helpful for some of you to actually see the words so that you can visualize them, there is the danger that you will get buried in them and not trust your ears. Singing is also about listening. So this is good training. We will use the songsheets, particularly with a couple of songs that are not in English. But then we’ll put them down so we can really participate fully in singing.

Sound Diaries

At this point I often have a discussion with the class about a listening assignment I’m giving them for the duration of the course. This involves keeping a sound diary. I want them to note sounds during the day. They can write them down any way they want. We also talk about extinct and endangered sounds.

This assignment gets the students listening. It tunes up their ears. And it begins to expand their ideas about music and music-making. I’m trying to push the

barriers often set by our Western framework about what music means. I leave the way they record the sounds very open. Any way they solve that problem is correct. This approach also reinforces the idea that there are many ways to approach music.

Name Rhythm Activity

L = Let's get up and make a circle again. Now here's what I want you to do. I

want you to say your name. It can be your first and last name or you could also include your middle name. And while your saying it, you clap the syllables at the same time. Here's mine. Lou-ise-Pas-cale. [clapping the 4 syllables while I'm saying my name aloud]

Let's just go around the circle. Say your name and clap it and then as a group we'll echo you. Here we go. (Everyone in the circle says and claps their name and we echo them.

S(2) = [pauses, then laughs]

L = Here's the good thing. I know you know your name. That makes it easy.

Just say it the way you normally would and clap at the same time.

Sometimes I'll do it with them. This hesitation is often the nervousness of doing something rhythmic and worrying about doing it right. But I remind them that they do know their name so this activity is a safe one.

L = Now this time I want you to do the same thing but don't say your name aloud.

Just think it in your head. This is the same process we go through when we read. We're thinking the words. Just clap your "name-rhythm." And if you find this difficult you can say your name softly to yourself and that might help. As each person takes a turn, it is our task to listen carefully. See if you can recognize a "name-rhythm" that sounds like yours. Are they any that are the same?

OK. Here we go. [We go around the room]

L = What did you hear? Any the same? [Students hands go up. They have recognized patterns]

L = Great. Now....we're going to add instruments. I have a lot of instruments over there on the table. You need to go and find one that will work for your "name-rhythm." Some of them might sound better than other ones. For instance, the bells have a sustaining sound that might not be the best. Find the best one for your name.

[back in a circle]

L = Now I'm going to go around the circle and when I point to you add you instrument with your name rhythm. We're going to try and pile them on top of one another. You have a couple of tasks here. First, you need to hold on to your name, unless you really like someone else's name better! [everyone laughs]

Next, the object of this exercise is to listen to one another. We're going to create an ensemble. That means you might need to adjust your rhythm a bit, slow it down, put in a pause.

[I demonstrate using my name]

But we want to finally have a group rhythm that is working together. This is not about solo-ing! After we have all come in I will have you walk around the room and weave in and out with one another.

Let's begin.

I go around and each person adds their rhythm. Then, after everyone is playing, we walk around. I have them play softer and louder and then have them get back into a circle. Finally, I signal to people to drop out one by one so that at the end perhaps only 3 or 4 are playing.

L = Was that hard? Did you have trouble holding on to your name? Did you get pulled over to someone else's?

S(2) = I didn't think I could do it but it sounded great. I did have to change mine a little bit.

S(3) = Walking around was hard but I found someone else who had my rhythm and that helped.

S(4) = It sounded great.

The purpose of this name-rhythm exercise is to get the group working together. The emphasis is about community music-making. It's about listening to and noticing one another and valuing all the rhythms in the group, combining them to work cohesively together. It's always important to clearly define the goals of this exercise ahead of time. They need to know they are working towards a group rhythm. It isn't just about "holding on" to their part and playing as loudly as possible.

Ensemble Building through Rhythm

L = Alright, everyone. Follow me. (I begin a clapping rhythm.) Everyone just copy this clapping pattern.

[L pats knees for one beat and clap for one. Group repeats that several times so that there is a definite unified rhythm going on in the room.]

OK. Keep going. Now, if anyone wants to change her/his rhythm, add something different, expand it, change it, go ahead.

I keep doing the first basic rhythm. Some students begin to invent more complicated rhythms. I let it go on for about 3 minutes or so, listening to what happens. Soon the group rhythm transforms and everyone in the circle is engaged in some way in a polyrhythmic ensemble.

[L signals everyone to stop.]

L = What decisions did you make during this activity? Did you change the rhythm? Did you choose to keep the original rhythmic beat?

Why did you make that decision?

S (1) = I deviated from the basic rhythm because I was bored keeping a steady, simple rhythm and wanted to try adding a new, more interesting rhythm.

L = Wonderful

S(2) = I kept the basic rhythm because I felt a need to keep the steady beat going, creating a foundation for other more complicated beats to play against.

L = Great. How 'bout anyone else?

L = The point is, whatever you chose to do; it was correct. There is no possible way to participate in this activity incorrectly. Most importantly, however, and the point of this exercise is that whatever decision you made in the process of creating the rhythm, your decision affected the whole group. This is the important piece. Every individual contribution and every individual voice is noticed and affects the entire group. Whether or not you chose to create a complicated rhythm, hold onto the basic rhythm or perhaps chooses to not participate at all, your place in the group is noticed and determines the power of the ensemble.

This exercise provides a powerful example that all teachers understand. They are very aware of the behavior of one individual can affect the entire group.

Working cooperatively and in a team are goals that teachers constantly strive for in building a cohesive classroom. This exercise, like the name rhythm exercise, emphasizes group cohesiveness, teamwork, cooperation rather than

individualization. This concept will carry over into the singing activities we will do later on in the course. There are usually quite a few nods of heads as teachers make connections between their own classrooms and this musical activity. For many, it is the first time they have connected music-making of any kind with cooperative learning and group work. Our western training leads us to think of music as such things as performance, professionals and solos. This is what the other aesthetic of singing is about and I like to emphasize these qualities such as group cohesiveness, building teamwork, cooperation, etc. right away.

Chants

L = We're going to learn a chant. It goes like this. Repeat after me. Each line is said four times.

Mush.....room Mush.....room

Cheese and Crackers, cheese and crackers

Chic.....ken Fricasee, chic.....ken fricasee

Soup.... Soup.....

OK. Let's try it again, saying all four, saying each four times. I want you to say "Mushroom" in a low voice, "cheese and crackers" a little bit higher voice, "chicken fricasee" even higher, and "soup" in a really high voice.

Let's go...

[group says all four]

L = Now. Pick a part.

[everyone chooses a section to be in.]

L = Let's put it all together. "Mushroom" will start and continue, then we'll add each section. If you think you'll have trouble hanging on to your part, listen to those around you. Don't plug your ears because then you'll only hear yourself and won't know if you're with your section.

[L begins adding parts together]

For some students this is the first time they have actually participated in "singing" or chanting in parts. Notice I do not refer to the parts by typical musical terms such as bass, tenor, alto, soprano. I avoid using those terms because I want to get away from that frame of reference. I encourage the students to change parts and try another one. If I had referred to the "soup" part as the soprano part, there are those who would immediately decide they couldn't do that part because they are NOT sopranos.

I build on this activity adding movements to the sound. We do it altogether and I have them take away the voice and keep the movement going. This means internalizing the sounds in their head, a great connection to language and also to keeping together as a group. Finally, I break them into small groups (4 or 5) and they create their own "curriculum" chant, based on some aspect of the curriculum that their students need to learn, i.e. the water cycle, parts of speech, steps of long division.

Everyone finds success with this activity. And even those fearful of singing hold onto her/his own part in their group performance. This chant activity is a great segue into part-singing. Chants, perhaps because of their lack of melodic line, are less threatening but provides practice in listening to one another, staying together as a group, and blending together.

Traditional Street Cries: Introducing singing in three parts

L = There are many songs, particularly folk songs, that have been created for a reason. Some songs are work songs, such as songs that people sang when they were working in the fields to make their work easier. Or songs for hammering railroad ties, herding cattle, hoisting sails on a sailing ship or weaving cloth. These work songs are powerful songs that helped people get through the drudgery of work tasks more easily. The songs created a rhythm that, in some cases, was necessary to complete the task efficiently (like hoisting a sail, or pulling up an anchor.) There are a genre of songs that are lullabies to help calm babies and soothe mothers as well.

There are many, many categories of traditional or folk songs. One of these is what is called "street cries." These are songs created to sell things in a market place, to advertise your wares. Many of you perhaps remember the songs from the musical "Oliver" where people are selling sweet lavender and beautiful roses. Those songs were based on traditional street cries.

We're going to learn some street cries that come from England. Imagine yourself in an old English marketplace. Here's the first one.

[L sings] "Chairs to Mend, old chairs to mend. Rush and cained bottomed, old chairs to mend."

OK. Let's try that .

[everyone sings]

L = The second thing we're selling is Mackeral.

L = [sings] "Mackeral, fresh mackeral"

[everyone repeats the line]

L = And the last is, "Any old rags, any old rags, give money for your old rags."

L = OK.. Let's try all three.

[everyone sings]

L = Now choose a part. Which one do you want? Do you want to mend old chairs? Do you want to sell mackeral? Or do you want to collect old rags. Choose a part.

[I assign sections of the room for people to go to who are singing the different parts]

L = We're going to see if we can sell all these things together because if we were in a market we wouldn't hear just one salesperson at a time. First, let's hear each part alone now.

[each section sings their part.]

I start them off but then I sing very softly. I want to hear if they can sing their part on their own. I don't point this out to them. I make this shift in a subtle way.

L = We'll start with "Chairs," then add "Mackeral," then add "Rags." Are you ready?

If you think you might have trouble hanging on to your part, listen to the other people in your group. Stand close together. But remember, you also want to try to listen to what's happening around you in the larger group.

[I begin each section and adds in each part. Group sings]

L = Great! That sounded wonderful. You're amazing! Now, we need to do something else. If you were really in a marketplace you wouldn't be just standing there in a little clump. Let's see if we can walk around and sing.

[several folks groan in a slight panic]

If you think you need help you can walk around the village square with a friend! As you walk around, look at the others and convince them to buy your product.

[start them again, one part at a time. We sing it for about two minutes]

[group applauds]

L = Great! You sounded wonderful. OK. Let's try one more thing. Let's now imagine that here in the middle of this classroom is the village square. And you're going to enter the village doing your thing. You'll wander around singing your part and then finally leave. It will begin softly, get

louder as we call come together and then get softer at the end as you all leave. You now need to go off to a corner of the room. You no longer need to stay with your group. You can be anywhere.

L = We'll start with the "chairs" first, wherever you are.

I get each group started. I also take a part. I choose one that I think might need some help. Sometimes, as I walk around, I switch parts if needed. I signal with my hands to come into the center, wander around, then leave. It ends very quietly as everyone wanders off.

L = Lovely. Our three-part song just became a dramatic performance piece as well. It was very effective. What did you think?

S(2) = It sounded so beautiful. I never thought I could sing my part alone but it wasn't so hard. I've never done that before.

S(3) = Can we tape it? I want to hear what we sounded like.

S(4) = Let's do it again!

This is a very simple three-part song. I make sure everyone learns all three parts so they can switch around if they want to. I also avoid talking about the structure of the song too much. I want them to have fun singing it and actually "feel" the words. Part of their success is because they are not worrying about whether they are singing it "right". They are invested in selling their wares, in interacting with "other villagers", in listening to each other, greeting each other, experiencing

the drama of the song itself. I participate too and make of point of doing a minimum of conducting. I want the group to learn to conduct themselves. This enhances the feeling of ensemble.

Singing in a round and dancing

L = I'm going to teach you a song from Ghana. It's about a little girl selling rice cakes. I actually heard children singing this song on the playground while I was there. Listen carefully to the words. It's not difficult. You have the words on your songsheet but I'd like you to see if you can just learn it by listening.

L = I'll sing each line, one at a time and you just echo it back.

[group sings it together several times.]

L = OK! Let's try it again, but this time I want to try to sing it in two parts. Gather in two groups. Remember: if you are having difficulty singing your part, listen to those around you. Don't plug your ears! When you plug your ears you can only hear yourself. Singing is about listening to others and creating an ensemble.

[I conduct the song in two parts. Everyone claps when we finish.]

They are clapping again for themselves. They are quite pleased with their accomplishment. I try not to explain a lot about part- singing. They've already had some experience doing it with the "Chairs" song. It's better, in my opinion, to

just keep them singing and not spend a lot of time explaining and getting into details.

L = Now I'd like to teach you some movements that go with the song. Everyone join in a circle.

[teach the dance. It a simple dance with a grapevine step and an in and out movement]

L = If you are unsure of the cross step, sometimes called a grapevine step, that's OK. Just move somehow to the left and right. The secret is to keep moving. Remember our philosophy – "How fascinating!" Doing it right is not what we're working towards here. Noticing each other, singing together, creating community, having a good time. That's what's important.

L = You've got it! So now, let's make two concentric circles. We are now going to sing and dance the song in a round. (Everyone laughs nervously) You can do it. Watch each other. We'll all help each other out.

Again, I keep the pace moving so they don't have a lot of time to think about it. If, for some reason, it falls apart, we start again. It's not a big deal. I'm careful not to try this until I'm sure they really know the song. Each time they sing it together I listen and sing quietly to test how well they can carry it on their own. I've never had a group who couldn't sing this in two, even three parts.

Throughout the course I introduce more and more songs. They are primarily folk songs or singing games, many from the African and African-American tradition. I make a point of informing the group, as much as possible, about the history of the song, putting it in context.

I provide a number of resources of song collections and encourage the teachers to share with each other. I emphasize, over and over, that as much as I might LOVE a song, they should not use it or teach it to their students unless they also love it. They need to find material that works for them and for the group of students they work with.

I bring CD's and tapes of music I think work well for a variety of students and subjects. I encourage teachers to use recorded music to learn the songs but to use it minimally with the students, if possible. There is much more freedom in the singing if they students can lead themselves. This is especially true of singing games. The recorded music limits the pitch and tempo. It is important to instill the idea that everyone is able to create her/his own music.

Conclusions

This "virtual transcript" of a music class serves to reveal several important elements essential in creating a teaching and learning environment. These elements provide an opportunity for individuals to shift previously learned paradigms and transform their practices and beliefs about singing. It is not

expected that teachers will replicate this teaching as presented, because it is not about product but about process. The specific activities are not as important as the pedagogical philosophy underlying the activities. That is where the possibility for the paradigm shift in singing to occur. The focus moves from individual to community, from skill building and participation, from product to process. In order to create a singing community, it is important to identify and examine the key considerations in more detail.

Chapter 5.2

Key Considerations in Building a Singing Community

Emerging from the master class outlined in the previous chapter, five important issues can be identified regarding teaching practices. These each warrant further exploration. These are important to examine in more detail because they are instrumental ingredients in creating an environment that can help shift the paradigm of the “non-singer” and support the aesthetic of community singing.

These considerations include:

- The creation of a safe environment
- The recognition of the dominant paradigm
- Listening to everyone
- Experiential learning
- The use of vernacular repertoire

The Creation of a Safe Environment

Safety is highly subjective and it is quite obvious that it is not possible to create and/or maintain a space that “feels” safe for everyone. For many however, participating in the act of singing is considered a high-risk activity, and it is important to recognize this issue and consider options for building an learning environment that encourages safety.

Moon Joyce discusses issues of safety in a paper on the barriers adult non-singers face. Joyce identified some common concerns around the issue of safety. She compiled the following list from data she collected over a five year time period while leading a variety of singing workshops. (Joyce 2001)

The most common concerns she found were:

- Skill level. Am I good enough?
- Public humiliation. Will I be singled out and asked to sing a solo?
- Acceptance. Can I be myself? Will my singing skill be truly accepted?
- Release of control. Can I relax and not be judged for not knowing?
- Belonging. Will I fit in?
- Control. Will I have control over what happens?

Joyce's research touches on very familiar issues that I also consistently encounter in my work with teachers. These concerns must be addressed if those in the group who consider themselves to be "non-singers" are going to change their attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and practices about singing.

There are several teaching strategies described in the "virtual" master class presented in last chapter that have proven to be successful in creating a safe classroom setting. I will review these in more detail here.

It is important to clarify from the beginning and continue to remind students what the expectations are about "singing." Establishing what it means to sing and defining it outside the traditional monocultural perspective allows students to check their own assumptions and beliefs. This conversation must happen because, as we have seen through data presented throughout this study, there are many buried assumptions and beliefs connected with this phenomenon.

Teachers must emphasize that singing is about participation, not perfection or performance. Participants immediately feel more comfortable when they are prepared for what is coming and know what is expected of them. Remind them that the goal of singing is to participate, not to “get it right” or “sing perfectly.” Community singing does not have the pressure of singing solos or being singled out. It is a group process. A major goal of community singing is belonging and building a group. Outlining the expectations helps to allay many of the fears Joyce names regarding skill level, public humiliation, acceptance and belonging.

I intentionally spend a good deal of time discussing the meaning of singing immediately at the beginning of my course. I bring in another cultural perspective, in this case Ghana, as a way to open up the conversation and introduce the possibility of other ways of perceiving the phenomenon of singing.

I realize that this initial discussion is not going to turn people's preconceived notions of singing around in an instant, but it is important to present the concept. It gives them permission to experience singing from another perspective.

As an example, I just recently presented a short, two-hour class in African-American singing games, stories and songs for a group of undergraduate students enrolled in a course on folklore.

I began by teaching a short chant and I noticed they were a bit hesitant to participate. They seemed shy and a bit embarrassed, looking around the room to check out if anyone else was singing. I then taught them a game that required

that they both sing and move. As they hesitantly rose from their chairs, I emphasized that doing this game was about participation. It was not about mastering complicated footwork or singing perfectly in tune. In the spirit of African culture, from which this game originated, our task was for all of us to sing and move together and have a good time. (It is important to mention that in the spirit of participation, it is essential that I as the instructor also participate.)

As we began to do the game, I noticed a marked difference in their energy. Clarifying the expectations obviously shifted the way they felt about participating. They felt safer. In addition, naming the cultural expectations around singing and suggesting alternatives allowed for individuals to imagine others ways of thinking about how to sing. The hesitancy that plagued them earlier had vanished and they seemed much more invested in what they were doing. In fact, they were having fun!

Secondly, I consciously create a physical space that honors every individual. Even in the case of the undergraduate presentation mentioned above, the students and I managed to move the fifty-five chairs (with desktops attached) in a large circle. Once the circle was formed, everyone became part of it and was recognized.

In the western choral tradition, singing is performed in a formal choral style setting, usually in straight rows facing a conductor. Often there is very little or no movement from the singers. As a way to shift these assumptions about singing, have participants sit in a circle. In this way they can see each other and listen to

each other more effectively. There is less importance put on the leader and more emphasis on the group.

A circle formation is also the most efficient for aural learning. It is important to hear and listen to one another as well as interact. The circle provides a venue for a new type of learning and participation to take place. Sometimes I ask everyone in the group to walk around while singing, weaving in and through the circle. By making eye contact with one another, participants become “known” by the group in another way. Involving the body while singing helps a singer internalize the music. They “know” the music through another venue. The song is in their voice and in their body.

The concern about “belonging” mentioned in Joyce’s research shifts when the focus to the group shifts. Although there is a leader, the essence of community singing focuses on group building and not individuality. The responsibility for the group comes from every individual and is not solely dependent on one leader.

Finally, an essential component for creating a safe environment is to create a space that encourages everyone to feel comfortable learning. One way to do this is to encourage and in fact, celebrate mistakes.

Another one of Lesley University’s faculty members begins her *Materials of Art* course by reminding students that “there are no mistakes, only new discoveries.” (Susan Fisher) She has found this axiom to immediately help allay their fears about “not being able to draw.” It shifts the paradigm of, in this case, the mindset of the “non-visual artist.”

Conductor Ben Zander promotes a similar philosophy that suggests that we should “celebrate our mistakes.” Doing something perfectly time and again does not lead to learning. We most often learn from our mistakes. (Zander and Zander 2000 p.31)

I have adapted and modified Zander’s philosophy to fit into the community singing philosophy and incorporate it into my teaching practice on the first day of any class I teach. In return, I consistently hear from students that they greatly appreciate the value of a teaching philosophy that encourages learning from mistakes. They know all too well about the children who worry about “getting it right.”

For many, the meaning behind the phenomenon of singing is related to the “right way to do it.” This is often exactly what stops people from singing. They believe they can’t do it right. When I teach a song or even a movement I suggest that if they find themselves concerned with “doing it wrong” they can simply say, “How fascinating!” and continue on.

This approach always takes my students by surprise because it goes against a strongly and long-held belief about what it means to participate in a musical activity. They assume there is no room for error. For some, it brings up memories of “singing the wrong note” and consequently being removed from the choir.

The aesthetic of community singing inherently accepts mistakes because participation is valued, not perfection. Perhaps not surprising, once the pressure of perfection is relieved, a sense of confidence is nourished within the group. A

trusting environment is created and individuals believe that, no matter what form it takes, their contribution will be valued and accepted.

Recognizing the Dominant Paradigm

As has been said, the practice of music education in the United States is based on a long history of assumptions and beliefs around what it means to sing and be a singer. Classroom teachers and music specialists base their current teaching practices, without question, on these long-held beliefs. These beliefs are made up of a collection of shared assumptions that have evolved over time and are perpetuated in the present educational framework where they lie unchallenged.

In order to shift the teaching philosophy and practices of classroom teachers and music specialists and, in fact, the entire education community around the phenomenon of singing, the basic assumptions that are embedded in what "singing" is and continues to be must be recognized and tackled head-on. It is necessary to consider and rethink what and how it could be otherwise.

I very purposely begin my courses by asking students the same research questions I asked of my interviewees: What is a singer? Are you one? How do you know that? Without exception, each time I engage my students in this exercise, they remark that the questions are curiously challenging. The discussion and reflective writing that ensues allows space for them to question, act and recognize assumptions, beliefs and past experiences that have hitherto gone unquestioned.

Maxine Greene recognizes the importance of this type of exercise when she states:

to learn and to teach, one must have an awareness of leaving something behind while reaching toward something new, and this kind of awareness must be linked to imagination. (Greene 1995, p.20)

Imagination plays an important part in this process. By encouraging students to use their imagination, they are given permission to “think outside the box.” They can actually realize the framework or “box” they have been functioning within and then can move beyond it. This is the rationale behind questioning them on their own understanding of “singing,” not only what it is but how they know it is so. Once they are aware of their current belief system, they can make a conscious choice to leave it behind and create another kind of belief system around singing that is new and full of imagination.

John Dewey also recognized the importance of this reflection process. He writes:

imagination is the “gateway” through which meanings derived from past experience find their way into the present; it is the conscious adjustment of the new and the old. (Dewey 1934, p.272)

Typically, students admit that, in fact, they have never questioned, much less, examined the meaning of such a commonly accepted concept as “singing.” They also have never considered the possibility that their beliefs about singing and/or musicianship are actually life stories, constructed and closely linked to selected information that has been internalized and is constructed within a societal, historical and cultural context.

Moreover, they find it even more astounding that there is the possibility of rethinking and re-experiencing the concept of "singing." It is possible to shift those long-held beliefs and view the phenomenon of singing from other perspectives.

In order to shift the paradigm of the "non-singer" the first step is to, in Freire's words, "arouse the consciousness." Freire recognizes that:

in order for change to occur, it is necessary to arouse a consciousness of how the real is constructed and challenge the naming of that real world. Through naming it, it is possible for those worlds to transform. (Freire 1977, p.78)

Lisa, a music specialist in the Connecticut public schools and a participant in one of my music courses provides a good example of what happens in the process of "arousing the consciousness." She was amazed at the change that occurred in the attitudes of the classroom teachers during a five-day music course.

Lisa noted that the classroom teachers were quite typically, initially fearful and apprehensive of participating in any kind of singing activity. They began the course by strongly expressing their feelings of fear about singing and sharing reason why they never sang with their students. Over the period of five days, they shifted their perspective and felt confident about their own singing ability and were excited to return to their classroom and sing with their students.

From a music specialist's point a view, Lisa was excited and amazed that change was actually possible. She, too, had shifted her attitude. Initially believing that classroom teachers were unwilling and unable to sing with their

students, she finished the course eager to implement a similar approach with the classroom teachers she works with in her school.

She wrote in her evaluation that she watched doubting classroom teachers who throughout the course were sure they couldn't sing and were not musical noticeably change their attitudes. They contributed as much to the class if not more than the so-called "musicians" in the room. This was very affirming to her. It challenged her belief about non-singing classroom teachers and made her realize change is possible.

A classroom teacher from the same course also spoke about a noticeable shift in attitude. She had always assumed that she wasn't good enough to sing with her students so she relied on CD's to create a musical environment. The class experience challenged her assumptions about singing, allowing her to consciously create a new belief system about singing which then gave her the confidence she needed sing with her students. (fifth grade teacher, Connecticut Public Schools)

The mind constructs meaning and structure from our perceptions and our perceptions can change as well as our minds. It is Zander's theory that:

we perceive only the sensations we are programmed to receive, and our awareness is further restricted by the fact that we recognize only those for which we have mental maps or categories. We see a map of the world, not the world itself. This map provides a world which is sorted and packaged and creates the meaning which governs our perception. (Zander and Zander 2000, pp.10-12)

Gathering inspiration from philosophers such as Greene and Freire and considering Zander's theory of perception, I suggest to students that they actually "try on" another way of experiencing and defining singing. I invite them to

consider singing as an activity that stresses participating, cooperating and team building, not perfecting such things as tone quality, rhythmic proficiency or music literacy, the type of musical skills most often linked with singing. Rather, it is about singing familiar songs, learning new songs and simply making music together. It is about listening to one another, blending voices, and creating a cooperative singing community.

Once this idea is framed and space is opened up to experience this new way of thinking and perceiving "singing," students begin to embrace the idea more fully and a paradigm shift is visible. "Singing" is redefined and perceived in a way that was before invisible. A kindergarten teacher verbalizes what the shift meant to her. She says:

I always believed music came from a book and had to be learned. I felt it was a factual experience that had pieces that had to be memorized in order to be successful. I am now free from those assumptions! I know that music is all around us and can be experienced and shared. The pieces don't always have to fit. They can be enjoyed for what they are or joined together. I now have a much better understanding of what it means to sing.
Kindergarten teacher, New London, Connecticut

Listening To Everyone

Singing is about listening. Learning involves listening. It is important for teachers to listen to students and students to listen to each other. Singing involves the voice and it is important that each voice in the group be represented and heard.

Listening to each other allows the space for student voices to be heard, which in turn provides an opportunity for the sharing of doubts, fears and

incompetencies. Once these voices are part of the dialogue, differences can be recognized and new ideas can be passionately affirmed. Listening is an integral part of the process. And listening is essential in creating a cooperative, inclusive vocal community.

Once the criteria of singing is redefined and the voices of all students trust that their voices will be heard and valued with interest and passion, there is a possibility that they will engage in singing with passion, trusting that their voice is making a contribution to the whole.

In my teaching, I emphasize through several activities the need to create an ensemble, and I demonstrate through experiential learning what I mean by that concept. (The name rhythm activity and group clapping exercise, outlined in the "virtual transcript", are examples of activities that enhance group cohesiveness.) It is important to me that students recognize their contribution is always noticed and valued in any way they are able to participate. Educators relate to this idea. A great deal of energy and value is placed on not only building a classroom but an entire educational community that functions as a cooperative unit and works as a team.

Groups need to be reminded early on in the process about the difference between performance singing and singing as a community. Ysaye Barnwell, who leads workshops in "Singing in the African-American Tradition," invites participants to experience singing as a community building experience through the exploration of African-American singing traditions. She constructs her

workshops based on values and assumption from an Afrocentric worldview. It is her belief that:

Shared diversity is absolutely necessary in community. The end product is a new creation that is greater than the sum of the parts. People in the group must agree to cooperate, instead of competing, in order for the parts to work well together. (Barnwell and Brandon 1998, p.8)

When I share my experiences in Ghana with my students, I am providing participants with another way of thinking about music-making and I am also admitting to them the surprise and difficulty I encountered when trying to shift my western perspective of music-making to another view.

Barnwell's pedagogical philosophy relates to the Ghanaian worldview I share with my students. She assumes that singing is not art for art's sake. It is a functional tool for engaging in the activities of daily life and for coping with life's emotional and spiritual responses.

Singing is a shared, communal celebration and the group gains power through the process of sharing. There is no audience because everyone is a participant and everyone must help create the song. (Barnwell and Brandon 1998, p.8)

This philosophical framework sets up expectations that provides a perspective of singing that differs greatly from the traditional monocultural western music education framework. The Afrocentric worldview presents singing as a collective experience and a venue for group membership, belonging and acceptance, all of which are important components of creating a safe environment. These components are an integral part of the aesthetic of

community singing and distinguish it from the traditional western singing experience.

Experiential Learning

As much as we can talk about and promote valuing another “aesthetic” for singing, the only possible way to reinforce the concept and shift the framework is to actually experience it. No amount of talking about it will make change.

There are several music textbooks currently in print encouraging classroom teachers to sing with their students. These books all strongly promote the idea that singing is possible for every human being and list in detail the many values that derive from singing with students. Some of them suggest that anyone can sing by simply mastering some simple techniques.

Many of these music texts do give recognition to the fact that “classroom teachers will need to overcome their ‘fear of singing’ and that, above all, this is probably the biggest obstacle.” One such textbook, *Music Skills for Classroom Teachers*, provides a solution to overcoming such anxiety. The authors suggest that:

if the classroom teacher can sing enthusiastically and in tune from a given pitch with a pleasant voice quality, he or she will be able to work with students given all of the other teaching aids available. (Winslow, Dallin et al. 2001, p.94)

Note the use of words and phrases such as “in tune” and “pleasant voice quality.” These words are embedded in the “taproot” aesthetic that will, for most classroom teachers, stop them dead in their tracks. The text continues with a detailed discussion of singing concerns such as voice registers, posture and

breathing, tone quality and range and flexibility. This approach, appropriate for the music specialist, will certainly alienate classroom teachers who believe they cannot sing.

Another text, *Music as a Way of Knowing*,²⁶ is written with the “non-singing” classroom teachers in mind. It veers away from the theoretical or traditional “taproot” approach to singing. The author, Nick Page, presents a convincing argument for the community singing philosophy, suggesting that anyone can sing with students.

He is passionate about getting teachers to realize they are capable of singing themselves and with their students. He provides a persuasive rationale for using music in the classroom and focuses his book on the classroom teacher who most likely feels she/he is not a “singer.” He states his philosophy very clearly in the introduction:

We are all talented. If you can play, you can make music. Like they say in Zimbabwe, “if you can talk, you can sing. If you can walk, you can dance.” You don’t need to know how to read music to sing. You need simply to be alive. You also need to trust your abilities as well as the abilities of your students. Everyone can sing and sing well and everyone can learn to play an instrument. (Page 1995, pp.7-8)

However convincing Page seems, Moon Joyce voices a valid concern about his philosophy and detects that even Page is tempted to return to a “taproot” philosophy. She notes that:

... woven into Page’s philosophy is the belief that people who sing want to sound “good” and once the songs are mastered, most

²⁶ Nick Page has written two music books, *Music as a Way of Knowing*, 1995 and *Sing and Shine On*,! 1995. Both are targeted for the person who is not particularly comfortable or familiar teaching music or leading songs. They are very user-friendly texts.

want to experience the joy of sharing them with others in performance. This approach is similar to that adopted by most traditional choral groups and assumes that no one want to sing “badly” and everyone wants to sing “well.” This pedagogical framework has the potential of reinventing the non-singer. (Joyce 2001)

It is my experience that typical classroom teachers, for whom these textbooks are written, think they can't sing and never sing with their students. This is not to suggest that these textbooks are written without care or good intentions. They most certainly are. They are designed to build confidence for the person who has little or no music training. But, it is my experience that this type of highly supportive literature does not change attitudes and almost never shifts teaching practices and beliefs about singing.

Classroom teachers read these texts and are not convinced. They read the words on the page and, with great cynicism, believe that the authors are not speaking about them because they “*know*” they are not musical and they cannot sing. In addition, if the language used is at all technical and incorporates formal musical terms, they immediately feel discouraged and alienated from the content.

They believe that developing musical literacy skills is too difficult for them. No amount of positive, encouraging words on a page in a textbook will convince them otherwise.

What is needed, is simply experiencing singing together. Becoming a part of a singing community, connected through shared voices does shift the paradigm. Once singing is redefined and the embedded assumptions are challenged, then there is the great need to experience the act of simply sing together. The act of doing creates believing.

Most importantly, beyond doing is the practice of reflecting on the doing.

Dewey confirms this when he speaks about the importance of the human experience. He writes that:

an ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance. (Dewey 1966, p.144)

Dewey confirms what I have found to be unequivocally true. When presenting teachers with the possibility of perceiving singing in other ways, they consider the possibility but are reluctant to believe it. Their life stories continue to convince them they can't sing. When they actually experience singing from another perspective and realize other possibilities, then the theory of perception about singing is substantiated and becomes true for them. The act of singing is charged with meaning for every individual and is grounded in the ways we perceive the experience. New experience is not merely added onto past experience, but transforms how the past is perceived.

Classroom teachers, hesitant to try "singing" with their students because of their own negative experiences and beliefs, do, in fact, end up going beyond their former "knowing" about "singing." Once they actively experience another way of singing, they take risks and willingly reconstruct new ways of perceiving and participating the phenomenon of singing.

Using Vernacular Repertoire

Choosing repertoire is the fifth and final consideration in creating a community of singers. Repertoire has been a part of the music education

conversation since the inception of music education programs in the United States and is worth reviewing.

We have seen in the history of music education, concerns about teaching note reading were high on the agenda and consideration of song repertoire came second. Primarily using European methods of instruction, a collection of western-based, classical songs were taught by rote as a vehicle to reinforce the understanding of particular musical elements. "Learning the facts of music were emphasized over the music itself." (Mark and Gary 1992, p.176)

By the end of the nineteenth century, several series of music textbooks were published which concentrated on teaching "beautiful singing through good song literature." (Mark and Gary 1992, p.200) The leaders in the music education field determined what qualified as "good song literature." Typically, the preferred music was from famous European composers such as Mozart, Bach and Beethoven; however, music education leaders such as Lowell Mason felt the need to compose their own song repertoires.

Allen Britton, in his historical critique of music education, provides an explanation for this development. By the mid-1800's, the leaders in music education found themselves faced with a dilemma. Although they preferred the highly artistic forms of European music, they determined this type of music was too difficult for the general American public to understand. "Yankee music" or folk music, on the other hand, was crude and unrefined. Neither music was appropriate for school use. Consequently, music educators such as Mason began composing and publishing a genre of "polite" music that was immediately

utilized in schools. This repertoire continues to be an integral part of music education repertoire in the present day. (Britton 1961, pp.214-215)

The leaders of the community singing movement came up with another solution for song repertoire. Based more in a "vernacular"²⁷ philosophy, they set out to compile a repertoire of songs that they believed represented all the various nationalities and ethnic groups in individual communities across the United States.

There are folk songs from England, Ireland, Poland, Russia, Scotland, Hungary and Wales, African-American spirituals and gospel songs and western classical composed songs by Schubert, Brahms, Mendelssohn and Greig. Cree and Ojibway tribal tunes were included but the lyrics were adapted. The final result was two published books of song collections (refer to Appendix D, p. 264-265) for complete lists of songs) that varied from sacred to seasonal. Every community singing group was encouraged to use this "common" body of songs with the expectation that everyone in America would know and be able to sing the same songs.

Typical of the song collections that are currently used in schools, these songs, based in a vernacular tradition, were all arranged and adapted to a western classical format and style with piano accompaniment. I'm sure this arranging was done with the belief that the songs would be more accessible for the general public to learn. Many of the lyrics were either adapted or newly created. Although those teaching and learning the songs most probably

²⁷ By vernacular, I mean repertoire that is native or indigenous to the group or culture.

believed they were singing the original “folk” version of the song, in most cases they were actually singing a version that had been changed to sound more “western” and familiar to their ears.

By the early 1900's music educators had adopted this “common” body of songs and diligently taught them to their students, believing that every child in American should know them. In 1990, Charles Elliott issued a challenge to the music education community to identify songs that were “common to the heritage of the United States.” (Elliott 1990) In 2000, the *Journal for Research in Music Education* was still attempting to meet Elliott's challenge and published an article which provided results of research study determining which songs most people “know” or “should know.”

I believe Elliott's mission of students learning a body of songs is a good one in theory, but suggesting that everyone should learn the same common body of songs defeats one of the main goals of community singing. The body of songs should be generated from those singing them. They need to originate from the experiences, shared knowledge and interest of the group. The leaders of the community singing movement were heading in the right direction with their concept about repertoire. Searching out and using vernacular repertoire for singing gatherings is an excellent idea. However, attempting to create a “common” body of songs that represents the history and cultural heritage of the United States is impractical, if not impossible.

Using vernacular songs is important. However, their commonality needs to be only to those who are singing them, not to the entire United States. We are

a society of many cultures. The repertoire for community singing must generate and relate to the many cultures that make up the group of singers. Those gathering to sing songs need to begin by singing songs that are familiar to the group or resonate, in some way, with the cultures in the group. It is then possible to expand to other repertoire that the group is interested in learning.

The wonderful aspect of a great deal of vernacular song repertoire is that the lyrics are easily learned and not immensely complicated. The community singing leaders of the early 1900's understood this concept about repertoire and, in most cases, avoided teaching songs that involve difficult lyrics.

The majority of people who are not confident singers are usually not musically literate. It is pointless to hand a musical score to someone who cannot read it, particularly someone who is feeling uneasy about singing. In fact, that is exactly what they do not need. Handing them a piece of paper with musical notation gives a message that in order to sing you need to be able to read the notes on the page. You need to be musically literate. This is a message embedded in long-held cultural assumptions that should be avoided. The message is intimidating and alienating. It is a message that does not support the spirit of community singing – singing for the joy of singing together, not for building skills.

Songs that have been created out of a vernacular experience are typically songs that have survived through many generations. These are often songs that have been passed on, not particularly through the written page, but orally, and have survived because people keep singing them. They are songs that have

survived many generations, kept alive by family members or community members. These songs also have changed over the course of time and are shaped by historical and social contexts within which they were created.

Vernacular repertoire is often affected by the “folk process” and over time songs change or adjust to the needs of those who sing them. The notion of adapting or changing a song to meet the needs of the group is a useful one to consider when implementing community singing in school settings. The more traditional “taproot” model of singing implies an expectation that songs will stay the same and be sung as close as possible to the written text.

In the community singing model, changing the melody or the lyrics in some way is part of the process and reflects the cultural context within which it is constructed. This process is perfectly acceptable and in fact, valued. The songs belong to the group. Therefore, the group has the liberty to change and adapt them in whatever way makes the most sense and provides the most meaning.

Barnwell speaks about the importance, from an Afrocentric perspective, of using vernacular song repertoire. Traditional communities, she points out, have long recognized the power of songs. To understand the meaning of a song fully means to understand the history that has shaped it. A song’s significance often is not heard in the notes but in the values that are imbedded in and promoted by the song and by the way people relate to each other when singing the song. (Barnwell and Brandon 1998, p.12)

This is why it is essential when using vernacular repertoire to understand as much about the song as possible. When is it sung? Why? For what

reasons? Who sings it? By understanding these elements, the essence of the song and those from whom it originated are more fully understood and appreciated.

The song repertoire, determined by the needs, desires and interests of the group, provides a framework for singing that celebrates the community and encourages participation of all members. The selection of appropriate repertoire is an essential component in creating a community of singers.

Keys to creating a singing community in an educational environment are: creating a safe environment, recognizing the dominant paradigm, cooperating and valuing all voices, experiential learning, and using vernacular repertoire. Each of these considerations leads to establishing an environment that shifts the paradigm and practice of how singing is perceived, implemented and nurtured in a school.

Taking Maxine Greene's suggestion, it is time to tap our imaginations and go beyond what is normal and seemingly fixed, and to envision the most ideal school community. This is a school community where everyone thinks of themselves as singers. The category of non-singer does not exist. It is an educational community where all teachers, students, parents, administrators, and support staff are eager to participate in singing activities and, where the aesthetics of community singing and traditional singing exist as complements to one another. What would this "ideal" community look and feel like? What transformations occur when this type of school community is in place? What are the benefits from this environment? The final chapter begins with a description of

this "ideal" school, followed by specific suggestions of steps needed to implement and create an all-school singing community.

Chapter 5.3

Creating Dynamic Schools

Where Everyone Sings

Portrait of a “Singing School”

What would a school where everybody's a singer look and feel like? What would be the tone, the activities, the collaborations among teachers? In such an ideal school, singing is perceived, celebrated, and implemented, and honored by everyone in many different forms. Singing is integrated into all aspects of teaching and learning. This one is an elementary school, kindergarten through fifth grade, composed of students from diverse ethnic, language and ability backgrounds.

In this school everyone participates in singing – students, classroom teachers, the music specialist, administrators, parents and school staff. They all play a role in creating and supporting this “singing school” community. Everyone in the school community sees singing as something everyone can do, and assumes that it benefits everyone. Everyone initiates and participates in singing activities as part of the school day. Everyone is literally a singer. The activity of singing is multifaceted, implemented in numerous ways, and for numerous reasons.

Music and Classroom Curriculum

In this school, singing is an effective tool for classroom teachers and music specialists to use in creating a cohesive, mutually supportive teaching and

learning environment. In September, a "curriculum calendar" is publicly posted and everyone contributes information about curriculum units that will be taught over the course of the year. The music specialist refers to the calendar throughout the year and assists classroom teachers by integrating music into the classroom curriculum.

Students sing together as a way to make connections to specific areas of the curriculum. For example, when the fourth grade classes study insects, the music specialist teaches songs that relate to that topic while also teaching specific singing skills. Improving vocal range, increasing accuracy, singing with expression, singing alone and in groups, and responding to cues from a conductor are some of the state-prescribed music standards that are easily met while simultaneously supporting curricular goals in individual classrooms.

This year the school has a combination grade three/four class. It is a new class arrangement so administrators and parents are carefully evaluating its academic soundness. The students in the class created a "multi-grade song" to convey their experience in the class. The lyrics inform listeners about the ways they work together, how their day is structured, and how they support one another. They happily sing it to anyone who visits them.

To encourage musical activities in the classroom, every class in the school is equipped with a CD/cassette player that has the capacity to record and duplicate. As part of a language arts unit on myths, the fifth grade students composed songs about their favorite myths and tape-recorded them. The

recordings can be useful for practicing the songs and sharing them with family members.

Building a Cohesive Community

Singing together is food for the soul, the heart and the intellect. Building a community, creating a harmonious learning environment, and valuing the individual and the group – all are enhanced through singing together. At this school every class begins their day with singing as a way to bring the group together, settle everyone, connect to one another, and honor both the individual and the group as a whole. Classes sing friendship songs, patriotic songs and “good morning” songs. It is a daily ritual that everyone anticipates.

Classroom singing is also used to facilitate transitions such as getting in line for lunch, going out to recess and cleaning-up. Sometimes singing is done with recorded music; sometimes rhythm instruments are added. The important thing is that singing occurs on a regular basis in all parts of the school.

Role of Staff, Administrators, and Parents

Singing is understood as an activity that is initiated not only by the music specialist but by parents, by administrators and even staff. Everyone is a singer and everyone contributes to the singing community. To “know” how to sing is viewed through many perspectives. Singing involves learning to read notes and improving vocal technique but it also involves songwriting and community

singing. Sometimes it involves performance and participation, but however it shows up, singing permeates the entire school community.

The principal plays an important role in ensuring that singing occurs everywhere. She believes and demonstrates, through her example, how singing is an effective way to bring everyone together. She firmly believes that everyone can contribute to and share in the singing community, and because of this assumption, everyone does. It seems to happen as naturally as breathing. Her support and commitment to this endeavor is a driving force in making the singing school community a reality. To encourage singing gatherings, the principal begins meetings with group singing, plays the piano during lunchtime, and sometimes accompanies the chorus.

The music specialist in the school engages all the students in singing activities that enhance the musical skills required as part of the music curriculum. She also collaborates with classroom teachers as they teach their curriculum.

The lunchroom staff encourages singing during lunchtime, and although they do not lead the groups in singing, they do participate. They remark that, when the students sing during lunchtime, they seem calmer, happier and more focused. There are seldom discipline problems at lunchtime.

Students are encouraged to share songs from their family repertoire. Parents may come in to sing with the class and teach a family song, and in this way songs from various countries and in many languages are shared and learned by all. Singing songs from other cultures is an effective way to celebrate

and learn about the diversity of the school population, which in this case, represents fourteen languages.

Singing and Special Events

Singing is an integral part of all-school celebrations. These are organized whenever students express the desire to share their learning with the entire community. When the fifth grade finished their unit on myths, they shared their songs in the all-school celebration. Parents and friends attended and became part of the celebration. This year school spirit is an important all-school theme. To support this theme, a group of classroom teachers and students composed a school song and the music specialist offered to teach it to the students in every grade. Now every school assembly begins with this school song. The song was originally created in a classroom, but the music specialist assists this project by teaching it to all the grades. She uses the opportunity to have students notate the song (a state-prescribed music standard) so it can be published in the school newspaper.

Each year the school holds two creative musical events: the annual "Cabaret Night" and "Lip Sync Night." On "Cabaret Night" the tables are turned, so to speak, and the teachers, parents, support staff and administrators perform for the children. It is a wonderful team-building event that demonstrates how music-making is not only a student activity but one in which everyone is involved.

On "Lip Sync Night" any child who wants to (there are no auditions)

can perform a two-minute piece. There is a big sing-a-long at the end of the evening. This event is enormously successful and students eagerly perform their favorite songs. This event demonstrates the school's belief that singing is acceptable in many shapes and forms.

Moving From Ideal to Real

Fantastic as it sounds, the school I have just described does, in fact, exist and is located just outside Boston, Massachusetts.²⁸ It is obvious from the description that this school has an administrator, Miriam Kronish, with extraordinary vision, talent and energy. Though her school cannot be exactly duplicated, it can inspire the creation of more such educational communities.

This school offers a picture of how to make it a reality. How could others in other places create such a lively, warm and creative community? What are the best strategies to use in nurturing an environment where everyone sings? How can a school community be created where the components such as cooperative planning, parent involvement, administrative commitment are all in place? What are the benefits for creating such an environment? What is the best way to begin? What follows is a discussion of some strategies that can be implemented in moving towards the goal of creating a dynamic school where everyone sings.

As seen from the description of the "ideal" school, building and maintaining a school that integrates singing into the daily life of the educational

²⁸ Inspiration for this description comes from the Elliot School in Needham, MA. I gathered this information from extensive interviews with classroom teachers and the principal of this school.

community involves every member of school. Everyone's voice is valued and everyone plays an important role. This means that there is a willingness to perceive and implement singing in a multitude of ways, and from various perspectives.

In addressing how to create such a learning environment, I will direct the discussion to the two groups of individuals who can most influence the transformation of any school: the music specialists and the classroom teachers.

Music Specialists:

Faced with administrators who might not completely understand the value of singing or the music program in general, and classroom teachers who are not singing with their students, music specialists might wonder why they should spend time and energy to encourage everyone to sing. Won't this just take time away from the music curriculum, diminish the value of singing, and lower the quality?

Music specialists are dedicated to providing a strong school music program and to working for long-term security for music education in public school, which is often on shaky ground. They know that music is often viewed as an "extra" subject and thus continues to require justifying to administrators, parents, and school board members. As we have seen in a Chapter 3.1, music education from its inception had to justify its very existence. Its precarious position probably led to the promotion of musical literacy, a tactic which helped legitimize the field of music education in a society that strongly valued a scientific

and linguistic approach to learning. And today, music educators continue to have high goals and an often insecure and under-appreciated place in public education.

Music educators know that the benefits of a music education program are profound, unique and well-documented in the literature. Music-making achieves fundamental values such as self-growth, self-knowledge, musical enjoyment and self-esteem and affects the power of students to think, know, value, and evaluate.²⁹ (Elliott 1995, p.297) Music programs in schools also have been shown to build parent support for the school, energize students, and activate creativity, imagination, and holistic thinking. (Page, 1995) (Rozmajzl, 2000)

Current trends in education for the twenty-first century emphasize educating not only the mind of the child but the "whole child." Education is expected to balance the intellectual, emotional, physical, social, aesthetic and creative needs of every student.³⁰ (Miller 1997, p.219) Even though music education programs naturally support, enhance and strengthen these basic goals of general education, this is not at all evident to most educators beyond the music specialist. Perhaps this is because most educators, with the exception of the music specialist, consider themselves unmusical, incapable of doing anything musical, above all, singing. (See Chapter 1.1)

The problem lies in the realm of perception and implementation. Music in education has been placed in the position of being an entity separated from the

²⁹ David Elliott's book *Music Matters, A New Philosophy of Music Education* 1995 provides an excellent rationale for music education.

³⁰ Miller's *What are Schools For? Holistic Education in American Culture*, is an excellent reference for information on the historical context and forces that shaped American education.

rest of the school community and curriculum. Students head off to another classroom for music and usually classroom teachers use music time to do their lesson planning. Even if they had time to accompany their students to the music room, most would choose not to because first, they perceive music as a separate subject unrelated to their curriculum and second, they perceive themselves to be unmusical.

The focus of the music specialist is, naturally, to teach music to the students. As logical as this may seem, the implementation of music in this single-focused manner, can have a negative effect on the music program. It perpetuates isolation, builds misunderstanding, and exacerbates the long-held belief that music is only for a talented few.

Teaching students, of course, must be the primary focus of the music program. Music specialists are hired to educate students in a "gradual, sustained, and systematic development of musicianship." (Elliott 1995, p.274) However, it is in the interest of the music specialist and the music education program in general to somehow, in some way, involve everyone in the school community in experiencing music-making, particularly singing.

As we have seen, there are many people who never sing and who firmly believe it is an unattainable and somewhat mysterious and elusive skill or ability. Since this is the case, singing must be demonstrated as achievable, accessible and applicable not just to students but to everyone in the school community. I'm not sure most music specialists have considered the long-range impact or visualized the outcome of creating a "singing school" where everyone is involved.

Above all, it is an opportunity to enhance and strengthen their music education program.

As mentioned in Section Four: Community Singing, the general concern voiced at music conferences or in music education journals is that our children are not singing. Interestingly, there is never, to my knowledge, a discussion or concern about classroom teachers or other school personnel not singing. The attention is solely on the students. It doesn't appear that music specialists see that classroom teachers are actually part of the phenomenon and part of the solution.

Dynamic educational communities that sing together can be developed and the music specialist can help bring about this creative transformation. To accomplish this, the activity of singing needs to expand in all directions. In other words, all students, up and down every grade level can learn the elements of singing, an activity conducted by the music specialist. In addition, everyone across the school can experience singing simply for the joy of it, an activity initiated not only by the music specialist but by other school members. The outcome is that singing becomes an integral part of everyone's experience.

One major benefit in transforming a school into a "singing school" where everyone sings is to achieve more security for the music program. With their programs seen as unimportant, unnecessary, irrelevant and a frill, security, which has long been a concern to music specialists, is a two-way relationship. David Elliot, music education philosopher, points out that something becomes "secure in or is secured by something else." (Elliot 1995, p.300) Music education

programs are “secured in and by” the educational communities within which they exist. Once those in the educational community personally experience music, its value to everyone in the school will be apparent. The logical outcome of creating a school where everyone sings is simple but profound: *the more everyone sings, the more interested everyone is in singing more!*

This is not to suggest that the music curriculum should be taken over by classroom teachers. The goals of music education are specific and worthy and need to be taught by those specifically trained in teaching musical skills. But there are ways to involve the rest of the school community in music-making that results in broadening the understanding of the value of music in education. When an entire school is involved in singing it becomes clear that music is an indispensable ingredient to a successful school environment.

A first step to take is actually to see “beyond,” to use Maxine Greene’s words, “what is supposedly fixed and finished” (Greene 1995, p.19) and to broaden the concept of singing. What it means to sing or be a singer is “fixed and somewhat finished.” Singing, both in American culture and in American public schools, has been and continues to be valued in terms of one aesthetic – the traditional, western classically-based aesthetic that values vocal technique, musical literacy and performance. For music specialists to go beyond what is fixed means they might have to move into more unfamiliar musical practice, to begin to value and encourage singing in terms other than just the ones they were trained in.

The following chart from Chapter 4.2 (p.117) describes two viewpoints on singing. It compares and contrasts the two aesthetics and illustrates the inherent value of both aesthetics.

Two Viewpoints on Singing

<u>The Community Singing Aesthetic</u>	<u>The Traditional Music Education Aesthetic</u>
Process emphasized	Product emphasized
Vernacular repertoire	Classical repertoire
Participation emphasized	Performance emphasized
Musical ability irrelevant	Musical ability important
Stresses social value	Stresses skill building
Spontaneous singing promoted	Organized drills/ techniques promoted
Excellence in feeling emphasized	Excellence in skills emphasized
Purpose is enjoyment	Purpose is performance, attainment of skills
Singing for spirit of fun and recreation	Singing for educational value
No restrictions on who sings or is a singer	Talent recognized and valued
Fosters emotional & spiritual experiences	Fosters acquiring technical musical skills
One category: singers	Two categories: singers/non- singers
Inclusive	Exclusive
Sing in a circle formation facing other singers	Sing facing a conductor

The specific music curriculum goals and objectives, listed on the right side of the chart, stress skill building, performing and fostering musical ability. These are the essential elements of music and must be included in a school's music program. In creating a school where everyone sings, the music curriculum, based primarily in the traditional music education aesthetic of singing, does not need altering.

The point is not to change the goals listed on the right-hand column but add the goals from the left-hand column. Singing must become multidimensional so that it contributes to every part of the educational community, and every person in the educational community contributes to it.

When singing is reconsidered in broader terms, it benefits the entire school community and most certainly enhances the music program. Although it may seem like a major shift in the way music is taught, broadening the singing community strongly supports the music learning standard that emphasizes that students sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire. (Content Standard #1, National Standard for Arts Education) It is my belief that students will be even more engaged in singing when they observe that their teachers and administrators are singing too!

Here are some strategies that music specialists can use to begin this process.

- Accept community singing as a valuable aesthetic

Organize all-school sings where the focus is not on developing musical skills but singing with an emphasis on participation. This will provide a venue for everyone, particularly classroom teachers, to feel more comfortable with singing.

These singing events emphasize community building, cooperation and participation, listening and appreciating one another. Pitch songs in an accessible range. Avoid pitching songs in a key that is too high for most voices. The alto range is usually comfortable for most adults and students.

Let it be known throughout the school that there are many ways to perceive singing. Perhaps at a faculty meeting introduce the topic of singing and engage everyone in a discussion about the meaning of what it means to be a singer. In Chapter 6.1, pp.143-141, in a discussion about the meaning of singing in the "virtual master class," there is a model for introducing this topic, particularly to those who consider themselves to be non-singers. I suggest beginning by having people think about and talk about the ways they personally define singing, if they consider themselves a singer, and how they know that.

Classroom teachers will most likely claim they can't sing but have not really explored where their knowledge and understanding of singing originates. The music specialist is in the position of beginning a conversation about singing as a way to shift that paradigm. Bringing an awareness of other perspectives of singing is key to making that shift.

- Encourage everyone to feel they are singers

Once classroom teachers, particularly those who feel they are "non-singers," are willing to consider the possibility of experiencing "singing" in new ways, these supposed "non-singers" need to sing and keep singing. They need to experience singing through this new perspective in order to trust that their

voices are accepted and valued, and that what is important is participation and group collaboration.

A key factor in building a singing community is “experiential learning.” (Chapter 5.2, pp.179-183) No amount of “talking about” the fact that everyone can sing changes attitudes. Ones’ attitudes change when ones’ experience changes. Those who consider themselves “non-singers” will shift their thinking when they have had a positive experience with singing by actively singing in an environment that is accepting and encouraging. Teaching vocal skills or using technical music language should be avoided such as telling people they have a “soprano” or “alto” voice. The goal is to get people singing for the pure joy of singing together. They will then begin to feel safe about using their voice and will begin to take risks and reconstruct new ways of perceiving and participating in singing.

An elementary music specialist (kindergarten - fifth) commented about what she observed when she witnessed classroom teachers, who initially believed they couldn’t sing, make a shift in how they felt about singing.

I have watched the classroom teachers in my school who told me they weren’t musical, couldn’t sing, felt scared about singing noticeably change once I began redefining singing in more than one way. They contribute to the musicality of the school as much if not more than the so-called “musicians.”

(Elementary music specialist (kindergarten – fifth), New London, CT, 7/01)

This does not necessarily mean that the music repertoire needs to be adjusted to include “simpler” types of songs. Songs need to be sung that have memorable lyrics and melodies. Songs from a vernacular repertoire provide an

excellent example of these types of songs. These songs have survived generations because the words are meaningful, easy to remember, and they relate to real-life situations. The tunes are also not complicated. As those new to singing become more comfortable, music specialists can move towards introducing two- and three-part rounds or songs in parts.

As we saw in Chapter 3.1, pp. 82-84, the repertoire chosen for music education was highly influenced by the feelings and beliefs of the dominant culture. After the American Revolution, there was a shift in musical taste in America as ties to England were restored. Western European classical music was strongly preferred over America folk music, or "Yankee music" (a term coined in the mid-1700's by the general public) which was considered, by the general public, as crass and unrefined. (Mark and Gary 1992, p.90)

Lowell Mason, in creating the first music education programs, was acutely aware of these trends in musical preference. However, he determined that most European classical repertoire was too difficult for American children to learn, and realizing that Yankee music was in disfavor, decided to compose his own genre of "polite" songs for children to sing. His particular genre of school music, which became the accepted norm for music education, has been criticized by some musical historians as bland and uninteresting as compared to the vigor and vitality of the vernacular repertoire.³¹

It is not necessary to fall into the trap of using uninteresting songs. The

³¹ Allen Britton, *Music in Early American Public Education: An Historical Critique*, 1958 criticizes Mason's composed music, labeling it "polite and insipid" and claiming the "music tended to separate music education from the rest of society. (Britton 1961, pp. 214-215)

repertoire can be exciting and challenging. Songs from different cultures and in different languages can be used for variety and added interest. Songs such as *Ise Oluwa*, a three-part song from West Africa, *Neesa*, a contemporary round from the Seneca Indian nation and *Sim Shalom*, an Israeli round are just a few examples of songs that are easy to learn, have simple, memorable melodies and are usually well-received by groups of singers. (Refer to Appendix F for a list of recommended songbooks.)

- Assist classroom teachers in finding repertoire that is easy to sing and easy to learn to share in their classroom.

Once classroom teachers begin singing, they will be eager to find repertoire that their students will enjoy. They want songs that will “work” and that the students will enjoy. (Refer to Chapter 5.1, pp.141-149, for discussion on songs and song leading.)

Encourage classroom teachers to build a repertoire from their own experience. Music specialists know songs that are particular favorites among the students. Teach those to the classroom teachers. When the music specialists assist classroom teachers in learning songs that their students have learned in music class, the classroom teachers are more connected to the music program. The students begin to experience that singing is something everyone does, beyond “the music room.” It gives singing a new importance and “normalcy” because everyone (classroom teachers included) is singing. To assist the classroom teachers in learning the songs, the music specialist can, during music

class, make a recording with the students that can be used to assist the classroom teacher in leading the songs in her class.

- Make a visit to the classroom and sing the songs together.

Help the classroom teacher identify students in the class who are particularly comfortable with singing and are capable of leading a song. Suggest to the classroom teacher that those particular students assist her in leading the songs. Open up the leadership and encourage others to take that role.

- Provide an atmosphere that encourages every voice to be heard.

Establish singing opportunities that help create a safe environment. (Issues of safety are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.2, pp.166-172) A few suggestions for creating a safe environment are: putting everyone in a circle, avoiding solos or situations that separate individuals from the group, pitching songs in keys that are accessible to all voices. Most importantly, announce to the group immediately that the goal of singing together is for everyone to participate, build group cohesiveness, and have fun. Avoid making judgments about voice quality or teaching of vocal technique.

Classroom Teachers:

If classroom teachers have never considered the possibility of singing with students, they might wonder where to begin the process. How do they find songs? Will the students really sing with them? Where can they find support? Can they enlist the music specialist to help with repertoire? What inherent value is there in singing with the students? What difference will it make? Where can

they find time in a day filled with meeting standards and teaching to standardized tests.

Why sing? Many classroom teachers feel that is the task of the music specialist. They don't need to get involved with that activity. It takes up time and besides, they believe they can't sing and are thus incapable of leading songs.

The challenge of teaching to learning standards and required testing leaves classroom teachers feeling depleted. There isn't enough time in the day for "fun," or even creative teaching. And certainly, singing is fun. But singing together is much more than simply fun. Singing songs in classrooms can enhance memory skills, creativity, imagination, attention span, and problem solving. Students have diverse learning styles and some learn more easily when ideas or concepts are put to a rhythm. It is not coincidence that many of us remember the alphabet through *The Alphabet Song*.

A seventh grade teacher once shared a story with me that provides a poignant example of how songs can aid learning. One of her students endlessly struggled in history class, failing test after test because he could never remember historical facts. They were studying the War of 1812 and she decided to teach the students the song, *The Battle of New Orleans*. The day arrived for the history test. As she passed out the papers the students asked, "Can we sing the song?" She thought for a moment and they replied, "Yes, but quietly to yourselves." She glanced over during the test and noticed her troubled student was singing away to himself. He aced the test!

As it turns out, the song *The Battle of New Orleans*, was written by Jimmy Driftwood who was a principal and a history teacher. He wrote it for his students because he believed learning should be fun and interesting and he wanted his students to remember the story of this battle. Johnny Horton recorded the song in 1959 and I'm sure there are many of us who still remember the lyrics! As a reminder, the chorus goes:

We fired our guns and the British kept a'comin
There wasn't nigh as many as there was a while ago
We fired once more and they began to runnin'
On down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico.

In today's complex society, learning must go beyond the "basics." Experiencing cooperative learning, listening to one another, honoring individual differences, building relationships, and connecting to the community are invaluable learnings and essential to coping with the complications of daily life. Singing together enhances those experiences. Singing provides a way to communicate between and among people. Shared diversity is necessary in a singing community. When people sing together they must agree, instead of compete, in order for the experience to be harmonious.

In today's classroom, educators often discuss with students the hope of creating harmony and peace among individuals, societies, cultures, and countries. The act of singing together gives practice in doing that on a smaller scale. If everyone participates, everyone helps create the song. Responsibility and respect for others are inherent in community singing. We all want to be good listeners, responsible, respectful, and cooperative world citizens. Singing together gives us practice in doing that.

Once classroom teachers are convinced that singing is a valuable asset to any classroom and for any student, the biggest challenge is for each teacher to dispel his/her own myth of being a “non-singer.” Singing must be more broadly understood and framed in terms focused on participation and group building. (I’m certain that Jimmy Driftwood did not worry about intonation and voice quality when he taught his students *The Battle of New Orleans*. He just wanted them to remember the sequence of events.)

It is possible to shift the former understanding of what it means to sing and to be a singer, but it takes time. Once singing becomes part of the school day, the benefits become more and more obvious: students listen to one another, and singing together creates harmony, and harmonious groups work cooperatively and support one another. Singing together can help you reach your goals as a teacher – skill building, understanding concepts across disciplines, and meeting each student’s needs.

Listed below are a few suggestions for classroom teachers to begin the process of implementing singing in the classroom setting.

- Accept and value another way to perceive singing

Community singing focuses on participation, not skill building. The purpose of singing together meets important goals that are essential for creating a dynamic learning environment. Singing in the classroom complements the singing that goes on in the music room.

I’ve always been an appreciator, but not a participator in music. I’ve now gone out and purchased instruments for the class and integrate singing where we create our own music instead of just

listening to it. I use it to calm the students and enhance concentration.
(High School special education teacher, Boise, ID, 3/01)

- Ask the music specialist or others in the school to support the idea of singing in the classroom and to provide encouragement.

Invite the music specialist, other classroom teachers, or parents to visit the classroom and sing. These folks can share new and diverse repertoire and bring other perspectives to singing. They can share the role of song leading. As the paradigm shifts, leadership also shifts. The music specialist is not the only one considered capable of leading songs.

The important thing to remember is to always structure the singing as a community singing environment. Arrange the chairs in a circle. That allows everyone to be seen and recognized. Classrooms can come join together to sing. Make this an end of the week activity to look forward to. An upper grade class could join together with a lower grade class and teach the younger students a few songs. Perhaps two classes of the same grade level could come together and sing. This begins to build an all-school community rather than classes functioning separately. Make sure a community of singers is structured so that everyone sings, particularly the adults!

Ask the music specialist to suggest repertoire; he/she has many songbooks and recordings that you could borrow and/or listen to. Use this resource.

- Note the ways singing can enhance curriculum

Songs can support the basic needs of a classroom through the

development and enhancement of cooperation, improving listening skills, team building, valuing diversity, releasing stress and tension and lifting the spirit. Use singing to enhance those goals.

Create original classroom vernacular songs by writing new lyrics to familiar songs or composing new melodies to teach curriculum. To begin this process, use familiar tunes, such as *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, *Skip to My Lou*, or *Home on the Range* and create new lyrics that are connected to curriculum. These songs can help students remember important facts or can be used as an assessment tool. Artist-in-resident, Victor Cockburn, worked with a kindergarten class and wrote a song about dolphins to go with their unit on ocean life.

(Cockburn 1991, p.61)

(To the tune Skip to My Lou)

The dolphin lives in the ocean, The wavy, wavy sea.

The dolphin has many friends, And they're as cute as can be.

The dolphin took a dive in, The wavy, wavy sea

His blue body flashing like lightening. Looked so pretty to me.

The dolphin has many enemies, Like the shark and the killer whale.

The dolphin swims away from them, By using his powerful tail.

Chorus:

And I want to be a dolphin, I want to be a dolphin

Swimming in the wavy, wavy sea.

I want to be a dolphin, I want to be a dolphin

Splashing in the water, Just you and me

Here is another example of a song about electrons, created by sixth graders in Overland Park, Kansas.

(To the tune of Frere Jacques)

In conductors go electrons,

See them flow, see them flow
 Then we'll try them later, With an insulator
 They won't go; they won't go.

Here is one more example, using the format of a rhythmic chant or rap instead of a melodic song, created by a sixth grade class in the Boston Public Schools for Black History month. (Pascale 1991, p.172)

(chorus)

To the B B Black, Black, To the B Black History
 To the B B Black, Black, To the B Black History

1st verse

Harriet Tubman, the number one woman, the one who set us free.
 First to the South, then to the North, and then to Victory
 (chorus)

2nd verse

Nat, Gabriel and Denmark, those men who once were slaves
 They go together and planned revolts towards America's so called brave.

A special edition of our song, we'd like you all to sing along
 With a hop – hop we just can't stop
 Trying to make room for the four black tops.
 There's Martin Luther, the dreaming man,
 Malcom X, with the plan.
 Jessie Owens, for running brave
 And Harriet Tubman who freed the slaves.

(chorus)

- Begin by singing songs originating from the personal history and culture of the class

A useful task for the students and classroom teachers is to write down childhood songs and sing those. Begin with familiar songs. Everyone has a repertoire of songs. Sometimes it is a matter of taking time to recall them. A sixth grade special education teacher wrote:

On a recent trip to visit my grandmother in West Virginia I asked her if she knew any songs from her childhood. She sang some and I taped them and shared them with my class. This inspired a wonderful interview/research project on songs with my students. (Sixth grade special education teacher, Columbia, S.C., 5/01)

Students can make a list of the songs they remember singing at camp, at home, in the car or on the bus. Those songs can be shared in class. Notes can be taken on variations that exist within each song. This is an opportunity to talk about oral traditions and the "folk process," and also serves as a good reminder to students that there is not "one right way" of singing a song or actually of doing anything!

Songs are personal. Anyone leading a community sing needs to use song repertoire that directly relates to the group itself. One of the most consistent questions I get asked when I teach is where I get my songs. Where does my repertoire come from? This is a difficult question to answer because I've been collecting and compiling song repertoire for many, many years. It comes from my family, my experiences, from songbooks, from friends. I collect songs I think people will enjoy singing. If I hear a song I like, I try to learn it and share it with others.

The teachers I work with repeatedly ask me to compile a list or record songs I know that I think are successful with any classroom. Unfortunately, there are none. The repertoire of songs needs to be found within the group. Certainly, there are some good songbooks published to draw from and that is a good place to begin. There are particular songbooks that I have found useful and I have

compiled a list of them as a reference. (Refer to Appendix F, Resources of Songbooks, pp.267-270)

- Be willing to take risks with the students and sing

Sometimes taking the step of singing alone in front of the class is emotionally risky and puts the teacher in a vulnerable place. It is essential to keep in mind that the goal is to participate, not to demonstrate perfect vocal quality. A fifth/sixth grade teacher relates an interesting story about her initial fear:

When I got up to lead a song with my students I started with a simple chant. Even then, I was perspiring from nervousness. Soon, I realized that the students didn't care what I sounded like. We have a great rapport and they made me feel comfortable. We laughed and had so much fun. We learned a lot from each other and I know it brought us closer.
(Fifth/sixth grade classroom teacher, North Attleboro, MA, 4/99)

A good idea, if one is hesitant about singing, is to begin by using small percussion instruments. Try creating a rhythm band and just chanting words. Get comfortable with that before moving to singing. If singing alone is difficult, use a small drum, tamborine or set of maracas to keep the rhythm of the song. Have the students play along on small instruments. If "real" percussion instruments are not available, create instruments from "found sounds." A small plastic water bottle filled with rice and beans makes a terrific shaker, cardboard mailing tubes with nails inserted and filled with rice, beans and popcorn become a beautifully sounding rainstick. Coffee cans with plastic lids become drums. The eraser end of a pencil serves as a drum mallet.

Begin by singing while doing movements or doing a singing game. This brings in singing in a very relaxed, fun way. It is possible, for most songs, to add clapping or other movement while singing. Some songs indicate in the lyrics what movement to do. For instance, in the Nigerian welcome song, *Funga Alafia*, (Chapter 5.1, pp.142-143) the lyrics suggest greeting everyone with your thoughts, your words, and your heart. The singers point to their head, their mouth and their heart accordingly as they sing. (Refer to Appendix F for a list of songbooks that contain many songs that include movements.)

The Benefits of Singing

Singing together in school allows for every voice to be heard both literally and metaphorically. Singing together requires listening to one another. Singing creates literal harmony and, metaphorically, a harmonious environment, that builds a school community which tends to be more cooperative, understanding, tolerant and appreciative. Cooperation and teamwork are enhanced when singing voices are blended together. A middle school teacher witnessed important benefits when she implemented singing:

I noticed that creating the proper environment for singing makes a big difference. Every voice is accepted. Singing guarantees success. Singing helps to fulfill the important goal of education that is to create a community of learners where everyone contributes something.

(Middle school Social Studies/English teacher, North Attleboro, MA 3/99)

As we know from Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences, singing in the classroom supports many educational goals. Gardner suggests in

his theory that there are at least eight parameters of intelligence and all should be nurtured as part of the educational process. (Gardner 1983) This theory demonstrates that students learn in many different ways. For many students learning a concept through melody and rhythm gives them a better chance to really "get it." Incorporating musical activities into a classroom day makes learning enjoyable while teaching to or building the musical intelligence of individual students. New research (Demorest and Morrison 2000, p.33) in the field of music education has proved that musical activities such as singing strengthens attention span, aids memory, and provides creative outlets. A first grade teacher noticed how singing enhanced her curriculum:

Some children have difficulty remembering the days of the week in sequence and learning the names of letters. We have created songs about these subject areas and sing them together. Everyone is involved. Before long they can name of days of the week and their letter names. They've learned them without realizing it. It's enjoyable. Singing plays an important role in our school day. It has brought new light into the classroom.
(First grade teacher, Green Bay, WI, 4/99)

Singing in the classroom, in the music room, and in all-school gatherings enhances the learning environment and strengthens the school community. Group dynamics are affected as well when people sing together and there is a positive change in the way the group as a whole works together. The spirit of the group is lifted. This more positive environment results in enhanced cooperation and teamwork, a sense of belonging to something bigger than oneself and one's immediate family. A first grade classroom teacher realized that singing transformed her teaching:

I now realize that singing is an essential creative avenue for students. As I develop my lessons I integrate music into all subject areas. I continue an ongoing dialogue with the music specialist to ensure musical integrity and inspire further incorporation of music into my classroom.

(First grade classroom teacher, North Attleboro 3/99)

As the United States becomes increasingly diverse, so do our schools.

Many classrooms today are composed of students from “a mosaic of cultures.”

(Cockburn 1991, p.64) Singing is an important way to begin the work of honoring and including the richness of our diverse students into our teaching and learning.

Songs emphasize individual cultures and positively value them. Fortunately, in today's global society, there is a rich source of world music available in local music stores. And of course, the students themselves are a source of culturally diverse music.

For example, in a predominantly Spanish-speaking school in Lawrence, Massachusetts, students composed a song using a Latin rhythm and melody. The lyrics, based on a Spanish song, were written in English and Spanish. “The song, ‘*Es Linda La Nieve*’ (The Snow is Pretty) valued the students’ first language and provided motivation for reading and understanding new words in English.” (Cockburn 1991, p.64)

Exposing students to a wide variety of global folk music and songs containing diverse languages and melodies highlights how music is a common thread for expression. Music is a universal language through which we can begin to appreciate, respect, learn and celebrate the individuality, creativity and world vision of every human being.

Vernacular songs, in particular, connect to community life and values and provide a background out of which they evolved. To illustrate this point, when I work with teachers, I introduce the topic of slavery in America through song and chant, beginning with songs from West Africa, which provide a prime example of the relationship of singing and dancing to community life. I then move into singing spirituals and work songs that embody the thoughts and feelings of the community of enslaved Africans. Barnwell and Brandon point out in their workshop, "Singing in the African-American Tradition:"

...that songs come out of a background which has shaped it and which is essential to understanding its full meaning. The significance of the songs lies in things which cannot be heard, things which are behind the notes but still a part of the music, such as the values imbedded in and promoted by the songs. (Barnwell 1998, p.10)

The study of diverse cultures comes alive through the singing of multicultural music, which provides a cultural awareness not only of other cultures but of our own. This cultural awareness helps begin an essential dialogue concerning the valuing and celebrating of differences.

Final Thoughts

At its most basic level, my examination of the meaning of "singing," suggests that everyone is a singer and that the meaning of "singing" must be broadened to become more inclusive. I have presented a case for creating schools where everyone sings, suggesting the possibility of creating more humanistic educational communities that encourage finding, recognizing, listening to and celebrating every voice.

The conclusions presented – that the non-singer is a myth, and that singing is an important and essential ingredient that for creating strong, vibrant school communities – are the basic messages gleaned from the data. I focused solely on singing, with all its cultural and societal wrappings, but it would be foolish to stop there. The implications of these data are more far-reaching. My study, when taken beyond the basic conclusions, has the possibility of profoundly affecting the ways all of music in education is perceived, implemented and nurtured.

Maxine Greene reminds us how easy it is to get caught in the “main text of life,” one that is negotiated mostly by convention, routine, habit, duty and one we have very little choice in.” (Greene 1995, p.138) Our long-held acceptance of the “non-singer” provides a perfect example for Greene’s metaphor. The traditionally-held meaning of singing is created out of convention and habit, perpetuated by the “main text” (white, middle class) values of America’s society, taken for granted, rarely questioned, named or subjected to examination. The “margins” of the “main text,” however, are where the arts find a place, where imagination flourishes, where questioning, wonderment, and communication across boundaries can occur. (Greene 1995, p.135)

In order to open doors in the domain of music education and transform the places where music is created and experienced, we must move away from the conventional “text” of music in education. We must move into the “margins,” not only with the simple concept of singing, but in all of music education.

Music education is a construct growing out of our particular society and history and now is the time to begin viewing it through a wider, more critical lens. If we expect our students to become open learners, eager questioners, seekers of knowledge, then, we educators must begin to perceive teaching and learning through multiple lenses and with imagination. We can no longer be complacent about the current construction and continue to think of ourselves as “non-singers,” any more than we can continue to think of ourselves as “non-listeners,” “non-participants,” “non-members of the community” or “non-learners.” We must begin to expand, revise, engage ourselves more authentically and adventurously in every component of education.

Decades ago, in *Democracy and Education*, John Dewey warned educators about creating an educational system that isolated subject matter from life experience, ignoring the human aspects of learning, the social aspects and particularly the arts. (Dewey 1916, pp. 9-10) We are headed in the direction of isolation when singing and other components of music in education are separated and relegated only to the music room. It is to everyone’s benefit to include as many people as possible in experiencing the joys of making music and we are foolish not to do so. When everyone shares in learning a song or dancing and singing together there is a “participant kind of knowing” (Greene 1995, p.137) with music itself. This leads to an experience that can become more reflective and critical for everyone involved.

There is much to gain for everyone in the school community when

cultural and societal boundaries are broken down, our minds are released and our creativity enlisted. We do an enormous disservice to ourselves as educators and to our students as learners to remain singularly structured with boundaries that are created and perpetuated within one paradigm. For more inclusive education, we must go beyond those boundaries and embrace “multiple voices and multiple realities” (Greene 1995, p.185) that our educational communities comprise. When that occurs, transformation is possible and teaching and learning will be shaped and driven by imagination, inclusiveness and passion.

APPENDIX A

Responses from Survey on Meaning of Singer/Non-Singer

(responses from Boston University students, 9/23/99)

Questions:

What does it mean to be a singer?

Are you one?

<p>To be a singer is to take pleasure and comfort in telling stories musically. Mostly though, the most joyful thing about singing is being able to share this story or just a rhythm with someone else.</p>	<p>I may not have the most beautiful voice, but I do love to sing, especially if there's someone to sing with.</p>
<p>I guess singer means simply one who sings, however I sing and do not say – I am a singer. A singer is someone with a voice that other like to hear. An singer is confident enough</p>	<p>I don't know. That's a tough question because I like to sing for certain others and myself but I'm not a singer. Maybe it's because lots of my friends go to Berklee College of Music, so I'm intimidated by them. Sorry I wasn't more helpful!</p>
<p>A singer is someone with the vocal talent to be spontaneous and take musical risks. Most of the songs I learn today involve the rehashing of old beats and tunes set to new words. There's no innovation and the melodies are simple to pick up on. This annoys me. I like to be challenged. I like to not be able to predict what's coming next. With that in mind, my favorite singer is Ani DiFranco. She's an amazing singer/songwriter with not only a talent for original lyrics but for not being afraid to modify the timing and tune of her old songs. She's amazing when you see her live.</p>	<p>I wish I was a singer, but my voice isn't too fantastic. I sing better on the low range bass on songs like A British Tar.</p>
<p>A singer is a person who has a song inside they need to sing. The voice that comes out is not important though I will never make a living singing.</p>	<p>My voice is not exactly beautiful. All my life (and I am not exaggerating), people have told me that I have a strange voice (People can be very rude). But I always loved to sing. I used to invent songs. Now I just sing songs I already know. In high school, I joined the Glee Club and I worked very hard to manage to stay on pitch. In 4 years I became halfway decent, although I never had a solo. According to my director, I had finally become a singer. But in my mind I always was one.</p>

Appendix A (responses from Boston University students, 9/23/99)

<p>Being a singer means you can take a song into your body and pour it out of you as your own. Anyone can be a singer and the titles 'good' and 'bad' are mere questions because I am certain that even the most shy and awkward student on campus has passions and if these passions were awakened in song, he or she would be a good singer, in my opinion.</p>	<p>Yes. Music makes me happy. Being part of the music makes me happier. I don't sing in a group or as a profession, but when I do sing, yes, I'm certainly a singer and I can ease myself in it.</p>
<p>A singer can exist on two different levels: professional and informal. I think that anyone who is not totally tone deaf and who seeks expression of emotion can be a singer. I know many people who began singing tunes in the shower or participating in choruses and ended up investing in singing lessons. This does not mean that one has to make a career of their voice, but that singing is such an enjoyable aspect of our vocal abilities that it can be expressed on many different levels.</p>	<p>I am surely a singer, for a day does not pass that I do not sing at least one line of a song, and whether it be in the shower or in a musical on stage or with a friend around a fire.</p>
<p>For me, a singer is someone who can relay a story to me and make me feel it. To make me connect with the story imbedding it in my memories.</p>	<p>I guess I could be a singer. I have sung before, however, I am not so sure if I made anyone feel. I like to think so though</p>
<p>To me a singer is someone who can unabashedly break out into song, know a range of songs and does not worry about what other people think of them. A singer is someone who just sings.</p>	<p>I first and foremost am not a singer. I think I used to be one until a few events in close succession caused me to stop even the pretense of singing that I had. Yes, I am starting to become a singer again. I am developing that confidence again that some people took from me. I know I don't have a good voice but it's not about the voice, it's about just doing it.</p>
<p>I think a singer is someone who enjoys the actual act of singing, not necessarily the modern type of large band thing, but more along the lines of singing for personal enjoyment or teaching others the songs you enjoy. When I think of an archetypal singer I think of my mother. She always was singing when I was younger (still does) but her songs were all stories. And it wasn't enough for me just to hum along. She taught me the words in Hindi, translated them and dances/movements.</p>	<p>I'm not that kind of a singer, but I hope one day to be, esp. if I have my own children.</p>

Appendix A (responses from Boston University students, 9/23/99)

Anyone who sings is a singer. You do not need to be in a music group to be one. If you sing aloud while listening to music you are a singer. If you sing in the shower you are a singer.	I consider myself a singer in that I do sing along to music and sometimes I sing in the shower. I don't sing publicly in a group. Just in this class. But I do like to sing so I am a singer.
A singer is someone who uses his or her voice to make music. I don't think it has anything to do with ability. You could have a beautiful voice but never use it as a singer. Most people are probably singers in some small way or another, even if they just sing along to TV theme songs or in the shower.	I would definitely say I'm a singer, although I do not sing well. I learned to play the guitar just to accompany my bad singing. Singing for hours, even if neighbors well at me, has always made me feel better.
A singer sings for herself or sings for other. She sings to entertain, to express emotion, or for no particular reason at all. A singer doesn't really have to be able to carry a tune. She doesn't have to be able to read music. A singer just has to sing for the joy of singing.	I definitely consider myself a singer. I can't really carry a tune, in fact, I know most of the time I sound pretty sad. But I love to sing I love to belt out a song in the car and when I do hit the right note, I get so excited. I love to sing songs in front of the whole camp during summer. Simply put, I love to sing therefore I am a singer.
Singing is about communication. Really it's often communicating across cultures and across time. It's really an inter-personal mass-communication.	I sing all the time.
Being a singer is usually referred to as a professional singer, but I think being a singer really means being a person that likes to sing and does it regularly. Whether a person's tune is ordinary or extraordinary does not matter.	I am a singer. I love to sing. I sing constantly to the radio, in a choir, on my own just walking down the street.
Singers use music to express themselves and their feelings.	I am not a singer.
I feel that being a singer has nothing to do with how well you can carry a tune or stay on the beat, but instead has to do with how you feel about music. If your ears perk up every time you hear a good song, and you feel that you want to participate in it, then you are a singer. Performance is not necessary for you to be a singer. You may only sing in the shower or hum along to the radio in your car, but that still makes you a singer.	I consider myself a singer because I enjoy singing and have been doing it in some form or another, both formally and informally all my life.

Appendix A (responses from Boston University students, 9/23/99)

<p>You sing, unprompted, throughout your life and song is an integral part of your soul's existence. Not necessarily having instruction, you enjoy and use your voice.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>I think that being a singer means using the songs that you sing to entertain yourself and other (especially yourself). And enjoying doing so, whether other people enjoy it or not.</p>	<p>I am a singer because I enjoy singing and do it to entertain myself. My younger brother used to get frustrated with me because I would sing all the time and he wanted quiet. I kept singing anyway.</p>
<p>To be a singer means to be moved by something, instruments, an inner voice, the radio, friends, something move you to become a lyrical poet. To set your thoughts to song and to sing out about what troubles you, delights you, etc. To be a singer is to use your voice in a different manner from everyday speech to communicate with others.</p>	<p>I think everyone is a singer, including myself. It's just that some people were given a talent to sing and do so much better than the rest of the bunch.</p>
<p>To be a singer I suppose, one must merely vocalize, but the specific purpose of conveying a message with a tune. A tune could be any pattern outside a normal speech pattern, something with tones.</p>	<p>I'd say that, by my definition, I'm a singer. I could be wrong, or could I/?</p>
<p>A singer is simply one who takes pleasure in singing and does it for his own enjoyment. A singer doesn't have to sound melodic or beautiful. A singer doesn't have to perform his repertoire to entertain others. One how sings for oneself constitutes a singer</p>	<p>YEAH. I am a singer.</p>
<p>A singer is anyone who sing, anyone who like to sing, anyone who like to sing but doesn't, anyone who want to be seen as such. Being a singer means having an appreciation (on perhaps only some small level) for song, for the act of singing, or for community through music</p>	<p>Yes! I am a singer. I do not have a pretty voice, I cannot really carry a tune, but I love to sing and my car and my shower and my tolerant friends love to hear me!</p>
<p>To be a singer means to use and utilize your natural inborn instrument. Everyone has a voice, with some exceptions, and when you sing you use this voice in a way that allows you to be creative, feel emotion and share a gift with others.</p>	<p>I've always been a singer, but I believe everyone is a singer. My choral teacher in high school had a quotation on her board that said, "If you can walk you can dance, If you can talk you can sing." I don't know where I'd be today if I wasn't a singer. There's nothing I enjoy more.</p>

Appendix A (responses from Boston University students, 9/23/99)

What it means to be a singer to me, is not necessarily a good voice and a good tune. A singer has a unique way of expression through his voice, just as a painter expresses with his hands. Everyone can be a singer as long as you are able to express yourself through it. Songs can make you happy, sad, or mad but it all depends on how the singer sings the song.	
A singer is one that finds happiness while singing. It's more than just singing notes. It's feeling them and feeling a part of the song being sung.	Yes. I believe I am.
A singer is anyone who musically expresses themselves via their voice. You don't need to be awesome. It's all in the eye of the beholder. One person could consider you a singer and another one wouldn't.	Yes, I think I'm a singer. Not a very good one but I sing all the time in the shower and car and at home. Although, many people would not consider me a singer because I'm not the best.
A singer is someone who expresses themselves through oral verse. Attitude, mood and the persona of the individual come out through the song they sing. A singer is just another talker in a group.	I love to sing, just not very talented at pitch, tone, etc.
A singer generally prompts me to think of a professional and someone famous who does not necessarily sing well, but sings (and that is what counts). I also can see a singer as anyone who sings at all, in the shower, while they clean, whatever.	In this definition I am definitely a singer. I got tunes in my head and I need to sing them. It keeps things interesting sometimes. Through the first thing that comes to my mind when I hear the word singer is a professional or person who sings for a living. I think anyone can be one, really.
The grammar of "to be a singer" on one level connotes one who sings, however most people (myself included) would intuitively feel that "to be a singer" one should somehow be professional and/or trained in some way.	I would consider myself to be a 'closet' singer because I sing often and with the intent of using proper technique, etc. but I am not a performer.

Appendix A (responses from Boston University students, 9/23/99)

To be a singer, I don't think you necessarily need to be a good singer or a professional singer. It means that you enjoy that act of singing and it gives you something. Happiness, peace, stress release, whatever. But you should be someone who sings on a regular basis, just for the act of singing. Not for other people but for yourself.	I am definitely not a singer. I rarely ever sing unless it's singing in a group and we're all singing together, like in the car. By my definition though, I don't sing really for myself, for a reason.
A singer is someone who sings for the joy of singing.	Sort of. Leaning more towards yes than no.
To be a singer means to like to sing and to sing a lot. To sing along with other with the radio, to yourself, to others with others. And just to enjoy it and appreciate the sound whether your voice is trained or not.	And yes, I do this.
To be a singer, one must like to sing.	In this context, I am, yes. I doubt, however, that other people would consider me a singer.
A singer is someone who sings.	When I'm singing I am.
Feeling the song, relating to the words, having some tone awareness is helpful but one doesn't have to be accurate to be a singer. We can all be singers. Some are more trained than others.	I am a singer!
To unselfconsciously enjoy singing, no matter how good or not so good you are.	Absolutely. (especially when it comes to karaoke)
A singer is just someone who releases their stress and emotions (depression, happiness, etc.) through voice.	Since I consider myself pretty unstable emotionally, I would consider myself a very good singer.
To communicate in a nonstandard way.	Yes.
A singer is someone who sings out of love for songs. They might get paid. They usually don't but without the dedication, I think, the song hardly comes across as anything special.	Sure. In the car, in my room, in the shower, at a concert, in public – rarely (I think people appreciate that)

Appendix A (responses from Clark University students, 9/27/99)

What does it mean to be a singer ?	Are you one?
To sing on key, to have a nice voice, to be talented	I was not anymore.
Someone who enjoys the act of singing	By the above definition I would call myself a singer but I do not consider myself to be a singer since I do not consider myself to be a good singer.
It means making music with your voice and putting words to it.	Of course, more so than others I think because I'm in a singing group.
A singer: good presentation, good voice, good set of lungs	I am a singer in my own way. I think I'm good (in a funny way)
If you are a singer it means you can sing. Usually they have pleasant voices and people want to hear their voices.	I sing but am not a 'singer'. I just sing sometimes not very good.
To be a singer, what must happen ...someone who hears music, rhythm.	Yes, in the shower (ONLY)
Someone who is brave and can manipulate their voice to create controlled tones.	Yes
To be a singer: Performance, outgoing, sing on key, practice, confident, time & effort, project To be a singer I believe you must possess all of these qualities	I am a singer.
To be a singer you have to have a decent voice and vocal range.	I like to think I am.
To know a song and practice it with your voice	I am one (but shy to sing in front of others)
Have a great voice and hold a tune.	NO!

Appendix A (responses from Clark University students, 9/27/99)

A singer is someone who has the ability to sing on key	NO
To be a singer you feel the music and are sensitive to it.	I am not a singer because I cannot carry a tune.
To be able to follow a tune well; to have a pleasant singing voice; to understand music well.	No
To be a singer you must have something you want to communicate, a mood, message, etc.	I'm not a public singer because even though I know one must just want to sing to sing I'm still a little shy because my noise isn't great.
You like to sing....not necessarily good at singing	Sort of.....

APPENDIX B

The phenomenological method of analysis used was as follows:

1. I read over each transcribed interview several times to acquire a general feeling and understanding of it.
2. I then extracted the significant statements, phrases or sentences that directly pertained to the phenomenon of "non-singer". These are presented in the following Figures 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1.

Figure 1.1

A list of significant statements of the experience

Suzen

- One event caused me to stop singing.
- I was a singer before. I loved it.
- I became just a chorus member after the event. No more solos. I thought this was a message that maybe I'm not so good.
- I am jealous of singers. They are so comfortable doing it.
- I must have had talent once. I got chosen for solos.
- The event caused me to feel excluded.
- I didn't feel comfortable.
- I decided, no more singing. This is not for me. They (the other solo performers) are right. I'm not like them.
- I'm not made to sing.
- I'm envious of singers. They are comfortable singing.
- I think, when I sing, that someone is listening to me and going to criticize me.
- Now I do try to sometimes sing.
- Before, in 7/8th grade, loved chorus. I felt included. I felt more human. I was with my friends.
- I don't think I'll ever be a singer. It's part of my personality now.
- The class is comfortable. The teacher sings. It's safe. It's comfortable. I sing in a group. So I sing now in class.
- I do need a release.
- It's time for me to get back out and be like I was.
- I'm self-conscious when someone listens to me sing.
- When someone says, "I hear you singing, I clam up" I don't want them to point it out.
- I don't know if I have talent.
- I used to be a soprano and now I can't even get that high.
- My boyfriend says I have a good voice but I don't believe him.

- The teacher in the class is not making anyone sing. It's about sharing, if you want to.
- Sometimes I find myself singing and I don't realize I'm singing.
- I don't sing very loud.
- Sometimes I don't sing at all (in class).
- I've always appreciated music. It's always been a part of my life.
- I'll join in on Happy Birthday now.
- I'll sing with my friends. I wouldn't have done that in the past.
- I sang all the time as a kid. That's a happy memory.
- It's been a long healing process (from the decision not to sing until now.)
- I admit my decision (to not sing) was not rationale.

Figure 2.1

A list of significant statements of the experience

Jessica

- I'm not known by people as a singer. They don't think of me and think singing.
- I tried to sing when I was younger. It didn't pan out. My mom suggested we try something else.
- I'm not a very good singer.
- I was never good at singing.
- I don't have a good voice.
- I like singing.
- People laugh at me when I sing.
- I'm not very a very loud person.
- I am kind of embarrassed to sing (in front of the class).
- We sang an easy song. Even I can sing it. It was fine. (class performance.)
- I really just can't sing.
- I don't sing with anyone.
- I wish I could just sing. I'd sing all the time.
- I don't have a voice.
- I guess it could be developed but it's too late.
- I would love to be a singer.
- They made me a munchkin in the Wizard of Oz play. I was just one of those people in the crowd. That's how I know I am terrible.
- Everyone's eyes are on you when you sing. I'm too shy.
- I envy people who can sing. It's pretty. People want to hear it.
- It's an attention getter. (to sing)
- It's nice (to be a singer)
- People go to see them (singers)
- I was nervous singing in class. But it was fun and it was not much of a tune. So it was easy.

- I was in chorus and the teacher made me sing high and low for placement. She kept having me sing. She knew I was terrible
- I'm a little shy. I never even speak out in classes.
- I'd love to be a singer but it's too late.
- I sing but I'm not a singer.
- If I had to sing along I'd drop the class. Humiliation is big.
- It's a shyness. Everyone's eyes on me. I don't want to do that.
- I was less inhibited as a kid.

Figure 3.1

A list of significant statements of the experience

Amanda

- I really can't sing
- I don't sing because I'm bad.
- I can't get the tune or pitch or whatever.
- I sing and people laugh.
- I can hear it in my head but I can't get it out right. I can't convey to anybody else how it's supposed to sound.
- I don't remember singing as a kid.
- I played in the band in high school. I didn't like the chorus people. They were these annoying squeaky little girls.
- I just don't sing cause I just feel like it.
- I don't just sing to sing.
- I don't sing alone in the car or shower.
- I'll sing with my friends in the car.
- I need silence.
- I wouldn't sing a solo in front of people. I'd feel embarrassed. Everyone would be listening to me.
- I can hear myself and I know I'm not on key.
- I can't get on the tone or pitch. I'm not singing on key.
- I know a lot about music. I know theory and am aware of pitch. I know if people are in tune together.
- I sing to little kids. They don't know the difference.
- I like to sing. I just don't do it. I just don't feel like it.
- I don't think I'd sing a solo. Everyone would hear me. It's too hard.
- I'd love to be able to sing.
- I'm beyond being a singer now. I've found other things to fill my time.
- I sang in the group in front of the class. It wasn't bad. We had practiced. I thought if they laugh, they laugh. I laugh at myself. I'm not super embarrassed. And there were other people to sing with.
- I'm not super embarrassed to get up in front of people in general.
- I'll sing if there is an occasion to sing like Happy Birthday.

- It was hard to sing in front of the class but we practiced and there were other people to balance me.
- I would feel embarrassed if I were the only one singing. I'd think – they are all listening to me. I'm so bad. I'm not on key.
- I didn't join the chorus I didn't like the chorus people. I joined band.
- They (the chorus girls) sang their own songs and didn't include us (the band members).
- I think there's some kind of break between my vocal chords and my brain. The sound just comes out flat and the notes aren't right.
- I sometimes can do it (sing) But just doing it on my own is really hard.
- I noticed yesterday in class people were singing in front looking down. I think they were uncomfortable.

Figure 4.1

A list of significant statements of the experience

Onika

- I can't really hold a tune.
- My voice cracks somewhere in the middle, beginning or end.
- A singer is someone who can lead songs.
- Singing in the shower is just goofing around.
- There are two different categories of singers – playing around and performing
- I in middle school chorus. It was a group. I could hide. I wasn't a singer; it was just fun.
- In high school the best chorus singers were chosen. They could lead songs.
- I don't mind singing in a group.
- I won't lead songs.
- I'll sing with little kids cause they sing along. And everyone's voices are squeaky.
- I couldn't be a singer because I can't be in front of people. I'm too shy.
- I get so nervous in front of a crowd.
- I'm from Barbados and I sing those songs.
- It depends on what I'm singing whether I'm a singer.
- When it's my music, I'm a singer.
- When I sing, I'm happy.
- Certain people are picked to lead songs, like sopranos who have really high voices.
- Maybe I got an unconscious message from that. I went out for volleyball.

3. I returned to the data and eliminated statements the contained the same or nearly the same statements. (horizontalization) This allowed me to narrow the data down somewhat. These data are presented in the following Figures 1.2, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2.

Figure 1.2

Horizontalization (non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements)

Suzen

- One event caused me to stop singing.
- I became just a chorus member. No more solos. I thought this was a message that maybe I'm not so good.
- I am jealous of singers. They are so comfortable doing it.
- I must have had talent once. I got chosen for solos.
- The event caused me to feel excluded.
- I didn't feel comfortable.
- I decided, no more singing. This is not for me. They (the other solo performers) are right. I'm not like them.
- I decided I must not be made to sing.
- I'm envious of singers. They are comfortable singing.
- I think, when I sing, that someone is listening to me and going to criticize me. I'm self-conscious.
- In 7/8th grade, loved chorus. I felt included. I felt more human. I was with my friends. I was a singer then.
- I don't think I'll ever be a singer. It's part of my personality now.
- The class is comfortable. The teacher sings. It's safe. I sing in the group.
- I do need a release.
- It's time for me to get back out and be like I was
- I used to be a soprano and now I can't even get that high.
- My boyfriend says I have a good voice but I don't believe him.
- He's (the teacher in the class) not making anyone sing. It's about sharing, if you want to.
- Sometimes I now find myself singing and I don't realize I'm singing
- I don't sing very loud.
- Sometimes I don't sing at all (in class)
- I've always appreciated music. It's always been a part of my life.
- I'll sing with my friends and join in on Happy Birthday. I wouldn't have done that in the past.
- I sang all the time as a kid. That's a happy memory.
- It's been a long healing process (from the decision not to sing until now)

- I admit my decision (to not sing) was not rationale.

Figure 2.2

Horizontalization (non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements)

Jessica

- I tried to sing when I was younger. It didn't pan out. My mom suggested we try something else.
- I was never good at singing.
- I don't have a good voice.
- I like singing.
- People laugh at me when I sing.
- I'm not very a very loud person.
- I am kind of embarrassed to sing (in front of the class).
- We sang an easy song – not much of a tune. (in the performance in class) Even I can sing it.
- It was fine. I was nervous but it was fun. (class performance.)
- I really just can't sing.
- I don't sing with anyone.
- I wish I could just sing. I'd sing all the time. I'd love to be a singer.
- I guess it (a singing voice) could be developed but it's too late.
- They made me a munchkin in the Wizard of Oz play. I was just one of those people in the crowd. That's how I know I am terrible.
- Everyone's eyes are on you when you sing. I'm too shy.
- I envy people who can sing. It's pretty. People want to hear it.
- It's an attention getter. (to sing)
- It's nice (to be a singer)
- People go to see them (singers)
- I was in chorus and the teacher made me sing high and low for placement. She kept having me sing. She knew I was terrible.
- I sing but I'm not a singer.
- If I had to sing alone I'd drop the class. Humiliation is big.
- It's shyness. Everyone's eyes on me. I don't want to do that.
- I was less inhibited as a kid.

Figure 3.2

Horizontalization (non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements)

Amanda

- I really can't sing
- I don't sing because I'm bad.
- I can't get the tune or pitch or whatever.
- I sing and people laugh.
- I can hear it in my head but I can't get it out right. I can't convey to anybody else how it's supposed to sound.
- I don't remember singing as a kid.

- I played in the band in high school. I didn't like the chorus people. They were these annoying squeaky little girls.
- I just don't sing cause I just feel like it.
- I don't sing alone in the car or shower.
- I'll sing with my friends in the car.
- I need silence.
- I wouldn't sing a solo in front of people. I'd feel embarrassed. It's too hard. I'd be thinking I'm bad. I'm not on key.
- Everyone would be listening to me.
- I can't get on the tone or pitch. I'm not singing on key.
- I know a lot about music. I know theory and am aware of pitch. I know if people are in tune together.
- I sing to little kids. They don't know the difference.
- I like to sing. I just don't do it. I just don't feel like it.
- I'd love to be able to sing.
- I'm beyond being a singer now. I've found other things to fill my time.
- I sang in the group in front of the class. It wasn't bad. We had practiced. I thought if they laugh, they laugh. I laugh at myself. I'm not super embarrassed. And there were other people to sing with.
- I'm not super embarrassed to get up in front of people in general.
- I'll sing if there is an occasion to sing like Happy Birthday.
- They (the chorus girls) sang their own songs and didn't include us (the band members.)
- I think there's some kind of break between my vocal chords and my brain. The sound just comes out flat and the notes aren't right.
- I sometimes can do it (sing) But just doing it on my own is really hard.

Figure 4.2

Horizontalization (non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements)

Onika

- I can't really hold a tune.
- My voice cracks somewhere in the middle, beginning or end.
- A singer is someone who can lead songs.
- Singing in the shower is just goofing around.
- There are two different categories of singers – playing around and performing
- I sang in middle school chorus. It was a group. I could hide. I wasn't a singer; it was just fun.
- In high school the best chorus singers were chosen. They could lead songs.
- I won't lead songs.

- I'll sing with little kids cause they sing along. And everyone's voices are squeaky.
- I couldn't be a singer because I can't be in front of people. I'm too shy.
- I get so nervous in front of a crowd.
- I'm from Barbados and I sing those songs.
- It depends on what I'm singing whether I'm a singer.
- When it's my music, I'm a singer.
- When I sing, I'm happy.
- Maybe I got an unconscious message, when I wasn't chosen to lead songs in chorus. So, I gave up chorus and went out for volleyball.

4. The next step was to organize each interviewee's non-repetitive statements into clusters of themes. The clusters represent themes I determined best fit the statements. These are presented in the following Figures 1.3, 2.3, 3.3, 4.3. In following this procedure with all four interviewees, themes common to all four interviewees emerged. I referred back to the original statements when creating these clusters and examined them to verify that statements made in the original transcript were accounted for and also that the clusters I created did not suggest something that was not in the original transcript. At this point I was still working with each individual interviewee and had not combined the themes.

Figure 1.3
Clusters of Meaning Units or Themes
Suzen

- A. Early singing experiences
 - I must have had talent once. I got chosen for solos
 - In the 7/8th grade I loved chorus. I felt included, more human. I was with my friends. I was a singer then.
 - I sang all the time as a kid. That's a happy memory.
 - I've always appreciated music. It's always been part of my life.
- B. Experience/beliefs about being a non-singer
 - One event caused me to stop singing.

- I became just a chorus member. No more solos. I thought this was a message that maybe I'm not so good.
 - The event caused me to feel excluded.
 - I didn't feel comfortable (with the group)
 - I decided. No more singing. This is not for me. They (the others in the group who got solos) are right. I'm not like them.
 - I decided I'm not made to sing.
 - I admit it was not rationale. (the decision not to sing)
- C. Current experiences with singing.
- The class is comfortable. The teacher sings and it's safe. I sing in the group
 - My boyfriend says I have a good voice but I don't believe him.
 - The teacher is not making anyone sing. It's just about sharing.
 - Sometimes I now find myself singing and don't realize I'm singing.
 - Sometimes I don't sing very loud.
 - Sometimes I don't sing at all. (in class)
 - I'll sing with my friends now and join in on Happy Birthday. I wouldn't have done that in the past.
 - It's been a long healing process (from the time I decided not to sing)
- D. Current beliefs about singing.
- I'm envious of singer. They are comfortable singing.
 - I think when I sing that someone is listening to me and going to criticize me. I'm self-conscious.
 - I don't think I'll ever be a singer. It's part of my personality now.
 - I do need a release.
 - It's time for me to get back out and be like I was.
 - I used to be a soprano and now I can't even get that high.

Figure 2.3
Clusters of Meaning Units or Themes
Jessica

- A. Prior experiences of being a non-singer.
- I tried to sing when I was younger. It didn't pan out. My mom suggested we try something else.
 - I was never good at singing.
 - They made me a munchkin in the Wizard of Oz play. I was just one of those people in the crowd. That's how I know I am terrible.
 - I was in the chorus and the teacher made me sing high and low for placement. She kept have me sing. She knew I was terrible.
 - I was less inhibited as a kid.

- B. Current experiences with singing
- People laugh at me when I sing
 - I am kind of embarrassed to sing (in front of the class)
 - We sang an easy song (in the class performance). Even I can sing it.
 - It was fine but I was nervous but it was fun (to sing in the performance.)
 - I don't sing with anyone.
- C. Current beliefs about singing
- I don't have a good voice.
 - I like singing.
 - I'm not a very loud person.
 - I really just can't sing.
 - I wish I could just sing. I'd sing all the time. I'd love to be a singer.
 - I guess it (singing) could be developed but it's too late.
 - Everyone's eyes are on you when you sing. I'm too shy.
 - I envy people who can sing. It's pretty and people want to hear it.
 - It's (singing) an attention getter.
 - It's (singing) nice.
 - People go to see them (singers)
 - I sing but I'm not a singer.
 - If I had to sing alone I'd drop the class. Humiliation is big.

Figure 3.3
Clusters of Meaning Units or Themes
Amanda

- A. Prior experiences with singing
- I don't remember singing as a kid.
 - I played in the high school band. I didn't like the chorus people. They were annoying squeaky little girls.
 - I learned a lot about music: theory and pitch. I learned to hear if people are in tune together.
 - They (the chorus girls) sang their own songs and didn't include us (the band members.)
- B. Current beliefs about singing
- I really can't sing.
 - I don't sing cause I'm bad.
 - I can't get the tune or pitch. .
 - I need silence.
 - I wouldn't sing a solo in front of people. I'd feel embarrassed. It's too hard. I'd be thinking I'm bad. I'm not on key.

- Everyone would be listening to me.
- I can't sing on key.
- I'd love to be able to sing.
- I'm beyond being a singer now. I've found other things to fill my time.
- I think there's some kind of break between my vocal chords and my brain. The sound just comes out flat and the notes aren't right.

C. Current experiences with singing

- I sing and people laugh.
- I can hear it in my head but I can't get it out right. I can't convey to anybody else how it's supposed to sound.
- I just don't sing cause I don't feel like it.
- I don't sing alone in the car or shower.
- I'll sing with my friends in the car.
- I sing with little kids. They don't know the difference.
- I like to sing. I just don't do it. I just don't feel like it.
- I sang in the group in front of the class. It wasn't bad. We had practiced. I thought if they laugh, they laugh.
- I laugh at myself.
- There were other people to sing with (in the performance)
- I'm not super embarrassed to get up in front of people in general.
- I'll sing if there is an occasion to sing like Happy Birthday
- I sometimes can do it (sing). But just doing it on my own is really hard.

Figure 4.3
Clusters of Units or Meanings
Onika

A. Prior experiences with singing

- I sang in middle school. It was a group. I could hide. It was fun.
- In high school the people who could lead songs were chosen for chorus.
- I gave up chorus and went out for volleyball.

B. Current beliefs about singing

- I can't really hold a tune.
- My voice cracks somewhere in the middle, beginning or end.
- A singer is someone who can lead songs.
- Singing in the shower is just goofing around.
- There are two different categories of singers – playing around and performing

- Maybe I got an unconscious message when I wasn't chosen to lead songs. So, I gave up chorus.
- I get so nervous in front of a crowd.
- I won't lead songs.
- I'll sing with little kids cause they sing along. And everyone's voices are squeaky.
- I couldn't be a singer because I can't be in front of people. I'm too shy.

C. Current experiences with singing

- I'm from Barbados and I sing those songs
- I'll sing with little kids cause they sing along. And everyone's voices are squeaky.
- When I sing, I'm happy
- When I'm in Barbados I'm a singer.

5. For this next step I varied the phenomenological methodology slightly. The traditional approach suggests creating a textural description (what happened) and a structural description (how the phenomenon happened) for each of the interviewees. I found as I began this step that I was combining the textural and structural descriptions. I decided to continue with my approach and create what I refer to as a profile for each of the interviewees which was created from the data mentioned above. I also created a profile for myself which is a required step for phenomenological research. Although I do not define myself as a “non-singer” I created my profile based on the experience I've had working with “non-singers”. It was interesting to compare my profile with those who have direct experience with the phenomenon. The profiles for each interviewee as well as mine are presented in following Figures 1.4, 2.4, 3.4, 4.4, 5.4.

Figure 1.4

Profile of Suzen's experience

(what was experienced, and how it was experienced)

I sang all the time as a kid and always appreciated music. I think music has always been part of my life. I think I had talent then. I was in the chorus in the 7/8th grade and loved it. I was often chosen for solos and I felt very included. I was with my friends. I was definitely a singer back then.

In the 10th grade I went out for the school play. I got chosen to do a couple songs, some duets, a solo, a trio, a small group number. I thought to myself, "I must have some talent." Then one day I came and I was cut from all the special parts. I became just a part of the chorus. I was very upset. I didn't feel included and felt very uncomfortable.

I decided to write a letter to the director and tell her how upset I was. Well, this backfired and suddenly everyone in the show was mad at me because they said I hurt the director's feelings. This event caused me to feel very excluded. The others in the show said I didn't understand what it was like to work hard and practice. It was so upsetting to me that I decided, no more singing. This is not for me. Those people are right. I don't understand. I'm not like them. I decided that I was not made for singing. I don't belong to sing. I admit now that it wasn't rationale but I decided at that moment not to sing.

It's been a long healing process. I haven't sung until three years ago. I had a boyfriend who sings a lot and asked me why I don't sing and I told this story to him. He tried to get me to sing but if I think he or anyone is listening to me when I sing I get self conscious and clam up. I think they are going to criticize me.

But I've decided that it's time to get back out and be like I was before. I need a release. This course atmosphere has been comfortable. The teacher sings and it feels safe. I'll sing with the group and sometimes I find myself singing and don't even realize I'm singing. I'll even join in with my friends now. When we did our performance in front of the class I was nervous but the song helped me feel comfortable. I loved the song.

I don't know if I'm ever going to be a singer as I define it, someone who's just comfortable with singing, someone who just does it, not matter what. It's part of my personality. And I'm jealous of singers, envious of the comfort they have. But I took this class and it was a personal decision. This is what I want now, for me. I want to do things just for me now.

Figure 2.4

Profile of Jessica's experience as a non-singer
(what was experienced, and how it was experienced)

When I was a kid I tried a lot of things. I was less inhibited. I was in plays and musicals but they just didn't pan out. My mom suggested we try something else. I even auditioned in front of everyone for the Wizard of Oz but only got a chorus part. That's how I know I am terrible.

Then I was in the chorus too in the 4th grade and the teacher made me sing high and low. It was just for placement; everyone got it but she knew I was terrible.

I really just can't sing. I don't have a good voice and I'm not very loud and people laugh at me when I sing. I am embarrassed to sing in front of people. Everybody's eyes are on you. I'm too shy for that.

I did sing in the group for the performance in class. I was nervous but it was fun. We sang an easy song that even I could sing. If I had to sing a solo I'd have dropped the class. Humiliation is big.

I envy people who can sing. I'd love to be a singer. People go to see singers. It's an attention getter. It's pretty and people want to hear you. I wish I could just sing. I'd sing all the time. I guess it could be developed but it's too late.

Figure 3.4

Profile of Amanda's experience of being a non-singer
(what was experienced, and how it was experienced)

I don't remember singing as a kid. I played in the high school band. I didn't chose chorus because I didn't like the chorus people. There were all these annoying girls in chorus. When the band and chorus went on trips together they'd always sing their songs and they never included us.

I learned a lot about music in high school, theory, pitch. I learned to hear if people were in tune together. Because of my music training I can hear that I'm not on key. I can't get the tune or the pitch and so I don't sing cause I'm bad. I think there's some kind of break between my vocal chords and my brain cause the sound just comes out flat and the notes aren't right. I can hear it in my head but I can't get it out right.

I'm not super embarrassed to get up in front of people in general. I'm a communications major. But I wouldn't sing a solo in front of people. I'd

feel embarrassed. Everyone would be listening to me and I'd be thinking, I'm bad and I'm not on key. Doing it on my own is really too hard.

Sometimes I can do it. I did sing in the group in front of the class for the performance. It wasn't bad. We had practiced. And there were other people to balance me. And I thought, if they laugh, they laugh. I laugh at myself. Sometimes I sing and my boyfriend laughs.

I like to sing; I just don't do it. I don't sing alone in the car or the shower. I will sing with my friends in the car or if there's an occasion to sing, like Happy Birthday. I sing with little kids. They don't know the difference. I'd love to be able to sing but I'm beyond being a singer now. I've found other things to fill my time.

Figure 4.4

Profile of Onika's experience of being a non-singer
(what was experienced and how it was experienced)

I sang in middle school and it was fine. I was in a group and I could pretty much hide. By high school it seemed like only the people who the best chorus singers were in chorus. They could lead songs. I wasn't encouraged to join and I went out for sports instead.

There are two categories of singing for me; playing around singing and actually performing. I sing with my friends and goof around but I don't perform. Performers are the real singers. That's what singing is to me.

I can't really hold a tune and my voice cracks somewhere in the middle or beginning or end. I couldn't be a performer. I'd get so nervous. That's why I don't think of myself as a singer. I can't be in front of people. I think of myself as shy.

I was born in Barbados and I moved here when I was four but my family and I listen and sing those songs. I guess it depends on what I'm singing whether I consider myself a singer or not. When I sing Calypso and Solka, which I consider *my music* I feel happy and I feel I'm a singer. It's up beat and fast and you don't really have to hold a note. I can't sing the songs that are more mellow, like gospel songs. With those songs you have to hold a tune.

Figure 5.4

Profile of the researcher's (Louise) experience of being a non-singer
(what was experienced and how it was experienced)

I personally have not ever experienced defining myself as a non-singer. I have always had positive experiences with singing and never felt or was never told that I was not a singer.

However, in my professional life as a teacher of teachers and my personal life as a person who sings regularly, I am often in contact with people who define themselves as non-singers. From these many experiences, I have compiled a list of statements that come from my experience of working with non-singers.

- ◆ Non-singers are very convinced that they can't sing. They often are insistent about it
- ◆ Non-singers often relay a story to me about a person from their past history (often a music teacher) who told them they couldn't sing. They believed them and consequently stopped singing.
- ◆ Non-singers I have most experience with are white men and women, between the ages of 20 – 60 years old.
- ◆ I most often hear non-singers say phrases such as:
 "I just can't sing."
 "I have a terrible voice."
 "I can't carry a tune."
 "People laugh at me when I sing."
- ◆ Non-singers seem initially unwilling to sing with a group and will never sing alone.
- ◆ The non-singers I have met who are teachers in my college courses, although they say they will not sing, eventually do join in with the group.
- ◆ Even though these non-singers state they cannot sing, I believe they can sing.
- ◆ I believe that they think they can't sing because they think they don't sound like some well-known performer.
- ◆ When people have been humiliated about their singing they tend not to sing in public.
- ◆ Singing becomes very private activity for non-singers.
- ◆ Non-singers do not want their voice to be distinguishable.

6. The final step following the phenomenological approach was to take the profile of each of the interviewees and to create an "exhaustive or composite description of phenomenon. This overall description, Figure 5, was created from

the integration of the four profiles and also included integrating the profile of the meaning of the phenomenon from my perspective as the researcher.

Figure 5
Composite Description of Being a Non-Singer

There is definitiveness; a '*knowing*' that informs non-singers about defining themselves in such a manner. This knowing does not come from their early childhood experiences with singing. In fact, they often remember happy times singing either with their family or in an elementary or middle school chorus.

Non-singers use a consistent language to describe themselves that includes *definitive-type statements* such as: "I know I'm terrible." "I just can't sing." "I'm bad." "I decided. I'm not made to sing". These statements are not connected with any one overt negative experience of someone telling them they could not sing but rather from a self '*knowing*' about the abilities singers must have to really be singers. It is connected with abilities that they believe they do not have and are connected with overt *messages* they received at some point with the experience of singing.

Not being chosen for the solo, being uncomfortable in front of an audience, no being chosen to lead songs and a belief that they are singing out of tune are all qualifiers of the non-singer. Singers, on the other hand, possess the ability to sing a solo, lead a song, and sing on pitch. Non-singers feel these abilities are unattainable to them but they are very envious of singers for possessing them. They would love to be a singer.

Non-singers are *shy and embarrassed* at the thought of singing alone in front of people. They feel very self-conscious and do not like the idea that people will be listening only to them. They envy the comfort a singer has with singing in front of any group of people.

APPENDIX C

I used a *modified* phenomenological approach for this cultural context research study. The typical final step of a phenomenological study, in my understanding, is to create profiles of each interviewee and then create a composite description of the phenomenon by essentially integrating the profiles together. This final step creates conflicts and difficulties for me and I do not see any value in doing it for the purposes of this study. I believe it is not possible or at best even beneficial to create a valid definitive statement about the experience of singing from a composite view of four cultural perspectives. Instead, I have created individual profiles for each informant and then drawn conclusions from these findings.

My initial step was to conduct one to two hour interviews. After completing each interview, which was recorded, I then transcribed each of them. The transcriptions were then analyzed in the following manner:

Steps followed:

1. I read over each transcribed interview several times to acquire a general feeling and understanding of it.
2. I then extracted the significant statements, phrases or sentences that directly pertained to the experience or meaning of singing in a cultural context.
3. The next step was to organize each interviewees' statements into themes I felt the statements fell under. In this step I included only the non-repetitive statements under each theme. (Refer to chart on pp.39-40)

4. In Step 4, I created a profile for each individual interviewee, which was created from the data results mentioned above. I accomplished this step by creating a chart. (Refer to chart, pp. 39-40)
5. In the final step I reviewed the data and made conclusions from the study. (Refer to pp. 46-47)

In the following pages I have listed the analysis of the data from steps 2 and 3 for each informant.

Step 2: Natalia

List of significant statements

- My mom loves to sing.
- She sang folkloric song about Spanish people.
- I learned about Spanish culture through her songs.
- My dad played Cuban songs when I was growing up
- In school, we did 'play-oriented' music, more like folkloric music
- Music is always part of our socializing.
- When I was younger we would sit around and sing stupid songs.
- In my school there was a chorus but I didn't join cause I sang badly.
- My friends and I make up songs to remember vocabulary and other things in school.
- If we thought we couldn't sing we would just sing for fun.
- In kindergarten I sang songs and learned from the songs.
- Everybody is comfortable singing, even though some people sing better than others do.
- It is very common to sing and dance when you go out to socialize.
- Our culture is much more music oriented than American culture.
- I guess I have music and dancing in my blood.
- Back home, if you don't know how to dance you are a loser.
- You have to know how to dance.
- Everyone dances.
- You learn by taking lessons or by watching and imitating.
- Everyone knows how to dance. Everyone.
- Dancing is a major part of the culture but singing is too.
- We don't listen to instrumental music. We make dances to go with songs.
- In Puerto Rico there is no audience. It doesn't exist.
- In Europe there is. Like in Spain, there is.

- In the small country town, people get together and make food and dance and play music.
- Dancing is a way to identify with your culture.
- We have identity songs that make us proud of who we are.
- Singers write lyrics about Puerto Rican identity and they are very prized in the culture.
- There are songs that give you a sense of independence.
- I learned a Spanish song as a young girl from my mother about how to act as a girl. It was about right and wrong – moral issues.
- There are popular songs now about Catholicism.
- I don't think Americans have a culture.
- Music makes us feel proud.
- Songs are a way of going anywhere and being different. This is my music, here I am and I am different. This is my identity.
- Sometimes a song is the only way I can find to express myself here in the U.S. The song is just what I want to say but I can't translate it to English.
- The song is a way of communicating.

Step 3: Natalia

Themes determined from non-repetitive statements.

A. Family/Childhood experiences

My mom loves to sing and she sang folkloric songs from her Spanish heritage.

I learned about Spanish culture through her songs.

My dad played Cuban songs from his culture when I was growing up.

When I was younger we would sit around and sing silly songs.

Even if we thought we couldn't sing, we'd sing just for fun.

B. School experiences

In school, we did play-oriented music, like folkloric music

In my school, there was a chorus but I didn't join cause I sang badly.

In kindergarten I sang songs and learned academics from the songs.

My friends and I made up song to remember vocabulary and other things for school.

C. Cultural experiences

Music is always a part of our socializing

Everybody is comfortable singing, even though some people sing better than others do.

It is very common to sing and dance when you go out to socialize.

Everyone dances.

You learn to dance by taking lessons or watching and imitating.

We don't listen to music. We make up songs and dances to go along with it.

In small country town, people get together and make food and dance, sing and play music.
 Sometimes a song is the only way I can find to express myself in the U.S.
 The song says what I need to say but I can't translate it into English.

D. Cultural beliefs

Our culture is much more music oriented than American culture.
 I have music and dancing in my blood.
 Back home, if you don't know how to dance you are a loser.
 You have to know how to dance.
 Everyone knows how to dance.
 Dancing and singing are a major part of our culture.
 In Puerto Rico there is no audience. It doesn't exist.
 Dancing and singing is a way to identify with your culture.
 Singers who write songs about Puerto Rico identity are prized in our culture.
 Americans don't have a culture.
 Music makes us feel proud.
 Songs are a way of going anywhere and being different. This is my music.
 Here I am. I am different. This is my identity.
 A song is a way of communicating.

E. Types of songs

We have identity songs that make us proud of who we are.
 There are songs that give you a sense of independence.
 I learned Spanish songs as a young girl about how to act and what was right and wrong.
 There are new songs in Puerto Rico about religion.

Step 2: Darina

List of the significant statements

- I remember my mother singing all the time.
- My grandmother and parents used to listen to the radio everyday. They listened to folk music.
- I moved several places in my life in Czechoslovakia but there was always singing.
- It was very natural to sing.
- The teachers sang, the grandparents sang. The parents sang.
- The children on the playground always sang when they were playing.
- Folksongs were the general music known by all.
- Women got together to make quilts and would sing about their work.
- I remember a wonderful spinning song my grandmother sang. It is in the music books and still sung today.

- Shepherds sang songs while herding sheep.
- There are lots of folksongs about the work of shepherds.
- Working was a chance to sing. It was another activity where everybody sang.
- There is one song, that everybody knows. It is very old, dating back to the 9th century. The title of this song is Songs. It translates:
Kedze ste sa vsali? – where did you come from?
Ciste zneba spadli? – did you fall from the sky?
Ci ste vahji rastli? Did you grow in the forest?
(The songs answer)
Aneba sme nespadi – We did not fall from the sky.
Vhzji sme nerastli - We did not grow in the forest.
Ale nas maidenci a dievce nasli – The boys and girls found us.
- I have known this old song always. Since ever. I don't remember where I first heard it because everybody knows it.
- I grew up singing in school
- I always sang folksongs.
- We did not sing religious songs but folksongs that originated by the people.
- We sang songs about everyday life that everyone could relate to.
- There was no formal teaching of singing in school.
- I don't remember singing in high school at all
- Everyone just sang.
- I never met anyone who couldn't sing.
- When I was 10 years old, I attended a special music school that was after school. In this school I began to learn more about music.
- Every child was encouraged to go to this music school.
- The country supported music and the arts in general.
- I don't remember anyone who could not sing or was thought of as a non-singer.
- Everyone could sing.
- It was a natural phenomenon.
- Teachers were all expected to sing and play an instrument.
- I naturally learned to harmonize by listening.
- My mother taught me counter melodies that were very beautiful.
- Folksongs are powerful because they are about things students know about.
- The invented music is not as good for teaching children.
- I did not really learn to read music and study voice until the university where I received formal music training.
- There are a lot of folksongs about the hero Juro Janosik, who is like a Robin Hood character. He is a true character. These songs are in all our songbooks.
- The songs came out of his story and his story of life.
- There are songs about the instruments played in Janosik's time.
- All the students, in every town, in every city learn these folksongs. They all use the same little music books.

- The music book begins by saying that music is our friend.
- A mother's voice puts her baby to sleep by singing. Singing is important.
- There are political songs, anthems about the Czech republic and Slovakia.
- There are Moravian songs in our music books. They are very beautiful.
- The Morovians and the Germans had strong singing communities and sang wonderful songs and these songs were loved and sung by others.
- Listening is considered a must-do activity back home. Everybody did it.
- Back home everybody participated because they liked to. They were encouraged to.
- There are work songs about how important work is. It is a fine activity.
- There is a work song about grass cutting that talks about how the sun need to go down because the work is hard and the workmen need to rest.
- There are lullabies.
- There are songs about nature – about the birch tree and how sweet it is.
- It was considered beautiful to be able to harmonize. I learned to harmonize by listening.
- There are mining songs and songs for entertainment.
- I was always encouraged to sing.
- My mother loved to sing and I loved to listen to her.
- We always came together, my friends, my family and we sang.
- Whenever there was a gathering we would sing.
- We don't sing rounds much. We harmonize in parts a lot. It is natural.
- When the Russians were in power we learned Russian in school and we learned their songs. We didn't agree with their politics but their songs were beautiful.
- The Czechoslovakian people believe that the life of the people is in their songs.
- The songs are about why they sing and when they sing.
- Music and singing have always been part of our people.
- The songs mirror the thinking and feeling of the people who sing the songs.
- The songs are with the people from when they are born, till they die. They are always with the people.
- For babies there are lullabies.
- For the young children, they sing when they are playing.
- For the young men and women, the songs can express their feeling of love.
- And there are work songs, songs for important tasks and events.
- I remember seeing singing and dancing in all the villages.
- And also people who immigrated to Slovakia shared their songs too.
- A famous Slovakian composer Eino Leino said, "A song is like a jewel, like a clear diamond."
- I like thinking about these songs. It brings up wonderful memories of my country.

Step 3: Darina

Themes determined from non-repetitive statements

A. Family/Childhood experiences

I remember my mother singing all the time. I loved to listen to her.
 My grandmother and parents used to listen to the radio and listened to folk music.
 I lived in several places in Czechoslovakia but there was always singing.
 When I was 10 years old I went to a special music school that was after school hours.
 I naturally learned to harmonize by listening
 My mother taught me counter melodies that were very beautiful.
 I did not learn to read music or have voice training until I was in the university. Then I received formal music training.

B. School experiences

The children on the playground always sang when they were playing.
 I grew up singing in school.
 We always sang folksongs that originated by the people.
 We did not sing religious songs.
 We sang songs about everyday life that everyone could relate to.
 There was no formal teaching of singing in school
 I don't remember singing in high school.
 All teachers were expected to sing and play an instrument.

C. Cultural Experiences

The teachers sang, the grandparents sang, the parents sang.
 Women would get together to make quilts and spin and sing about their work.
 Shepherds sang songs while herding sheep.
 Working together was a chance for people to sing and everybody sang.
 There is an old song, dating back to the 9th century, which everybody knows. It is about "Songs". It talks about where songs come from.
 I have known this song always. Everybody knows it.
 Everyone sang.
 I never met anyone who couldn't sing.
 Every child was encouraged to go to the special music school.
 The country supported music and the arts in general.
 All the students, in every town, in every city, learn the same folksongs.
 Children learn from the music books that music is our friend.
 The Morovians and Germans had strong singing communities and everyone loved their songs and sang them.
 I learned to harmonize by listening.
 I was always encouraged to sing.
 Whenever my friends and family gathered together we sang.

We don't sing rounds. We harmonize.
 When the Russians were in power we didn't believe in their politics but we sang their songs. They were very beautiful.
 I remember hearing singing and dancing in all the villages.
 People who immigrated to Slovakia shared their songs.
 Thinking about songs from my country brings up wonderful memories.

D. Cultural Beliefs

It is very natural to sing. It is a natural phenomenon.
 Folksongs were general music known by all.
 I don't remember anyone who could not sing or who thought of themselves as non-singers.
 Everyone could sing.
 Folksongs are powerful because they are about things people know about.
 Invented songs are not as good for teaching children.
 Singing is important.
 Listening was an important activity and everyone did it.
 Everyone participates in music-making because they like it and they were encouraged to do it.
 It is considered beautiful and natural to harmonize.
 The life of the Czechoslovakian people is in their songs.
 The songs are about why they sing and when they sing.
 Music and singing have always been part of our people.
 The songs mirror the thinking and feeling of the people who sing them
 Songs are with people from the beginning – when they are born until they die.
 A famous Slovakian composer said, "A song is like a jewel, like a clear diamond." I believe that.

E. Types of songs

There were spinning songs.
 There are lots of songs about the shepherds and their work.
 There are lots of songs about a real hero of ours, Juro Janosik. He is like Robin Hood.
 There are political songs such as anthems about the Czech republic and Slovakia.
 We sing Moravian songs that are very beautiful.
 There are songs about how important work is.
 There are songs about particular types of work such as grass cutting.
 There are mining songs.
 There are lullabies.
 Songs about nature
 Young children have play songs
 Young men and women have songs that can express their love.
 There are songs about important events.

Step 2: Werner

List of significant statements

- I grew up in Manheim, Germany and there was opera and all sorts of music.
- I took violin lesson when I was 6 and switched to the cello when I was 10.
- There was music all the time.
- The opera was always there for everyone.
- There was opera, and symphony and choral groups.
- Music was all over.
- When I was 13 I lived in Italy for a year and it was the same thing – music everywhere.
- The Italian children delivering the newspaper were singing. Music was part of their lives.
- I had no music instruction in the public school. Just regular subjects.
- But children were indoctrinated by their parents and everyone to get into music and to do music.
- It was everywhere.
- As children, we were exposed to it even if we weren't professionals.
- People loved music so many went to private teachers for instruction.
- My father sang and my mother played the piano.
- My grandfather sang in a song organization. They met once a month.
- You needed to have a good ear. If you had no talent at all, you were just a listener, not a performer.
- If you are out of tune – forget it.
- In Germany they imported international musicians to perform.
- I grew up thinking music was very important.
- I was interested in attending concerts.
- The love of music was instilled in people.
- In Germany, everyone wants to make music. Some are good, some are not.
- If you are not good, it's painful.
- Music was important.
- Everybody went to the classical concerts – children and parents.
- I don't know what you mean by folk music. There was always folk music in music. Classical motifs are based on folk music much of the time.
- My father sang kinderlieder songs by Schumann.
- A lot of classical music is based on folk music.
- I feel sorry for anyone who doesn't enjoy music.
- Every city in Germany and Italy had a chamber group.
- Music – you have to do it well, or don't do it.
- In Europe, people would get together just to make music.
- I like playing in the orchestra now to be in the music, to play music.
- I like to participate in these wonderful works of music.
- Music is like a language.
- It's a challenge to play music well.

- It's worthwhile and gratifying to play it well.
- The people in the orchestra love to make music.

Step 3: Werner

Themes determined from non-repetitive statements

A. Family/Childhood Experiences

I took violin lessons when I was 6 years old and cello when I was 10.
 There was music all the time.
 I lived in Italy for a year when I was 13 and music was everywhere.
 As children we were exposed to music even if we weren't professional.
 My father sang and my mother played the piano.
 My grandfather sang in a song organization that met once a month.
 I grew up thinking music was very important.
 I was interested in attending concerts.
 My father sang kinderlieder by Schumann.

B. School Experiences

I had no music instruction in public school, just regular subjects.

C. Cultural Experiences

There was opera for everyone, and symphony and choral groups.
 Children were indoctrinated by their parents and everyone to get into music and do music.
 Music was everywhere
 People loved music and went to private teachers for instruction.
 They imported international musicians to perform locally.
 Everyone went to classical concerts – children and parents.
 .Classical music is often based on folk music.
 Every city in Germany had a chamber group.
 People would get together just to make music.

D. Cultural Beliefs

You need a good ear to play or sing.
 If you have no talent, you were just a listener, not a performer.
 If you are out of tune – forget it.
 The love of music was instilled in people.
 In Germany, everyone wants to make music.
 Some are good and some are not.
 If you are not good, it is painful.
 Music was important to us.
 I feel sorry for anyone who doesn't enjoy music.
 Music – you have to do it well or don't do it.
 Music is like a language.
 It's a challenge to play music well.
 It's worthwhile and gratifying to play it well.

E. Types of Songs

Opera

Step 2: Shabaash

List of significant statements

- Singing in my traditional home was natural.
- Singing always goes with dancing, playing instruments, drumming. It is combined.
- We don't separate singing. It's all music.
- My whole family is talented in music so there is always lots of singing, dancing and drumming.
- I grew up hearing my cousins, uncles, aunties. We were all doing it.
- My auntie was a well-known and respected composer.
- My auntie was a singer and known in the community
- As a kid I heard here and wanted to join in.
- On special occasions, funerals, ceremonies, little children came along and there was always music making going on. It was natural.
- At tribal meetings, people would come because they were attracted to the music. They become part of the music.
- Children are at the meetings, watch the adults and pick it up.
- As kids, we created musical instruments from cardboard and plastic and rubber. We made drums
- Music is a part of life.
- Nobody teaches you how to play a rhythm.
- I'm not a professional but I can play with any professional.
- In almost all the families, the kids are exposed to music.
- If there is a really musically gifted person in a family, everyone looks up to that person.
- No one is considered a non-music maker.
- The idea of non-music maker came to me when I had formal, Western education.
- I can't sing because of the experience I had with my formal education.
- We had music in school and it was about learning how to sing, to write notation. It was based on the British/Western system.
- You were taught, in school about part- singing.
- The expectation was that you have a trained voice and need to be a singer.
- I withdrew and thought I couldn't sing.
- Singing is inside of me still.
- In my village, I have always thought of myself as a singer.
- When I return to my village and there is singing and dancing, I can sing.
- When you sing traditional songs, there is no expectation that you must sing a certain part.
- We don't have classifications like tenor, bass, etc.
- There are no restrictions in traditional singing.
- There is a lot of freedom to use your voice.

- There is no judgment on how you sing.
- No one ever says your voice is bad.
- When there is music, everyone participates by watching, singing or dancing, clapping, playing an instrument.
- There is no distinction between a performer and an audience.
- The expectation is that you are free.
- The kind of participation is up to the motivation of the individual.
- As a child you can always join in music making activities.
- The more exposure you have, the better you get.
- If you are taken away from your environment, you lose the ability for music making.
- School stifled my ability to become a talented musician.
- School did not favor traditional drumming and dancing and singing.
- We sang English songs that had nothing to do with us.
- The African music is taught orally.
- My auntie was known for her singing and a well-known composer and community leader.
- The feeling is not that you are the composer but your ability to compose songs is given to you by the ancestral spirits.
- When my auntie would compose a new song, the women would listen, learn it, and begin to spread the word around the village about the new song.
- She is very honored as a composer.
- There is a type of music, Akbaloo, which is mostly for women. It is Ewe.
- Another type, Akbajah is more energetic, and brisk and fast. It is Ewe.
- Our people sing or make music to entertain themselves, to feel good, make themselves happy and to relax.
- Singing is good for our health, our body. It is therapeutic.
- Whenever there is a funeral, ceremony or festival, there is music making. It is good for the society.
- Music-making brings us together.
- Any one person can start making music at any time.
- A song can just come out of you because you remember an experience or you thought of something or you want to console yourself
- You can sing anytime, anyplace, any day.
- No one thinks it is strange to hear someone singing.
- People might join with you in singing.
- People sing songs as they are walking on the street or in the market or at the workplace.
- People sing while they work and it gives them inspiration.
- Singing is everywhere – on the farm, at home, in the bathroom.
- Music is about entertainment and it also brings people together.
- When there are moments of loss, people come together, join one another and sing.
- Songs can comfort.

- They sang songs when my father died to remember someone for his good deeds.
- There are songs in the village to praise men who have done great things.
- Songs are about relationships, hope, men's life, men's attitude towards women, about death, loss, happiness, celebration, and songs to enliven the soul.
- People sing songs while they work.
- There are no songs about particular kinds of work.
- There are songs in the society for when you are doing work you sing to keep you spirit going.
- The songs keep changing.
- Songs that are sung generations ago are still sung.
- There are new songs to relate to the present day generation.
- There are political songs to pass on messages of the politicians.
- Songs are made today to honor present day politicians.
- There are lullabies to get children to go to sleep.
- The mother or brothers or sisters sing to the little ones.
- High Life is a new kind of music composed now, based on traditional music.
- Singing is used to socialize our people, to educate them to be aware what is happening around them.
- Songs provide messages about what is good and bad.
- I have talent to create songs but I don't have the spirit working through me so I can't do it.
- Songs provide moral lessons, like storytelling.
- Songs make you aware of the values, the rules of the community.
- Songs can warn you about people's behavior.
- Some children's songs are just nonsense work and don't mean anything.
- Some children's songs have morals and messages.
- There are songs about marriage that have subtle messages.
- The songs give you pleasure and joy and at the same time have a message of the values of the society.
- There are songs about how the man must play his role.
- Songs socialize young men and women to their role and responsibility to society.
- In the Ewe tribe we do not sing at the traditional weddings.
- But at a funeral we sing songs.
- Our songs have meaning.
- I feel comfortable at home singing because you can get into the song at any level and use any voice you want.
- Nobody says, hey don't bring in that voice.
- You have the freedom to use any voice that you want.
- People are free to come and go any time they want. It is open and flows.
- There is a song to encourage children to go to school and become literate.
- Most songs have messages.

- Songs connect us to human life experiences
- There are songs about praise, encouragement, warning.
- Songs are for inspiration, motivation, awareness, consolation.
- When I go home I always want to be where there is singing and drumming.
- Everybody sings and it is not strange.
- Adults sing
- All the teenagers sing and it is not strange.
- When music-making is going on in one neighborhood, it is open to people in other neighborhoods. There is no restriction.
- People want to sing because there is encouragement from everybody.
- It is natural to participate.
- There are lots of ways to participate – drum, play, clap, sing, dance.

Step 3: Shabaash

Themes determined from non-repetitive statements

A. Family/Childhood Experiences

Singing in my home was natural.

My whole family is talented in music so there is always lots of singing, dancing and drumming going on.

I grew up hearing my cousins, uncles, aunties making music.

My auntie was a well-known and respected composer and singer.

As a kid I heard music and wanted to join in.

We created musical instruments from cardboard, plastic, rubber and made drums.

B. School Experiences

The idea of non-music maker came to me when I experienced formal Western-based education.

I believe I can't sing because of my formal Western education.

We had music in school and it was about learning to sing and write notation.

My schooling was based on a British/Western system.

I was taught about part-singing.

I didn't understand that and withdrew and thought I couldn't sing.

The expectation was that you have a trained voice and need to be a singer.

School stifled my ability to be a talented musician.

School did not favor traditional drumming, dancing and singing.

We sang English songs that had nothing to do with us.

C. Cultural Experiences

On special occasions, funerals, ceremonies, tribal meetings, there was always music.

Little children come along to special occasions and participate in the music.

Children watch the adults make music and pick it up.
 Nobody teaches you to play a rhythm.
 In almost every family, kids are exposed to music.
 When I return to my village, there is singing and dancing and I can sing.
 When we sing traditional songs there is no expectation of singing a particular part.
 We don't have classifications of tenor, bass, soprano.
 When there is music, everyone participates in lots of ways by watching, singing, dancing, clapping, playing an instrument.
 As a child you can always join in the music-making activities.
 African music is taught orally.
 When my auntie composed a new song, women would listen, learn the song and spread the song around the village.
 A composer is an honored person.
 Any person can start making music at any time.
 You remember an experience or want to console yourself, and you sing.
 If you begin singing, people might join you.
 People sing songs when they are walking down the street, in the market, in the workplace.
 People sing when they work and it gives them inspiration.
 Singing is everywhere
 In moments of loss, people come together and sing.
 The songs keep changing.
 Songs that have been sung for generations are still sung.
 There are new songs to relate to present day generations.
 Brothers, sisters and mothers sing lullabies to the babies.
 We are comfortable singing because we can get into the song at any level and use any voice we want.
 Teenagers sing and it is not strange.
 When music making is going on in one neighborhood, it is open to people in other neighborhoods. There is no restriction.

D. Cultural Beliefs

Singing always goes with dancing, playing instruments, drumming. They are combined, not separate. It is all music.
 Music is a part of life.
 I am not a professional but I can play with any professional.
 If there is a really musically gifted person in a family, they are very respected.
 No one is considered a non-music maker.
 Singing is inside of me still.
 In my village, I always think of myself as a singer.
 There are no restrictions in traditional singing.
 There is a lot of freedom to use your voice in traditional singing.
 There is no judgment of how you sing.
 No one ever says your voice is bad.

There is no distinction between a performer and an audience.
 The expectation is to be free with the music.
 The more exposure you have to the music, the better you get.
 If you are taken away from the environment, you lose the ability for music-making.
 It is a belief that if you when you are a good composer the songs are given to you by the ancestral spirits.
 Singing is good for our health, our bodies. It is therapeutic.
 Music-making is good for the society.
 Music-making brings us together.
 You can sing anytime, any place, and time of day.
 No one thinks it is strange to hear someone singing.
 Music is about entertainment and also brings people together.
 Singing is used to socialize our people, to educate them to be aware of what is happening around them.
 Songs make you aware of values and rules of the community
 Songs socialize us to our role and responsibility in society.
 We do not sing at traditional Ewe weddings.
 Our songs have meaning.
 Nobody says, hey don't use that voice. You have the freedom to use any voice you want.
 People can come and go when they want.
 Most songs have messages.
 Songs connect us to human life experiences.
 People want to sing because there is encouragement from everybody.
 It is natural to participate.

E. Types of Songs

Akbaloo music is mostly for women and comes from the Ewe tribe.
 Akbajah music is energetic, brisk and fast and is Ewe.
 We sing music to entertain ourselves.
 Music is to feel good, make us happy and to relax.
 Songs can comfort.
 There are songs to remember someone's good deeds, sung at a funeral.
 There are songs to praise men who have done great things.
 There are songs about relationships
 Songs for hope.
 Songs about men's life
 Songs about men's attitudes towards women
 Songs about death.
 Songs about loss
 Songs about happiness
 Songs about celebration
 Songs to enliven the soul.
 There are no songs about particular kinds of work.
 There are political songs to pass on messages of politicians.

There are songs to honor present day politicians.

There are lullabies

High Life is a new kind of music today based on traditional music

Songs have messages about what is good and bad.

Songs provide moral lessons

Songs can warn you about people's behavior

Some children's songs have morals and messages

Some children's songs are just nonsense.

There are songs about marriage that have subtle messages

There are songs about how men must play their role

There are songs to encourage children to go to school and become literate.

There are songs of praise, encouragement and warning.

There are songs for inspiration, motivation, awareness and consolation.

APPENDIX D

Index of songs from *I Hear America Singing!* 55 Community Songs and Choruses (1917) and *Twice 55 Community Songs, The Green Book* (1919)

55 SONGS AND CHORUSES

FOR COMMUNITY SINGING

Selected by the National Conference of Music Supervisors

CONTENTS

America	No. 1	Merrily, Merrily (Round)	33
America, the Beautiful	5	Merry Life, A	34
Annie Laurie	21	My Bonnie	24
Angel of Peace	3	My Old Kentucky Home	10
Avril Chorus	55	Nancy Lee	17
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Juanita	23	Sweet and Low	14
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Lovely Evening (Round)	29	Tomorrow	43
Love's Old Sweet Song	20	U. S. A. Forever	35
Massa's in the Cold Ground	9	Yankee Doodle	36

This collection succeeds **18 Songs for Community Singing**, and is the outgrowth of the widespread interest in group or community singing. It represents a movement toward deeper and truer brotherhood and spiritual awakening through mass singing in America—an effort to liberate the spirit of the people through self-expression in song, and add to growth in unity of thought and feeling, which is the foundation of individual and national strength.

PRICE 10 CENTS

Complete edition, voice and piano, 25 cents

Orchestral and band parts and illustrative slides can be procured from the publishers.

C. C. BIRCHARD & COMPANY : : BOSTON

Twice 55 Community Songs* 266

The Green Book

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APPENDIX E

Index of songs from Get America Singing.....AGAIN! MENC, (1966) Milwaukee,
Hal Leonard Corporation

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APPENDIX F

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RECOMMENDED SONGBOOKS

Amidon, P. and M. A. Amidon, Eds. (1991). Jump Jim Jo. Brattleboro, VT, New England Dancing Masters Productions.

This resource consists of a book and a CD or audio cassette of 21 singing games from various regions around the United States. The instructions are easy to follow and the games have easy-to-learn lyrics and melody. This is a highly recommended resource for anyone working with grades K - 5.

Andy Davis, P. A., Mary Alice Amidon, Ed. (2000). Down in the Valley. Brattleboro, VT, New England Dancing Masters Productions.

This songbook contains 25 fun, easy-to-learn singing games that are appropriate for kindergarten through 8th grade. A CD or audio cassette is also available.

Barnwell, Y. and G. Brandon (1998). Singing in the African American Tradition. New York, Homespun Tapes.

This booklet contains a history of songs from the African American tradition and two teaching CD's to accompany each song. Helpful notes are included about the songs and suggested methods for teaching them.

Carawan, G. and C. Carawan, Eds. (1992). Sing For Freedom: the story of the civil rights movement through its songs. Bethlehem, PA, Sing Out Corporation.

This collection contains the important repertoire of the civil rights movement and reveals the inspiring and liberating power of song in social struggle. It is a major contribution to the heritage of the United States. Also included are photographs, interviews and oral histories of activists.

Fowke, E. (1969). Sally Go Round the Sun, McClelland and Stewart Limited.

A collection of 300 children's songs, games and rhymes. Fowke focused on choosing rhymes that originated with children. The book includes notes, sources and references and a brief description for playing the games. Categorized by type: singing games, skipping rhymes, ball bouncing, foot and finger plays, etc. Indexed by first lines.

Jenkins, E. (1966). The Ella Jenkins Song Book for Children. New York, Oak Publications.

Twenty-six songs and chants from the African American tradition that Ella Jenkins uses extensively in her workshops. Includes comments on songs and chants. Suggested for K - 6th grade.

Kenney, M., Ed. (1975). Circle Round the Zero: Play Chants & Singing Games of City Children. St. Louis, MO, Maganmusic Baton, Inc.

This collection includes jump rope chants, clap pattern songs, ball bouncing games, counting out rhymes, call and response songs, elimination games and singing games. It is a wonderful collection of outdoor songs rooted in English and African American culture. It provides inspiration to begin one's own playground song collection.

Langstaff, J. and N. Langstaff, Eds. (1970). Jim Along, Josie. New York, Harcourt Brade Jovanovich, Inc.

This song collection is especially suited for group singing and represents many types of traditional songs. Piano arrangements and guitar chords are included.

Lomax, A. (1964). The Penguin Book of American Folk Songs. Baltimore, Maryland, Penguin Books.

A collection of ballads, to sea shanties, love songs, and lullabies. Categorized by type of song: Yankee songs, Southern mountain songs, lullabies and reels, Western songs, etc.. Includes brief historical description with each section and with each songs. Indexed by song title and first line.

Lomax, A. (1975). The Folk Songs of North America in the English Language.
Garden City, New York, Dolphin Books.

A well-edited anthology of over three-hundred American folk songs.. Organized in 4 parts including maps, historical references to songs, index to song titles and first lines. Although this collection is now out-of-print, it is worth trying to find a used copy.

Lomax, A., J. D. Elder, et al. (1997). Brown Girl in the Ring An Anthology of Song Games from the Eastern Caribbean. New York, Pantheon Books.

Sixty-eight children's song games, music, lyrics and stories behind them from countries throughout eastern Caribbean. Includes instructions for games and notes about each song. Categorized by location of song. Companion CD, Caribbean Voyage: Brown Girl in the Ring, available through Rounder Records.

Lomax Hawes, B. and B. Jones (1972). Step It down. New York, NY, Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

Book contain recollections of Bessie Jones whose family came from the days of slavery. Song categorized by type: baby games, clapping, jumps and skips, house games, outdoor games, etc. Music and instructions with games. Accompanying tape available.

Seeger, P., Ed. (1988). Rise Up Singing. Bethlehem, PA, Sing Out Corporation.

This songbook contains the lyrics and guitar chords for over seven-hundred-fifty songs categorized under subject and title. A fantastic resource if you know the melody and need help remembering the words.

Seeger, R. C., Ed. (1948). American Folk Songs for Children: A Book for Children, Parents and Teachers. New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc.

This classic songbook, still in print, is still treasured. It's made up of a familiar collection of American "folk" songs for use in schools and homes.

Sharon, L. B., Ed. (1980). Elephant Jam. New York, McGraw -Hill Ryerson Limited.

This is a wonderful collection of everything from clapping games, skipping rhymes, playground chants and songs from around the world. There are easy-to-follow instructions. This material appeals to all ages.

Sharon, L. B., Ed. (1983). Mother Goose songs, Finger Rymes, Tickling Verses, Games and More. Boston, MA, The Atlantic Monthly Press.

This collection of songs, nursery rhymes, games and more is for children from six month to seven years of age. Many of the songs have easy-to-lay piano arrangements.

Tucker, J. C., Ed. (1994). Roots and Branches: A Legacy of Multicultural Music for Children. Danbury, CT, World Music Press.

This is a unique collection of thirty-eight songs and singing games from 23 different cultures. Included with each song is an overview of each culture, with a map locating the origin of the song, notes on the song with complete directions for the games. A CD or audio-cassette comes with the book. The CD is recommended. Appropriate for elementary and upper grades. .

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This book contains a wide variety of rounds from very easy to more complicated. The subjects of the rounds vary greatly and are appropriate for children and adults.

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