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# With distinction: Examining the relevance of Bourdieu's cultural capital in relation to community music programs and social transformation

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With *distinction*: Examining the relevance of Bourdieu's cultural capital in relation to  
community music programs and social transformation

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By

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## Abstract

With distinction: Examining the relevance of Bourdieu's cultural capital in relation to community music programs and social transformation

Caolfionn Yenney-Henderson

This paper examines the ways in which leaders of community music programs entangle these organizations, either consciously or subconsciously, in various forms of democracy, citizenship and social reproduction/transformation. I begin by exploring Bourdieu's notions of cultural capital and *habitus* as well as Michael Apple's hidden curriculum in order to illustrate the ways in which community education programs contribute to the process of social reproduction. I then examine two community music programs in Chicago, Illinois, the Citizen Musician Initiative and the Old Town School of Folk Music, exploring the ability of these programs (and others like them) to function as forces of radical, democratic change through a dismantling of traditionally held notions of cultural capital. To conclude, I discuss recommendations for further action and research.

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## I. Introduction

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,  
 Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,  
 The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,  
 The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,  
 The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand  
     singing on the steamboat deck,  
 The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,  
 The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or  
     at noon intermission or at sundown,  
 The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of  
     the girl sewing or washing,  
 Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,  
 The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows,  
     robust, friendly,  
 Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

--Walt Whitman, 1900, *Leaves of Grass*

Music has always been an integral thread in the fabric of societies across the world and America is certainly no exception. As Whitman's poem illustrates above, music in the United States has long been tied to class associations; clearly more than entertainment, music serves as a way to make meaning of one's world. An auditory zeitgeist, music is not only formed by the happenings of society, but also *informs* society. One of the primary ways in which music achieves these simultaneous goals is through music education. The act of teaching music to another individual—who is taught, by whom, what material is covered—is mired in various complex and historical power relations between the student, teacher, and broader society. Through the process of music education, as with all education, students are taught what knowledges (in this case musical knowledge) are worth knowing. Through education, students also learn the dynamics of social relationships, social stratification, and the ways in which to interact with those both similar and dissimilar to oneself. These types of implicit lessons

illustrate the very real manner in which music education is connected with the way in which students come to understand larger societal discourses such as democracy and citizenship. Operating under a guise of neutrality through which much of these hidden lessons are taught, this makes the field of education a particularly interesting and fraught field of study. While the traditional K-12 classroom setting is important, I have chosen to focus on community music education programs because of the complex connections between such programs, the local communities in which they are situated, and the populations which these programs serve.

With the steady decline of music programs in public schools, the access to this type of experience and knowledge, what Pierre Bourdieu would call cultural capital, is increasingly limited. As one would imagine, what is taught in community music programs on the most basic level is how to play music. Traditionally, students are instructed on basic technical skills such as reading music, proper fingering/bowing techniques, and, at times, are coached on performance style—the ways in which to make the notes on the page become more meaningful, more heartfelt, in essence, more musical. But *how* to play music is not all that is taught during a lesson. Inherent in all educational practice is what Michael Apple (2009) calls the ‘hidden curriculum.’ At the most basic level, the hidden curriculum is defined as “the tacit teaching to students norms, values, and dispositions that goes on simply by their living in and coping with the institutional expectations and routines of schools” or indeed any educational program (Apple, 2009, p. 13). The question then becomes, how do these notions of the hidden curriculum and Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of cultural capital affect community music programs? How do

these programs influence students' understanding of and interactions with notions of democracy and citizenship?

In exploring this issue of social reproduction, one must wonder if it is possible for community music programs to become tools for radical social change. The term social reproduction refers to the replication and perpetuation of power dynamics that are seemingly inherent in the fabric of society such as racial, gendered, or classist segregation and discrimination. This paper examines the ways in which leaders of community music programs entangle these organizations, either consciously or subconsciously, in various forms of democracy. First, I explore the interrelated concepts of cultural capital, social reproduction, and the hidden curriculum. Such a discussion conceives of music as a source of social agency. As Tia DeNora states,

Music is in dynamic relation with a social life, helping to invoke, stabilize, and change the parameters of agency, collective, and individual. By the term 'agency' here, I mean feeling, perception cognition and consciousness, identity, energy, perceived situation and scene, embodied conduct and comportment. If music can affect the shape of social agency, then control over music in social settings is a source of social power, it is an opportunity to structure the parameters of action. (DeNora, 2000, p. 20)

Secondly, I examine two community music programs in Chicago, Illinois, the newly launched Citizen Musician Initiative (CMI) and the Old Town School of Folk Music (OTSFM). Through each organization's website and print materials, I examine each program's mission, service, community influence, and key programmatic terms in order to explore the possibility of these community music programs as forces of radical, democratic change. My focus on print and internet related materials is not to discredit the importance of in-person interviews or other qualitative research methods. Rather, I am interested in the ways in which these programs present themselves to, and are understood

by, the public—whose most common interaction with these organizations would be through print and online materials.

My interest in the relationships between community music programs and broader discourses of democracy and citizenship stem from my time as an undergraduate at Macalester College. During my studies there I was a triple major in Music, Educational Studies, and Women's/Gender/Sexuality Studies. A seeming hodge-podge of academic pursuits, these majors allowed me to explore the interdisciplinary connections between music performance and feminism, specifically portrayals of the relationship between gender and mental stability on the operatic stage. Upon graduation, I began working as an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow at a non-profit that specialized in developing school-community partnerships for at-risk, marginalized youth. It was during this year of service that I became aware of community music programs as an alternative or complement to traditional K-12 music education. I also became interested in the practical and theoretical implications of ways in which such community music programs reach out to and educate students.

Beginning my graduate program in Social and Cultural Foundation of Education at DePaul University in the fall of 2010, I was able to re-engage with many of the theorists and discourses that had filled my undergraduate years. I relished the opportunity to revisit the texts of scholars such as Karl Marx, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Jacques Derrida, as well as the exposure to 'new' academics such as Henry Giroux and Michael Apple. Immediately, my master's work began to focus on the myriad ways in which the concept of community music programs are understood in broader ideological frameworks. However, it was not until January 2011, with the launching of



the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Citizen Musician Initiative that I realized I was most interested in the ways in which community music programs interact with notions of social reproduction and democracy. Preliminary research revealed that little had been written about the inherent power dynamics at play between the transmission of cultural capital within community music programs and the reproduction of the country's current incarnation of democracy. Thus, I set out to examine the relationships between community music programs, cultural capital, and the discourses of social reproduction, democracy, and citizenship, particularly in relation to two Chicago-based programs—the Citizen Musician Initiative and the Old Town School of Folk Music. The intent of this thesis is not to present a completed picture of the intricate power dynamics inherent in these relationships. Rather, I hope this paper will elicit discussion on the topic and broaden academic literature concerning the relationship of music and democracy.

## II. Historical Foundations

Definitions of citizenship, democracy, and community engagement are complicated across disciplines and academic scholars by variables such as economics, nationality, race, immigration, media, and popular culture. Rather than flushing out the many varied and complicated uses of these cross-disciplinary terms, I focus on a few relevant definitions in order to illustrate their myriad relationships. Acknowledging the contested histories of these terms also serves to clarify their historical and present day meanings. In what follows, I examine the histories and contended notions of citizenship and democracy throughout literature related to cultural studies. I then explore Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital, *habitus*, and the critiques of his theoretical position in relation to arts and, more specifically, music/music education's relationship to the process of social reproduction. Finally, I examine the history of community music programs in the United States as well as the limited scholarship that has examined the links between politics and music education.

### **Root Histories: Greek *polis***

Modern day constructions of democracy and citizenship are best traced to the Greek *polis* and the philosopher Aristotle. In the Grecian tradition, the concept of citizen was not an identity granted to everyone. Rather, citizens were a relatively elite group, small enough to “know one another's characters” (Heater, 1999, p. 45). This group was formed of elite members primarily due to the demands of time put upon these individuals. As Derek Heater writes, “the good citizens were those wholly and efficiently committed

through thought and action to the common weal” (1999, p.45). This commitment to citizenship systematically excluded foreigners, women, peasants working to support families, and those who were not educated enough, by Grecian standards, to fully participate in Greek society. While these outcasts were at times lumped into the overarching category of “Greek citizens” they could never become “proper” citizens of the Greek *polis* as “Aristotle’s model of citizenry was a leisured, propertied elite” who were the “product of education” (1999, p.47). Additionally, because education and propriety circumvented participation as a citizen, the privilege of citizenship was generally inherited by familial blood or *jus sanguinis* (Heater, 2004, p. 254). It was not until later periods in Greek history that individuals were able to work towards becoming part of the citizenry (2004, p.5). It is from this nostalgic version of democracy and citizenship that has developed into what Derek Heater has deemed “Civic- Republican” forms of democracy throughout US history and today.

### **Civic-Republican Democracy and Citizenship**

Based strongly upon the principles of citizenship in the Greek *polis*, the Civic-Republican concept of democracy promotes “some form of sharing of power to prevent...autocratic government” coupled with “involvement of the citizenry in public affairs to the mutual benefit of the individual and the community” (Heater, 1999, p. 44). As with Greek conceptualizations of citizenship, the Civic-Republican view prevents the vast majority of a nation’s population from becoming active, ‘proper’ citizens. This is due to a definition of citizenship bolstered by formal government privileging the wealthy and well-educated while simultaneously creating a narrow definition of public participation

that excludes a broad range of civic-social activities such as pressure groups, unions, non-profit organizations, and charities (1999, p.73). A more modern re-conceptualization of Civic-Republican Democracy and citizenship, Communitarianism, does attempt to build community and engage citizens through military service and service-learning opportunities in schools; however, this mode of citizenship still essentializes citizens as having similar goals, beliefs, and, most importantly, rejects others who do not fit this mold of citizenry. Certainly, in this global age, we must consider a broader definition of citizenship that is more inclusive than selective in its scope.

### **Liberal Democracy and Citizenship**

While Civic-Republican Democracy and citizenship emphasize the *duties* of a citizen, Liberal Democracy and citizenship has been defined more in terms of *rights* for citizens with citizenship requiring less work for individuals on a day-to-day basis. Perhaps most important in framing the discourse of citizenship through the lens of Liberal Democracy is the idea that the individual remains an individual; in other words, “the acquisition of citizenly status does not necessitate abandonment of the pursuit of self-interest” (Heater, 1999, p. 6). In fact, it could be argued that Liberal Democracy and citizenship *promotes* excessive individuality by guarding one’s private life and interests as it is insured by state protected rights (1999, p.7). Liberal citizenship (as well as all versions of citizenship we have discussed thus far) is further complicated by the discourse of capitalism and unequal distribution of wealth. Thus, the rights insured and protected by the state are not the same for every individual. “Capitalism weakens [the] egalitarian political structure [of Liberal citizenship] by giving primacy to economic

relationships” also complicated by globalization (1999, p. 10). It is precisely this globalizing, capital-driven form of exclusive citizenship that needs to be challenged in the United States today. Luckily, scholars and activists have been theorizing and actively working towards a concept of democracy that would combat our current societal ills. As with many discourses that aim to push boundaries of society, this movement has been deemed ‘Radical’ Democracy.

### **Radical Democracy and Citizenship**

In today’s ever connected, global(ized), and capitalistic neoliberal economy even corporations are given the rights of citizens. In light of such a society, Gayatri Spivak and David Plotke believe that “conventional definitions of citizenship and national identity have been thrown into question by ruptures in the global political landscape, changing post-industrial economic relationships, and shifting population demographics” (Spivak & Plotke, 1996, p. 209). Within this neoliberal tailspin, democracy “serves as a marker for a wide variety of interests” and illustrates the ways in which the discourse “has become essentialized as an undefined norm—joining such ambiguous expressions as ‘mainstream opinion’ and ‘family values,’ which lack a clear definition, yet are highly effective in discrediting selected groups” (Trend, 1996, p. 8). To combat the ambiguity and social inequalities of liberal democracy, several scholars have suggested Radical Democracy as a way to re-envision the future of our nation (and beyond) free from capitalistic oppression, militarization of private and public life, and the privatization of big business and globalization (Giroux, 2009; Trend 1996). But what exactly does the term *radical* imply? Barbara Epstein suggests that unlike socially charged terms such as

'left', 'socialist', or 'progressive', the term 'radical' "remains acceptable, but largely because its meaning is entirely elastic" (Epstein, 1996, p. 127). She continues,

The term "radical democracy" has a set of positive connotations: it is associated with the social movements of the seventies and eighties, in particular feminism, gay and lesbian rights, environmentalism, and multiculturalism; it suggests a politics oriented more toward culture than toward political or economic struggles. It suggests grassroots politics, diversity, a playful political practice that is not bound by rigid structures but is continually in the process of transformation. (1996, p. 128)

Epstein goes on to discredit Radical Democracy as a turn away from politics and class issues. However, many scholars still believe that Radical Democracy has the possibility to transform our current systems of inequality and promote a form of education that teaches our youth to become active, aware, and engaged individuals (Chomsky 2003; Giroux, 2009; Trend 1996). This transformative education would promote creative, inventive work as "the highest want in life" and "would provide the possibility...to free human beings from the activities that...turn them into imbeciles through the burden of specialized labor" (Chomsky, 2003, p. 165; p.177). In this vein, art initiatives like community music programs appear to be a perfect place to begin such a social transformation, albeit with the understanding that even programs meant to enlighten and educate students do so within specific, historically situated contexts, oftentimes favoring the transmission of one particular form of knowledge over others. By exploring Bourdieu's theory of distinction, one can begin to understand these complex relationships and the ways in which such programs can function both for and against social reproduction.

## **Bourdieu: Understanding Cultural Capital and the *Habitus***

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was a pre-eminent French scholar in the field of sociology, particularly in regards to the relationship between class ideology and social/economic power. Much too complex to address in full here, the theoretical foundations of Bourdieu's work has strong connections to the Frankfurt School and scholars such as Karl Marx, Marcel Mauss, Blaise Pascal, and Herbert Marcuse. Bourdieu's work expounds on key theoretical ideas of these scholars, particularly Marcuse's arguments that illustrate the need for a critical pedagogy—one that focuses on how instructors, school-workers, and even students become entangled in social reproduction (Giroux, 2001. p. 39).

Bourdieu elaborates on these concepts of taste and social reproduction in *Distinction* (1984) and it is useful to quote him at length. While discussing class, Bourdieu states,

[w]hereas the ideology of charisma regards taste in legitimate culture as a gift of nature, scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education; surveys establish that all cultural practices (museum visits, concert-going, reading, etc.), and preferences in literature, painting or music, are closely linked to educational level...and secondarily to social origin. The relative weight of home background and of formal education...varies according to the extent to which the different cultural practices are recognized and taught by the educational system, and the influence of social origin is strongest—other things being equal—in 'extra-curricular' and avant-garde culture. To the socially recognized hierarchy of the arts, and within each of them, of genres, schools, or periods, corresponds a social hierarchy of the consumers. This predisposes tastes to function as markers of 'class' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 1).

Within his discussion of class formation, Bourdieu argues that our existence amounts to a game of social status, during which individuals draw on three types of resources, which he calls economic, social, and cultural capital (Holt, 1998, p. 3). As its name implies,

economic capital centers on financial resources. Similarly, social capital focuses on relationships and social networks. While these first two forms of capital are important to Bourdieu, cultural capital is perhaps the most vital, yet elusive, category. Defined as “a set of socially rare and distinctive tastes, skills, knowledge, and practices,” and existing in three forms: implicit practical knowledge or skills, objectified in cultural objects, and institutionalized through education by way of official degrees and diplomas, cultural capital functions to help individuals construct the parameters of their worlds (1998, p. 3).

Based upon the various types of cultural capital, it becomes apparent that upper-class, culturally elite individuals and families are best able to take advantage of cultural capital consumption through their conscious indulgence in pastimes such as arts, food, sports, interior décor, popular culture, hobbies, etc. (Holt, 1998, p. 4). All cultural practices are, according to Bourdieu, “automatically classified and classifying, rank-ordered and rank-ordering” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 223) “These innumerable, diverse, yet redundant, experiences particular to cultural elites become subjectively embodied as ways of feeling, thinking, and acting,” ultimately shaping the psychological structure that Bourdieu calls the *habitus* (Holt, 1998, p. 3). It is important to note that the *habitus* is not consciously constructed. Rather, this *habitus* or acquisition of particular tastes serves to, “‘differentiate’ and ‘appreciate’ ...in other words, to establish and mark differences by a process of distinction which is not (or not necessarily) a distinct knowledge” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 466). He continues,

The schemes of the habitus, the primary forms of classification, owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control of the will. Orientating practices practically, they embed what some would mistakenly call *values* in the most automatic gestures or the apparently most insignificant



techniques of the body...and engage the most fundamental principles of construction and evaluation of the social world. [...] Taste is a practical mastery of distributions which...functions as a sort of social orientation, a 'sense of one's place', guiding the occupants of a given place in social space towards the social positions adjusted to their properties, and towards the practices or goods which benefit the occupants of the position" (1984, p. 466).

Holt summarizes Bourdieu's notion of the *habitus* as,

an abstracted, transposable system of schema that both classifies the world and structures action...in Bourdieu's theory, resources that are valued in field of consumption are naturalized and mystified in the habitus as tastes and consumption practices. Within the field of consumption, tastes and their expression as lifestyles are stratified on the basis of the objective social conditions that structure the habitus. *Thus, the field of consumption is stratified so that there exist different lifestyles organized by class position*" (Holt, 1998, p. 3, emphasis mine).

Not only is the *habitus* structured via class association and, thus, one's access to various forms of cultural capital, but this process leads to consumption patterns which simultaneously serve to express and reinforce the psychological structure of the *habitus*. Thus, the *habitus* becomes naturalized and status is unconsciously created and maintained as a consequence of cultural capital acquisition and the consumption of cultural goods.

Beginning at birth, this naturalization process allows,

[t]he embodied cultural capital of the previous generations [to] function as a sort of advance (both a head start and a credit) which, by providing from the outset the example of culture incarnated in familiar models, enables the newcomer to start acquiring the basic elements of the legitimate culture, from the beginning. (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 70)

Two distinct issues arise from the notion of cultural capital and the *habitus*. The first is that, through this naturalized process, cultural capital becomes a way in which individuals stratify society "as bases for whom one is attracted to and admires, whom one finds uninteresting or does not understand, or whom one finds unimpressive and so seeks to avoid" (1998, p. 4). The second issue is that, due to the stratification of social class, not

everyone is granted access to the consumption of cultural capital in the same ways. With today's increasing focus on globalization and social inequality, social elites have been doing more in an attempt to provide cultural capital to those who are deemed 'lacking'. Art, other cultural programs, and general education has played a large role in this process; however, I believe that community music education programs have played an equally important, if lesser-known role in the transmission of cultural capital—a fact that has both positive and negative repercussions.

### **Facing the Music: Criticisms of Bourdieu and the Concept of Omnivorousness**

Critics of Bourdieu, of whom there are plenty, argue that his theories should be relegated to the historical and geographical location from whence they came—mid twentieth century France (DiMaggio and Mukhtar, 2004, p. 170). Critics such as Henry Giroux posit that Bourdieu's theories are too static, disregarding the notion that culture is both a structuring and transforming process, excluding “both the active nature of domination as well as the active nature of resistance” (Giroux, 2001, p. 91). Still others maintain that the modern United States has too little in common with the historical context of Bourdieu's theories of elite cultural forms to keep them applicable in modern times. Contemporary critiques of Bourdieu's theory of distinction generally fall into two camps. The first maintain that although there are differences between France and the United States, the foundational concepts of Bourdieu's theory of distinction remain true. Michèle Lamont's (1992) work *Money, Morals, & Manners* illustrates this notion, ultimately concluding that individuals in the United States generally maintain less strict social boundaries and a higher respect for morals than their French counterparts. In discussing her findings on Americans, she states,

[Americans] do not acknowledge the legitimacy of high culture and the importance to accumulate knowledge about it. In keeping with the populist tradition, drawing boundaries using such signals can be seen as undemocratic, the way selecting on the basis of religion or ethnicity is perceived by many as illegitimately bigoted. (Lamont, 1992, p.186).

An American refusal to acknowledge high culture leads other scholars to critique Bourdieu's work through what has been come to be called omnivorousness. The concept of omnivorousness maintains that snobbish, univorous attitudes are being replaced, if a bit unevenly, with "a comparatively benevolent and tolerant pluralism" (Warde, Martens, & Olsen, 1999, p. 107). In fact, according to the work of Peterson (2005), high-status individuals are actually more likely to be culturally omnivorous, consuming both high and low status culture. It is this pervasiveness of popular "low" culture that is touted as the main argument against the modern relevance of Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital and social positionality. With the prevalence of popular culture in the mainstream media, "commercial popular culture has become so pervasive and so finely segmented as to overwhelm the ability of universities and nonprofit cultural institutions to maintain their cultural centrality" (DiMaggio and Mukhtar, 2004, p. 170). In fact, it can be argued that "the U.S. public stoutly rejects the proposition that high culture is inherently more valuable than folk or popular culture and that the most educated Americans [who should have the greatest stake in maintaining a cultural hierarchy] are the most united in rejecting it" (2004, p. 171).

It is true that the popular culture and media landscapes between mid-twentieth century France and the current US culture are quite different. It would appear that the influence of popular culture has made activities such as attending the opera or the symphony less important to the upper-class—the influx and importance of popular

culture serving as a means of cultural capital subversion, if you will. However, in today's society there are still lingering beliefs about activities reserved for the upper echelons of society. The value of mainstream media and entertainment culture is in constant struggle with ideas of "what wealthy people do" and what "poor people do".

While popular culture has had an effect on the high/low cultural divide, I believe that this notion of omnivorousness has been unequally distributed to the upper class. Take for example the *Real Housewives of Orange County*, a very popular 'reality' television program on BRAVO which follows the lives of five wealthy housewives. On an episode which originally aired on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 the housewives pack up for the night to go 'glamping' (glam camping) complete with chefs, champagne, and personal assistants. On the surface, the message may appear to be one of irony. Even though they are rich, the housewives can have fun doing something 'low class' and mundane, like camping—as long as it is glammed up, at least a little bit. Examples of the upper class appropriating low cultural capital activities have been increasing in other areas of culture as well—take fashion, for example. A popular trend is to buy shirts that have the appearance of being old, or as it is more aptly called, 'vintage.' Again, the irony is that these shirts are anything but old. Not only new, they have designer labels and are sold at high-end stores such as Abercrombie and Fitch, Neiman Marcus, and American Apparel.

My point in these examples is that equal opportunities for the subversion of cultural capital and shrinking of the high/low divide are not available for the majority of the US population. Most women cannot jet off, especially overnight, for a stay in an Orange County or Beverly Hills hotel. The young teen in high school who wears old tees from a thrift store because his family does not make enough to shop at the mall is more

likely to be pitied than praised for his fashion sense. Shows like ‘The Real Housewives’ are popular because the general population is fascinated with the cultural practices of the rich. Such shows are popular because the high class culture, in all its overindulgence, is an escape for the average individual. Giroux is right—culture is malleable and has changed drastically since Bourdieu’s theories originated. Cultural capital may not be defined as structuring society in the same ways Bourdieu originally conceptualized, but it cannot be denied that those deemed lacking still clamor for it. Although cultural omnivorousness may be present in the US, certain activities, privileges, and ways of thinking are still maintained by the upper class through high cultural capital activities. The ability to study academic pursuits, travel freely, and learn foreign languages are considered largely a luxury. So too is devoting time and resources to the study of art and music. It is the latter of these activities that I would now like to focus on.

### **Music and Bourdieu: Connecting Music, Democracy, and Social Reproduction**

Since before America won our independence in 1776, music has been foundational to this country (Leglar & Smith, 2010, p. 345). During the revolutionary war, sacred music, written by American composers, was transported south by musicians. At the same time, military bands such as Josiah Flagg’s, the Massachusetts Militia Band, and the US Marine Band spread American secular music throughout the country (2010, p. 346). With the founding of the Boston Phil-Harmonic Society (orchestra), the Handel and Hayden Society (chorus), the German Singing Society (glee club), and the Aeolian Vocalist (vocal quartet), the early nineteenth century was the beginning of what would become the community music movement in the United States (2010, p. 346). By the late 1800’s/early 1900’s, many community music organizations had been founded to preserve

the language and mother culture of various immigrant subsets of Americans. Examples include the Northeastern Sangebund of America (1850), the Polish Singers of America (1889), Norwegian Singers Association of America (1891), the American Union of Swedish Singers (1892), the American Lithuanian Musicians Alliance (1911) and the Jewish Music Alliance (1925) (2010, p. 346). Additional community organizations such as the Lake Chautauqua Assembly, Chicago's Hull House, and the Third Street Music School Settlement provided education for adult and professional musicians (2010, p. 346). Founded in 1883, the Hull House began a rather long, successful history of community music programs in the Chicago-land area (2012, p. 348). As of January 2012, Chicago had a dozen community music education programs as recorded by the Chicago Consortium of Community Music Schools (CCCMS, 2011).

The arts, and more specifically music, are most commonly used to discuss Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital because these cultural forms have been "deeply institutionalized by states and institutions of higher learning [constituting] the most broadly recognized forms of prestigious culture throughout Europe and the Americas (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004, p.170). As Bourdieu states, "nothing more clearly affirms one's 'class', nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 18). Even with the social and cultural disparities between France and the United States, art has largely remained a cornerstone of prestige and wealth. Much of the recent literature on Bourdieu and notions of cultural capital center on its relevance in today's art world by focusing on the attendance and demographics of audiences at high culture events such as symphonies, operas, and art shows (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004; Upright, 2004). Audience demographics are important and certainly provide insight into the

consumption of high cultural capital activities in the US today; however, very little research has been done to examine how the instruction of music education relates to notions of cultural capital and social reproduction.

On the surface, it may appear that music education and concepts of democracy and citizenship have little to no relationship. However, more and more music educators are becoming interested in the ways in which these two seemingly disparate concepts interact on a daily level. Traditionally, much of this research in music education has centered on the day-to-day practical implications of democratic classroom practices (Allsup, 2003, 2007; DeLorenzo 2003; Jorgensen 1997, 2003). Take, for example, ensemble spaces, which are traditionally exceedingly patriarchal and decidedly undemocratic. Often run by men in positions of power as the conductor, the symphony's role is to take orders and play in accordance with the wishes of the conductor. Within these spaces there is no room for discussion, argument, or critical thinking on the part of anyone but the conductor.

Thankfully, more and more large ensembles (be it in community music programs, universities, or k-12 settings) are turning to more democratic classroom and ensemble practices including improvisation and scratch orchestration. The ability to bring democratic practices into the music classroom creates a more equal relationship between the instructor and player(s). These democratic systems are often set in motion in the music classroom with the hope that students will become more engaged and invested in the music making process. Far less common is a discussion of the ways in which music education interacts with broader notions of democracy and citizenship on an ideological and symbolic level. This is an issue that must be addressed because, as I will illustrate,

music education—like most academic pursuits—is fraught with both overt and covert ideological assumptions that perpetuate the social inequalities inherent in the US’s democratic system.

A leader in the discussion of the convergence between music education and democracy, Paul G. Woodford believes that what is learned in the music classroom can contribute to democratic ideals outside of the classroom, influencing how musicians and citizens engage in the world and become more culturally competent. He writes,

democracy implies a loving concern for others and their welfare. If nothing else, the pursuit of a democratic aim or purpose through music education should motivate children to care more about, and thus become more involved in, the wider musical and social world around them. One would think—hope—that music teachers and parents would applaud any educational or musical initiative that might help to overcome adolescents’ apathy and indifference to any music other than what they consider their own. (Woodford, 2005, p. 58)

Through his work, Woodford promotes the need for inclusivity, diversity, and criticism as part of music education. In fact, Woodford proposes that,

music teachers are probably uniquely positioned to help break down or bridge institutional, social, and cultural barriers to the free exchange and cross-fertilization of ideas in the public sphere through their use of an increasing diversity of music in the classroom (2005, p. 76).

Similarly, music educator and scholar Lisa C. DiLorenzo’s work aims to illustrate that “music should not be an isolated branch of knowledge, but, rather, an aesthetic deeply embedded in a social political context where democracy and its moral underpinnings play a key role” (DiLorenzo, 2003, p. 35). Mainstream scholarship such as Woodford’s and DiLorenzo’s is difficult to find, but it raises several interesting questions. What covert ideologies are being passed on to students through music education? In what ways do these ideologies influence one’s understanding of larger society? How can community



music programs combat social reproduction in favor of more radical, democratic forms of social interaction and citizenship?

### **The Problem with Poulenc: Issues of the Western Canon**

As discussed earlier, education-based community music programs teach students how to play their respective instruments. However, students are also taught aspects of the hidden curriculum—unspoken ideologies such as how to take direction, listen to instructions, and work with others for a common goal (in this case, to make music). For nearly all community music programs, music education centers on the Western canon. These works, deemed the ‘classical’ style, are considered the established repertoire for any serious music scholar. It is true that more and more music programs are opening their doors to less canonized musical forms such as jazz, improvisation, differing forms of musical instruction such as Kodály, Orff, or Suzuki, as well as the genre of new or ‘world’ music. However, the standard practice is that one must still master techniques of the classical canon (and classical instruction) before segueing into a ‘less rigorous’ music genre. As Lucy Green writes,

Music education participates in the construction and perpetuation of ideologies about musical value. For the first seventy years or so of the twentieth century, music in schools was overwhelmingly concerned with Western classical music and settings of folk songs by prestigious composers. (Green, 2003, p. 265)

Paraphrasing the Dalai Lama, a music theory teacher once sternly informed my undergraduate music theory class, “you must learn the rules before you can break them.” Within music education it is clear that “the rules” are defined as a Western, classical approach to literature and instruction.

Questionable, to me, are the repercussions of privileging such a canon of Western, classical repertoire—especially in community music programs. By all regards, music education serves as an excellent pathway for the hidden curriculum. First, as we have discussed, these programs generally promote the classical canon as the most *valuable* form of music. Inherent in this assumption are the main tenets of Bourdieu’s theory of distinction—a stratification of tastes and interests which inadvertently leads to social positioning within the field of music—Mozart as being ‘better’ or more ‘academic’ than say the compositions of jazzier Dizzy Gillespie, whose musical contributions clearly, at least according to the theory of distinction, remain more important than, say, those of the Rolling Stones or the late Michael Jackson. Secondly, these programs reinforce the unequal distribution of power between teacher and student. Classical music students quickly learn that they are present to learn from the ‘master’ instructor—one who has already conquered the skills necessary to interact on a meaningful level with the classical repertoire canon. Finally, and perhaps most importantly—especially in relation to Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital and social reproduction—is the focus of many community music programs in reaching out to lower socioeconomic students in order to enrich their lives with classical music.

The reasonings for extending community music education programs to lower socioeconomic status (SES) students are plentiful and should generally not be seen as malicious. Often, community music education programs reach out to economically depressed areas because music and art education programs of K-12 schools in those areas are often extraordinarily limited, or have been cut entirely. For these students, community music organizations often provide free or greatly reduced lessons, at times even providing

instruments for students to rent or borrow at no additional cost. Community music programs allow these students the opportunity to interact with music—an experience that they very well may not have without such organizations. My intent is not to cast aspersions on the work that these organizations do in economically depressed areas. I believe in providing all students with as many opportunities for learning, exploration, and growth as possible. Time and again scholars have proven that music education improves other areas of academics (Babo, 2004; Kelstrom, 1998; Morrison, 1994). However, I am suggesting that community music programs must carefully examine the ways in which their programs interact with students who, due to their economic difficulties, often come from completely different cultural backgrounds than their musical instructors.

In light of the hidden curriculum and the acquisition of cultural capital, what must be prevented is the assumption that community music programs are filling some sort of cultural void for these lower SES students. Providing lower SES students with classical music training alone will not suddenly raise them to the same social and economic privileges as their wealthy, suburban ‘peers.’ As Michael Apple states, one cannot “take the cultural capital, the *habitus*, of the middle class as natural and employ it as if all children have equal access to it” (Apple, 2009, p. 31). At times, community music programs fall prey to the same pitfalls as traditional k-12 institutions “by taking all children as equal, while implicitly favoring those who have already acquired the linguistic and social competencies to handle middle-class culture...tak[ing] as natural what is essentially a social gift, i.e. cultural capital” (Dale in Apple, 2009, p. 31). As Bourdieu makes clear, “prestigious cultural forms are effective as cultural capital only for those equipped to use them” (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004, p. 180). Therefore, while

community music programs are attempting to provide access to all and shore up educational inequalities, it is entirely possible for the very same programs to actually be perpetuating social reproduction by simultaneously legitimizing the importance of the Western, classical canon and providing instruction to students who are, by all other means, ill-equipped to benefit from such education.

While community music programs may have admirable intentions, the ideology of power simply runs too deep for most programs to address adequately. The question then becomes if it is possible for a community music program to not only recognize such discourses, but also actively combat it. I believe that not only is it a possibility, but that two community music programs within Chicago are already working towards these goals. In what follows, I will examine two Chicago-based community music programs—the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Citizen Musician Initiative (CMI) and the Old Town School of Folk Music (OTSFM). As I will illustrate, both of these programs relate to larger societal discourses such as democracy and citizenship in a unique and potentially radical ways. Although not idyllic in their execution, I will illustrate the potential of these programs to combat issues associated with the acquisition of cultural capital and foster radically democratic forms of social interactions.

### III. Case-Study

#### The Citizen Musician Initiative

In January 2011 the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) launched a new community music program entitled the Citizen Musician Initiative (CMI). According to Charles Grode, Vice President of the Institute at the CSO, the CMI “‘is not a project. This is not a program. It's a movement’” (Caro, 2011c). This movement, aimed at music performers, creators, teachers, and music appreciators, merges notions of citizenship and music making/appreciation. Critical to the CMI’s image is the concept of ‘citizen musicians.’ According to the CMI’s website, citizen musicians,

come from diverse backgrounds and are guided by unique perspectives. They mentor others musically and personally. They aspire to work towards empathic connections with musicians and audiences. They aim for transformation and inspiration at the highest level. They desire to learn from others and share their experiences for the benefit of all. (CSO, 2011)

The site continues,

The Citizen Musician initiative, inspired by the tremendous work of musicians past and present to enrich the human experience, is an effort to acknowledge and celebrate acts of citizen musicianship and increase awareness of the existence, quality and value of this work. (2011)

The CMI invites individuals to “be a citizen musician...by finding opportunities for musical collaboration, connection, and conversation in your day-to-day lives” (2011).

The concept of a ‘citizen musician’ sounds inviting; however, the problem is that over one year after its launch, the CMI has yet to clearly define its usage of the term ‘citizen.’

Without clarification of this key programmatic term, the purpose and ideological framework of the initiative, while progressive in theory, becomes increasingly hazy as one moves from the program’s epicenter into larger local and global communities.

Since its launch in 2011, the CMI has maintained a very professional website. This site has been crucial to the initiative over the past year as it is the main way in which individuals can learn about the program. Information on the site is presented through timelines, photographs, biographies, written excerpts, and video clips. The website does not discuss social responsibility or democracy in any direct manner. Additionally, the CMI's website also does not identify any staff members dedicated to program management except for Yo-Yo Ma, world-famous cellist and newly appointed Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant to The Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Citizen Musician activities advertised on the website are primarily by well-established classical musicians and groups. While a handful of exciting events have been advertised to promote the message of the CMI, most appear to include an elite audience or function as a surprise to unsuspecting passersby—only advertised widely by a recap in the Chicago Tribune (Caro, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2012a, 2012b). While these activities do increase awareness of the CMI, the mission of the organization remains vague, as does the interest levels of stakeholders in using the program to address social inequalities. If more widely advertised activity was carried out by the initiative, it would be easier to see what type of community engagement the program is interested in becoming involved in and, by connection, its guiding mission and ideologies.

### **Defining citizenship: consequences and opportunities.**

For any initiative to be successful, the foundational concepts of the program must be clearly outlined—such is the case with the CMI. Without a clear definition of 'citizenship' from the initiative, outsiders are left wondering what purpose such an

initiative will serve in their community. It is completely possible that these definitions are clearly articulated within the inner confines of the organization; however, based upon the CMI's web presence—largely the way communication about the program has taken place—these concepts are not explored rigorously. As discussed, the program's website utilizes the language of collaboration, connection, and communication to discuss the concept of a Citizen Musician, but never clarifies why *citizenship* is the term used to encapsulate the organization's mission. Certainly, it would seem, a program that consciously chooses to adapt a word such as citizenship into its name should be interested in examining the importance of music in addressing issues of equality and social responsibility—key facets of radical democracy and the creation of engaged, informed citizens. Based upon the CSO's advertisement of the CMI via its web and print materials, I do not believe the CMI yet has the infrastructure or oversight in place to truly tackle these issues. However, I do believe that the *responsibility* and *possibility* for such conversations exist within the program's foundational ideologies and depended greatly on the usage of the term 'citizenship.' Is it possible that the perception of the initiative's vision would differ if another term was utilized in place of 'citizenship'? Could the term 'citizenship' suggest notions of democracy and social engagement to a greater degree than the program desires? Perhaps the term has been left intentionally vague, allowing the public the opportunity to read into the program that which they wish. However, one must wonder if such vagueness will prove to be a programmatic flaw in the implementation of the CMI. With 'citizenship' being such a focus of the initiative by their own doing, I believe it is only a matter of time before others begin pressing the program for a more nuanced definition of the term, and thus mission, from the program. Ignoring their usage

of the term ‘citizenship’ by the Citizen Musician Initiative may prove to have greater repercussions in terms of understanding how the broader community understands, and thus supports, the larger ideologies and principles of the CMI. With such abstruseness concerning the foundation concepts of the CMI, it is no wonder that the overarching ideologies, mission, and activities of the program are also inherently vague, at least in their current online presence.

Although I do not believe this is the leadership model of the CSO, it is possible that the CMI is utilizing a more decentralized, shared leadership approach. Certainly, such a decentralization of power would complement notions of radical democracy and participatory citizenship discussed by scholars such as Giroux (2009) and Trend (1996). If the CMI utilizes this decentralized leadership, I believe it is important for the program to state this on its website, as it could clarify some of the ideological underpinnings of the program. This analysis is not to say that one form of leadership (centralized versus decentralized) is better than another. Rather, no matter what approach to leadership is taken, it needs to be addressed on the CMI’s website in order to provide the public with a clear understanding of its organizational structure and activities. In order to thrive, an initiative needs more than a catchy name and well-designed website (both of which the CMI has)—it requires a commitment to a clearly defined mission and vision, well-defined and attainable goals that can be evaluated accordingly and, perhaps most importantly, an effective way in which to promote this information to outside audience members.



**Social responsibility: Future possibilities of the Citizen Musician Initiative.**

I believe that the CMI can work towards promoting the ideology of a more democratic, less hierarchical conceptualization of music and greater society. For now, it seems as though the key word when imagining the relationship between the CMI and broader social change is *possibility*. Concerning music education, notions of cultural competency, engaged citizenship, and democracy, music scholar Paul G. Woodford writes,

the aim of music education, however, is not to upset or overthrow the musical and educational establishments. Rather, it is to seek a dynamic social equilibrium or creative tension between the traditional and the seemingly new or strange. This means preparing children to function as moral agents in public deliberations about the appropriate content and use of music in the public sphere...there can be arguably no more important educational task than helping children simultaneously explore and shape their world in pursuit of mutual understanding, reconciliation, respect, and forgiveness—in short, in pursuit of their common humanity.  
(Woodford, 2005, p. xvi)

An ideological framework focused promoting diverse forms of music-making and cultural competency from a historically classical organization such as The Chicago Symphony Orchestra would certainly be revolutionary, but at the moment it seems that this remains only a *possibility* and not a step that the CMI intends to take in the immediate. The language utilized on the initiative's website (ideas of communication, collaboration, connection) also appears to promote (if even vaguely) the possibility for the program to support social change—a society where music inspires individuals to work together and become engaged in their communities through the lens of music and music education.

### **Old Town School of Folk Music**

Steeped in longstanding Chicago history, the Old Town School of Folk Music (OTSFM) has been providing community music education to individuals in Chicago since its founding in 1957. The seeming antithesis of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's longstanding Western tradition, the OTSFM provides instruction on folk music of various cultures from around the world. The founders of the school focused specifically on folk music as an "accessible music for ordinary people to enjoy (because of its perceived simplicity and its vernacular content) and, partly for that reason, a field of musical knowledge that deserved more attention" (Lee, 2011, p. 135).

One of the most successful folk schools in the country, the OTSFM currently operates out of three central buildings in Chicago, IL, with several suburban satellite locations for their children's music programs. Between their multiple locations, the OTSFM offers over 700 accredited classes in genres such as Bluegrass, Blues, Celtic music, Jazz, Rock, and Musical Theater. Private lessons are offered in accordion, autoharp, banjo, bass, cello, dobro, dulcimer, fiddle, flute, gamelan, guitar, harmonica, mandolin, oud, percussion, tin whistle, ukulele, and voice (OTSF, 2011). The OTSFM operates as a self-described "musical democracy, where everybody at their own level [has] a participation in it" (Hamilton in Lee, 2001, p. 138). In what follows, I discuss the OTSFM's democratic tendencies centered around accessibility and participation as well as a focus on non-Western music and pedagogy. Through these foundational practices of the OTSFM, the program is able to subvert traditional relationships between music education, cultural capital, and democratic interactions.

### **Creating a ‘musical democracy’: The importance of access and participation.**

As its name suggests, paramount to the OTSFM is the focus on the folk community, which, unlike traditional Western music education, is largely centered on group instruction, with an emphasis on the tradition of oral instruction and active participation. From the very beginning of the school, this emphasis was stressed. An excerpt from the school’s first newsletter written by George Armstrong in 1960 reads,

What are the purposes of the school? First, and most important, it is, to our knowledge the first school to offer courses in instrumental instruction specifically designed for people interested in folk music. After only two chord positions on the guitar have been learned, the student is shown that he is now able to play a simple accompaniment to a folk song. Thus the student, from the outset, can experience enjoyable results without the prerequisite of reading music and practicing scales and exercises appropriate to formal musical training[...W]hether the student attends ten or a hundred sessions, something usable has been learned. (Armstrong 1960, emphasis in the original)

This emphasis on community and participation is critical to the school’s mission and is still demonstrated today through the vast array of open sessions/jams provided by the school. A ‘session’ or ‘jam’ is a popular occurrence within the folk community where individuals of all instrument types, talents, and experience come together to make music, generally centered around a few preset songs of a specific musical genre. Current public session and/or jams offered at the OTSFM include: ‘free jams,’ ‘gather all’ music sessions, ‘open bluegrass jam,’ ‘Skip’s back porch jam,’ ‘song circle,’ ‘string jam,’ ‘voice of the people jam,’ ‘fandango jam,’ and the ‘community drum circle’ (OTSFM, 2011). Additionally, the OTSFM provides opportunities for composition critique at the weekly ‘songwriter’s exchange’ (2011). At sessions, students of all skill levels are invited to join along. Those beginners, who have not yet learned all the techniques of their given

instrument, are encouraged to clap and sing, play basic chord progressions, sound a single note repeatedly, or even, in the case of particular instruments, mute their strings and continue to strum along silently in order to maintain the rhythm of the music (Lee, 2011, p. 338). Such a participatory form of education allows students the opportunity to immediately put into practice the musical skills they have been taught, with much less fear or stigma than in a traditional music education classroom or private lesson setting. In her 2011 dissertation, Tanya Lee interviewed one instructor at the OTSFM who summarized this type of ‘trial and error’ education this way,

The other thing I tell them which is the most important thing...is that no one there is listening to you – they’re all listening to themselves. Therefore, if you just want to sit there and toot along without listening to me, or just doing whatever you feel like, no one’s going to have any idea whether it’s right or wrong, up, down, backwards, and why not. Why not do it? (Landt in Lee, 2011, p. 388)

Is it possible that this ability to educate without fear of making a mistake could actually help students become more engaged in the music making process? Is it possible that this ‘why not do it’ attitude could transcend the music classroom into other aspects of one’s social life? Whether or not this is possible, by its very design, the OTSFM provides its students the very best opportunities to form not only a musical community, but a personal community as well—a community that, in working towards a more musically democratic space, acknowledges the importance of participation and the inherent value of various forms of music from around the globe.

**Building a global community: Balancing non-western folk and capitalism.**

In building a folk-based community, founders of the OTSFM saw the space as a place “where an understanding and revitalization of America’s musical roots could form a defense against the influence of commercialism and the sharing of songs could show the way to bridge national and ethnic differences” (Lee, 2011, p. 134). Frank Hamilton, one of the founders of the OTSFM, continues,

We saw what the school could become and what we wanted it to become: intercultural, diverse, but at the same time with a reverence for the folk cultures, folk culture-based music, the egalitarian approach towards a social teaching, where people could find it as a *social* communication as well as a musical communication” (Hamilton in Lee, 2011, p. 135).

This focus on, and appreciation for, diversity within the field of music is vital, not only for the mission of the OTSFM, but also for the partial dissolution of Western, classical hegemony within music education. By focusing on folk music and culture, the OTSFM is able to widen students’ views on the issue of musical value, thus lessening the weight of classical music as cultural capital.

Despite the interest in combating commercialism, one key issue with the OTSFM is the disconnect between the culture of folk music and the cost associated with accessing such opportunities. Currently, enrollment prices for classes at OTSFM hover between \$120-\$200, with private lessons costing up to \$416 for an eight-week period (OTSFM, 2011). While financial aid exists, a qualified student will only receive a twenty-five to seventy-five percent tuition waiver, good for only one class per session (OTSFM, 2011). The disparity between traditional folk culture and modern access to music education quickly becomes apparent. While much of the origins of the US folk movement were decidedly political, activist, and anti-capitalist in nature, the OTSFM is taking a

decidedly capitalist stance on who is granted access to the study of folk music. The result is an organization that primarily serves a relatively economically, privileged, upper middle class audience—once again reserving cultural capital for a select group of individuals. I do not believe that the OTSFM wishes to exclude individuals from participating in their programs. Nevertheless, their current system privileges those individuals who are able to pay for their lessons, thus selectively altering those with access to education about folk music. An even more basic objection is that, given the non-hierarchical structure of many aspects of the school, people are in effect paying to spend time with peers when they could, in theory, do the same for free. Viewed this way, the OTSFM is working to privatize public space and communal knowledge.

This past section has outlined both the Citizen Musician Initiative and the Old Town School of Folk Music—their guiding ideologies, programmatic content, as well as areas of disconnect within their programs. In what follows, I would like to illustrate the ways in which, despite their respective flaws, each of these programs retains the possibility to subvert notions of distinction in ways which promote facets of radical democracy and participatory citizenship.

#### IV. Discussion and Analysis

The Citizen Musician Initiative and the Old Town School of Folk Music embody the possibility of community music programs to enact social change and work towards a more radically progressive model of democracy. This is not to say that each organization is not without room for growth. As discussed, the absence of definition within the CMI makes the concept broadly appealing, without the need to take any real political stance on its beliefs and goals. Additionally, while the OTSFM is more vocal about its interest in serving as a ‘musical democracy’ with a focus on ‘low culture’ folk music, it seemingly suffers from economic segregation issues resulting in a re-invention of folk music devoid of a discussion of class, race, and politics. Nevertheless, each organization is doing their small part in reimagining the relationships between music, cultural capital, and broader societal discourses of democracy and citizenship. By using music as a vehicle for social good, these organizations are providing opportunities to open people’s minds and hearts to a diversity of cultures, as well as educating them on the value of working collaboratively and giving back.

Although focused on different musical genres, both the CMI and OTSFM provide their participants with cultural capital. However, I do not believe that this alone is inherently detrimental. This is because the ways in which both organizations promote their larger message is one of collaboration and connection with the greater community. Neither program serves to bring music education to those ‘lacking’ in cultural experiences. Rather, these programs serve to bring people together *through* music—demonstrating the ways in which music is a source of collaboration and community.

These programs' distinct focus on community and collaboration are key facets to notions of radical democracy and participatory citizenship; however, it is clear that neither group is interested in aligning themselves to such a political stance, most likely for fear of negative repercussions. Certainly, one could imagine, a main reason to depoliticize the activities of these programs is funding. Both the CMI and OTSFM rely heavily on private donors, both corporate organizations as well as individuals. Aligning themselves with any political stance could greatly jeopardize their respective relationships with current and potential donors. When it comes to funding the arts, I believe that most organizations, the CMI and OTSFM included, would like to maintain that music transcends societal discourses and remains devoid of political meaning. However, music, just as with any art form, is deeply rooted in political contestation on both an individual and societal level. As Richard Taruskin states,

if we believe that opera [or any musical genre] cannot threaten life and morals, then we are perhaps more vulnerable than we imagined. If it is because we believe that ethics can have any bearing on aesthetics, then our own dehumanization is already far advanced. (Taruskin, 1997, p. 510)

Philosopher of music Aaron Ridley puts it another way,

There is something very odd, after all, about the way in which so much philosophy of music has so often been done. To try to isolate music entirely, to try to leech or prise out of it its context-laden character, and indeed the very nature of one's own context-laden engagement with it, is rather like trying to pretend that music had come from Mars—that it has suddenly appeared on one's desk from nowhere. (Ridley, 2004, p.3)

As I have illustrated throughout this paper, music and music education have the possibility to act as great political forces, armed with the ability to interact with larger societal discourses (for better or worse). A truly radical step would be for both these organizations to acknowledge and embrace the inherent political connection between their



music programs and society. Certainly, such a move would alienate some funders; however, I also believe it would bring to the surface new donors who would be excited to develop and promote the missions of these organizations in an attempt to promote a more caring, collaborative community. Such a statement, in my opinion, would truly make the CMI a movement and would allow the OTSFM to reimagine their pedagogical approach to teaching folk, perhaps re-establishing connections between the music and the historical struggles with race, class, and politics. Finally, if one were to reimagine cultural capital in light of radical democracy and participatory citizenship, the category of capital (and all its associated ideologies) would take on a new meaning. While the concept of those “with” and “without” high cultural capital may still exist, its effects on larger societal discourses would be lessened. If the “radical” mission of the CMI and OTSFM is to promote all genres of music as a means of collaboration, then the importance of strictly classical music (and those who have access to it) is greatly diminished in favor of a celebration of all musical genres. Thus a truly equitable flattening of the importance and distance between high and low cultural capital for both elite and average individuals. Whether or not these programs wish to acknowledge it, they seem to be, in the words of Thomas A. Regelski, seeking “to have a...lasting impact on students—in particular on their willingness and ability to engage in musical practices that enrich not only their own lives through music, but that enrich the musical life of society as a whole” (Regelski, n.d., p. 4).

While the bulk of my argument has been a theoretical argument on the importance of cultural capital in relation to music programs and notions of democracy and citizenship, I do not find it practical or advantageous to confine this argument to the

purely theoretical realm. In our day-to-day practices, there are simple measures that practitioners and academics can take to ensure that music education programs continue to promote collaboration and community. The final section of this paper seeks to examine steps both academics and practitioners can take to lessen the influence of the transmission of cultural capital and social reproduction while promoting community collaboration and radical democracy and participatory citizenship.

## V. Recommendations for Action and Further Research

As I have illustrated, the concept of relating community music programs to larger issues of citizenship and social change is a largely unexamined area of academia and social life. I emphasize the distinction between academia and broader ‘social life’ not to support this divide, but rather to simply acknowledge that, historically, a general division between academics and practitioners has existed. Too often there is a strange, tense relationship between theory and practice, with those ‘on the front lines’ weary of academic work being too theoretical to illicit real change in practice. In an effort to connect theory and practice in what follows, I offer both recommendations for action *and* further scholarly research in regards to the relationship between music and social change. While not all community music programs may align themselves as closely to ideologies of radical democracy as the CMI or the OTSFM, I believe that all programs can benefit from a heightened sense of awareness and reflexivity in their work.

Firstly, community music programs must become more aware of the canon they choose to teach. This is not to say that the Western, classical canon should be disregarded. Rather, it should be taught in tandem with a respect for more global, non-Western forms of music, or at least those forms of Western music education that are considered less “elite” and more hands-on such as Kodály, Orff, or Suzuki instructional methods. In following this recommendation, the initial reaction of many community music programs may be that, as classical programs, they have no resources in terms of time, funding, or instructors to teach such globally-focused programs. In offering this recommendation, I

am not suggesting that every community music program incorporate a global or ‘world music’ component. Such a suggestion would not be feasible for many small music programs. Rather, I am suggesting that these programs become more open and welcoming to the idea of non-Western music. One way to accomplish this is to explore lesser-known composers or arrangers such as Satoko Fujii, Reza Vail, Noel Quinlan, Ryan Molloy, and Seung-Ah Oh whose work, by their own definition, bridges the Western/non-Western divide. Another way to incorporate this recommendation is for classical instructors to adopt basic teaching methods of non-Western music, including less-strict power relationships between instructor and student, group instruction, and hands-on instruction which allows for more open communication and collaboration—both key facets of a radical democracy.

Secondly, keeping in mind Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital, community music programs must be mindful of the ways in which they serve specific populations of students, particularly low-income and traditionally marginalized individuals. There is a large, historical weight behind teaching music of any kind, but particularly classical music. Instructors must be aware that, in instances of low-income or marginalized students, the experience of classical music is much more foreign to them than to their white, middle-class ‘peers.’ Instructors must be conscious about the ways in which they address this musical education—students should not feel as though they are culturally empty vessels being filled by the knowledge of the instructor (Chomsky, 2003).

Unfamiliarity with classical music should not be seen as a cultural deficiency. Instructors must work to bridge the divide between class, culture, and musical genres and be open to

appreciating the importance of the musical background each student brings to their lesson or class.

Finally, community music programs must continue to focus on the importance of community engagement and collaboration. Advances in technology such as Ipods, Apple's GarageBand, and notation software such as Sibelius or Finale are making music consumption, composition, and even music education a solo activity. As Cristin Bagnall said of the Citizen Musician Initiative, 'music (has become) a tool to create your own universe and separate you from other people. This [the CMI] is definitely the opposite of that' (Cato, 2011, p.2). Community music programs must remember that without interaction within the community, their programs would be nonexistent. By illustrating the importance of outreach, community music programs are educating their students on how to be more engaged with their local communities. Fostering such an ethic of care is paramount in working together to promote truly democratic social relationships and fostering engaged, active citizens.

In regards to continued academic research on the relationship between music and social change, my recommendation, to put it simply, is continued research. Much more can be done to investigate, through theoretical, qualitative, and quantitative means, the ways which music education and community music programs can influence the ways in which individuals interact with others and understand the concepts of radical democracy and citizenship. Also interesting would be research conducted to examine how musical collaboration and community outreach effects individuals' perceptions and interests in collaboration in other areas of their lives.

Finally, continued research on programs such as the Citizen Musician Initiative and the Old Town School of Folk Music is also important. As progressive community music programs, it will be interesting to see how these organizations develop over time. Given its deep-seated history, how will the OTSFM continue to develop and serve a broader range of students through the ever-expanding world of global and folk music? How will the CMI grow over time to clearly articulate its mission and vision for citizenship? The possibility remains, through the natural progression of these programs over time, that they will pull away from their seemingly natural focus on the ideologies of radical democracy. However, only time will tell, and so a commitment from academics to maintain a close-eye on these types of programs long-term is important. It is only through continued study of these issues that we can begin to re-politicize the field of music education for long-term progressive change.

## VI. Conclusion

Bourdieu's theory of distinction is applicable today when we remember that all forms of education rely on cultural capital and the notion of a hidden curriculum to perpetuate social inequalities. The arts, steeped in complex histories, remain a prime way in which cultural capital, in its most traditional sense, is still transmitted. While education concerning the arts may no longer be as fundamental for the social elite as it was in the mid-twentieth century France, such as education is still considered a privilege— of which a vast majority of wealthy elites take advantage. Especially in an era marked by the extermination of arts-related programs for today's youth, the ability to study music does indeed grant a student access to a realm of specialized knowledge, both consciously and unconsciously taught, that provides that student a larger cultural cache than their non-musical peer.

Given the eradication of many public K-12 music education programs and their unique positionality within the community, community-based music education programs provide a unique opportunity to continue to educate students musically, but with a conscious recognition of the social and political ramifications for doing so. Connected to the community by way of their location, faculty, donor base, student population, and, at times, musical focus, community music programs, whether admittedly or not, are poised to serve as instruments of drastic political and social change. The Citizen Musician Initiative and the Old Town School of Folk Music are two such Chicago-based programs. Although seemingly leery of positioning themselves as radical for fear of political and funding backlash, both the CMI and OTSFM promote key aspects of radical democracy and participatory citizenship such as community involvement, collaboration, democratic

instruction, and a general appreciation for music of all genres, not just that of the Western, classical canon.

The purpose of this paper has been to explore notions of cultural capital and the ways in which community music programs like the CMI and OTSFM have the ability to deconstruct the traditional relationship between such capital and social reproduction in favor of a more radical, participatory conceptualization of democracy and citizenship. Although not without their limitations, these two programs embody the possibility for social change that countless other community music programs surely hold as well. It is my hope that the arguments provided in this paper, as well as the recommendations for further action and research, spark a need among academics and practitioners to continue work in this field of study and further examine the radical possibilities between community music programs and the formation of a more caring, responsive, and collaborative democratic society.



## VII. References

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