Shifting the Music Education Paradigm: What is Learned through Student/Teacher/Composer Collaborative Music Composition

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Abstract

Making Music: Composing *with* Young Musicians is a multi-year, multi-site research project partnered with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and the Canadian Music Centre to commission composers to collaborate with teachers and students (age 11 to 18) to write a piece of music. This article outlines findings on the analysis and interpretation of teacher questionnaires through a pragmatic lens to answer the following question: What do students and teachers learn musically and pedagogically from collaboration with professional composers? This new pedagogical approach of composer/teacher/student collaboration represents a possible paradigm shift–from a traditional teacher-directed approach to one that is creative and interpersonal. The

approach is quite beneficial as it highlights the extent to which learning the musical compositional process can be engaging and enjoyable. It also encourages teachers to learn new pedagogical strategies while valuing the creative compositional process. The findings will be of potential interest to music teachers, post-secondary music educators, composers, and music publishers, as the data will help them write/teach/disseminate educational music.

Introduction

There are numerous music composition programs and courses in Canadian post-secondary institutions. These programs, however, solely address music composition for professional level repertoire and not educational music[1] for young musicians (Carruthers, 2000; Colgrass, 2004; Andrews & Carruthers, 2004). This situation has arisen for several reasons. Educational music is often viewed as being of less quality than music composed by professionals (Camphouse, 2004, 2007; Gershman, 2007; Hatrik, 2002; Ross, 1995). Teaching strategies and the parameters for writing educational music are quite limited (Andrews, 2012; Cox & Stevens, 2010; Swanwick, 1999). Furthermore, the music of modern professional composers is often inaccessible to students because it is more complex (Andrews, 2004a; Bowden, 2010; Terauds, 2011). It is, as Sir Harrison Birtwisle of the UK comments, "a mysterious thing and slightly holy in a way, something you don't tamper with" (cited in Ross, 1995). This lack of good quality educational music prevents teachers from including it in the curriculum and students from playing it in their developing years. Hence, in order for students to play quality Canadian repertoire, composers must learn to write appropriate educational music.

The Context

Few professionals have successfully written repertoire for young musicians, other than Carl Orff, Bela Bartok, Zoltan Kodaly, and Paul Hindemith. Australian and German researchers (Gillies, 1990; Kim, 1995) have studied Bartok's and Hindemith's educational music to obtain insights into their success. They discovered the importance of employing appropriate sequencing of rhythmic patterns and suitable ranges when composing for young musicians. Others, such as Paynter (1982) in England and Schafer (1977) in Canada, have introduced various approaches to writing educational music (music for young musicians). For example, they introduced group compositions, peer assistance, and environmental sounds. Paynter's

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[1] Educational music is repertoire composed for young musicians that supports their musical development (i.e., discipline-based learning). Much educational music represents arrangements of popular music, film and television shows, or transcriptions of Western-European classics, which are playable by school ensembles (Andrews, 2009; Wendzich & Andrews, 2019).

repertoire influenced the national music curriculum in the UK, notably by introducing composition, improvisation, and the importance of listening skills in the music classroom.

Schafer's work, however, has not been integrated into most mainstream music education programs in Canada (Beynon & Veblen, 2012; Boucher & Moisey, 2019; Carruthers, 2000).[2] Furthermore, studies conducted on educational music do not express how professional composers write and conceptualize educational music. Moreover, few composers interact with young musicians to discern how to write educational repertoire. Because there are few collaborations between professional Canadian composers and Canadian school systems, there is little data on how such collaborations might support student learning on both a musical and interpersonal level. Furthermore, due to the lack of understanding about educational music and the complexities associated with contemporary musical works, modern Canadian pieces are uncommonly performed and studied in school music programs (Bartel et al., 1999; Carruthers, 2000; Shand & Bartel, 1998; Varahidis, 2012).

The Solution

To help professional composers learn how to write educational music and encourage students to perform Canadian repertoire, eighteen composers were commissioned by a large urban school board in eastern Ontario, Canada to write new pieces. These compositions were written in a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council-funded project entitled Making Music: Composing *with* Young Musicians (Andrews, 2017). This was a partnership project as it was,

> an entity in which two or more partners (e.g., schools, cultural institutions, universities, local arts agencies, libraries, senior citizen organizations, and other community groups) have agreed formally to collaborate for a specified duration, with financial support from a recognized agency or organization responsible for the partnership's administration and management. (Colley et al., 2012, p. 342)

The purpose of the Making Music Project was to obtain an in-depth understanding of how professional composers[3] might collaborate with teachers and their students to create educational music. Consequently, composers, teachers, and their students collaborated to produce a composition playable by young musicians. In so doing, composers contributed their

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[2] Although this is the case, students have been exposed to Schafer's work through *Music Alive* hosted by the National Arts Centre (Gordon, 2014)

[3] These are Canadian composers who have studied Western-European and Canadian repertoire. They all have received higher music education degrees in their professional field and are currently composing music in Canada. All have written music for professional and amateur musicians.

musical expertise, teachers ensured that government-mandated music curriculum was employed, and students co-created and performed the new repertoire. This collaborative project shed light on what students and teachers learned.

Composition Learning

Much literature exists on the compositional process, including what is learned when writing repertoire. Composition learning in music education refers to, "the result of creative thinking in music that takes shape in a process of bringing a musical product into existence by an individual or group of composers" (Randles et al., 2012). Researchers found that this type of creative thinking occurs when amateur composers (student composers) write repertoire independently or collaboratively with their peers (Kenny, 2014; Randles et al., 2012). When students engage in musical workshops with composers and their music teachers, they experience art music through active engagement (Rolle et al., 2018). Consequently, they develop communicative, listening, and performance skills (Paynter, 1982; Wendzich & Andrews, 2017).

According to Burnard and Younker (2002), when students engage in collaborative compositional endeavours, they also learn about the role of creativity. Other studies (including the Making Music Project) indicate that when collaborating with artists, students and teachers gain an understanding of the creative process. They also develop an appreciation for artistic culture (Carlisle, 2011; Upitis et al., 1999; Wendzich & Andrews, 2017). They begin to understand the extent to which "creating" is messy and not necessarily linear, but non-sequential and that the life of an artist can be quite challenging. Furthermore, by developing a student's natural abilities for creative learning, teachers can help foster creative thinking (Randles et al., 2012). They can also help students learn about and discover musical inspiration (Hickey, 2012; Stauffer, 2002).

When learning about the compositional process, many students and teachers engage in stages to writing music: a process of discovering a germinal idea (preparation), a brief sketch (incubation), elaboration and refinement of a first draft (illumination), and revisions to a final copy (verification) (Bennett, 1976). These stages, however, are not necessarily linear, but can be cyclical, non-linear, or non-sequential (Freed-Garrod, 1999; Katz & Gardner, 2012). According to Mazzola et al. (2011), music composition is often non-sequential. It is an "artistic and scientific expression, and that such extensions can be achieved by following a general process of creative exploration" (p. 3). Burnard and Younker (2002) discovered that the quality of strategies and the movement across and between the creative thinking stages among students, often vary. This is likely due to students' diverse backgrounds and experiences. Moreover, when students create, they naturally select a balance of freedom and constraints as creative boundaries that guide their compositional strategies.

Knowledge & Musical Skills

When students and teachers collaborate to write an educational piece of music, they gain musical knowledge and develop musical skills. Students learn to listen to their own musical output, as well as their peers'. This helps many young musicians focus on the task at hand, and to not become distracted by decoding notation (Thornton, 2013). When students create music, listen to, and discuss it with their peers and music instructor(s), they may also begin to learn about music theory "accidently" (Hickey, 2012). According to O'Neill (2005, 2014), this collaborative environment enables young people to engage more, feel empowered, and personally fulfilled.

Moreover, in a collaborative atmosphere, teachers may gain an understanding of what is challenging or relevant to the learners (O'Neill, 2014). This is accomplished by listening to and conversing with students; according to Eidsaa (2018), this type of interaction in a musical setting is known as *formal* talk[4]. According to Hickey (2012) and Svinicki (2004), teachers may already have the skills to show young musicians how to compose interesting and exciting music. Some of these skills include creativity, encouraging group work and peer- and self-assessment, as well as knowing how to motivate students. Hickey (2012) provides teachers with a curricular model for teaching composition comprised of activities, practical approaches to implementing music curriculum, and methods for assessing students' progress.

When a music instructor adopts a student-centered approach, those in class often collaborate not only with each other but with the teacher. The parties thereby develop musical decision-making and problem-solving skills (Isaksen et al., 2011; Teffinger et al., 2008). This collaborative atmosphere helps students and teachers engage in respectful disagreement and learn from one another; it enables teachers to provide meaningful instructor-student feedback (Randles & Sullivan, 2013). The instructors and students even gain insight into new concepts and/or behaviors when listening to others' ideas (Denner et al., 2005; O'Neill, 2012; Paynter, 1982; Schafer, 1977).

Other studies indicate how the artistic collaborative process encourages students to develop peer- and self-assessment: "[Students] learn to pay attention to their inner thoughts … and refine their work through critiquing" (Andrews, 2016). In order to teach or evaluate one's peers, students have to listen and share ideas. They also must complement each other, as well as discuss what works and what requires improvement (Andrews, 2016). Young musicians not only use their listening skills when assessing their peers' work, but when reflecting upon the

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[4] Formal talk refers to information shared among those involved in the collaborative project or instructions given to the pupils (Eidsaa, 2018).

accuracy of their own performances (Davis, 2013). When self-assessing, students learn to take charge of their learning and become self-teachers. Consequently, students develop independent learning techniques while deepening their understanding of artistic concepts and elements (Green, 2001, 2008).

One such musical concept pertains to musical expression. According to Colgrass (2004), students can express their composition in a variety of ways: written (i.e., standard notation), drawn (i.e., graphic notation), or performed. This variety of musical expression can be engaging and exhilarating for many amateur musicians (Colgrass, 2013; O'Neill, 2014).

Students may also become engaged in the musical process when they play that which is challenging and simultaneously familiar (Wendzich & Andrews, 2019). According to Stauffer (2002), young musicians enjoy using familiar melodies when composing music. These melodies are often from films, television, and instrumental experiences. Students also employ social and cultural cues related to school and home life to create their musical works. Consequently, music instructors have learned the importance of creating a collaborative "fun" atmosphere in which students have exploratory options (Bowden, 2010; Colgrass, 2004; Wendzich & Andrews, 2017, 2019).

Students can explore music and musical concepts in a variety of ways (Andrews & Giesbrecht, 2014; Freed-Garrod, 1999; Hargreaves et al., 2004). While exploring various note and rhythm combinations with others, young musicians develop the ability to improvise (O'Neill, 2014). In a study conducted in the UK, students not only developed the ability to improvise, but they began ascribing meaning to improvisation and composition. According to Burnard (2000), improvisation and composition are "interrelated forms co-existing functionally in context [and] distinct forms distinguished by bodily intention." Exploratory options enable students to create a beginning, middle, and end of a composition. Although this is the case, careful consideration must be given to resolving every aspect of the compositional process with precise language as students can easily misunderstand concepts and misinterpret what music instructors say. Many teachers have learned the importance of providing meaningful feedback by defining and clarifying terms. For example, the following terms can serve as valuable teaching tools during the initial stages of producing a musical work: *idea*, *musical proposition*, *exposition*, *theme*, *melody*, *rhythm*, *structure*, and *musical suspense*. (Wendzich & Andrews, 2020). However, these terms must be carefully clarified and selected accordingly so as to be most helpful for students: the teacher must use his or her skills to present meaningful compositional suggestions based on the language and focus that has been established throughout the compositional process (Randles & Sullivan, 2013). Thus, a decent amount of reflection must transpire when considering how to best help students maintain and improve their musical pieces.

In summary, when composing repertoire with students, teachers have learned the importance of providing meaningful feedback. They have also learned more about certain pedagogical strategies such as, a student-centered approach and creating a "fun" atmosphere. Furthermore, instructors have gained insight into new musical concepts and/or behaviours, as well as the creative compositional process. Similarly, students have learned about the role of creativity when composing. They have also developed such musical skills as listening, improvisation, performance, etc. These findings are of interest as the current study explores what students and teachers learn musically and pedagogically from collaboration with professional composers.

Development

This article reports findings of a part of a larger study. Hence, before detailing these findings, it is necessary to discuss the overarching study.

The Making Music Project

Within the Making Music Project, eighteen composers were commissioned by a large urban school board in eastern Ontario, Canada to write new pieces of music. In this study, composers, teachers, and their students collaborated to produce a composition playable by young musicians. During this creative endeavor, teachers ensured that government-mandated curricular music expectations were achieved by their students, while composers contributed their musical expertise, and students co-created and performed the compositions.

Our methodological approach was Integrated Inquiry and it was employed throughout the Making Music Project. This research strategy substantiates data analysis through the use of multiple data collection protocols from the same or different groups of participants, or alternately, the same protocol from different time periods (Andrews, 2008). Unlike mixed methods approaches which require qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), Integrated Inquiry may employ multiple qualitative or multiple quantitative protocols or the use of a single protocol in different time periods.

Theoretical Framework

The four dimensions of creativity – *place, process, product* and *person* – were adopted as the theoretical framework (Amabile & Tighe, 1993; Woodman & Schoenfeldt, 1989).

Characteristics of *place, process* and *person*, are treated as independent variables to creativity (i.e., as representing influences on the creative products). Whereas product (also known as a creative outcome), is often treated as a dependent variable (i.e., as a measure of creativity). With respect to music composition, these dimensions refer to the *pre-requisites* for composing

(training, emotions, context), compositional *process* (strategies, techniques, sequencing), musical *piece* (features, style, impact), and *person* (characteristics, pre-dispositions, motivation) (Andrews, 2004b).

Data Collection

In the Making Music Project, different protocols over a three-year time period were implemented for each dimension to address specific secondary questions: i) *pre-requisites:* How can musical ideas be conceptualized and developed in collaboration with students? (composer record); ii) *process:* What musical knowledge and skills are developed when students and teachers co-create music with composers in schools? (learning report); iii) *piece:* What aspects of the new compositions reflect the teachers' pedagogical input? (composition commentary); and *person:* What do students and teachers learn from collaboration with professional composers? (teacher questionnaire).

The protocols focused on the musical and pedagogical aspects of the collaborative composition. The Composer Records detailed how the composers conceptualized the writing of the piece in collaboration with the teachers and their students. The Learning Reports by the teachers detailed the development of musical ideas by the composers and students. The Composer Commentaries detailed the teachers' pedagogical input into the compositions, and the Teacher Questionnaire focused on what the students learned through their involvement in the project (refer to Figure 1).
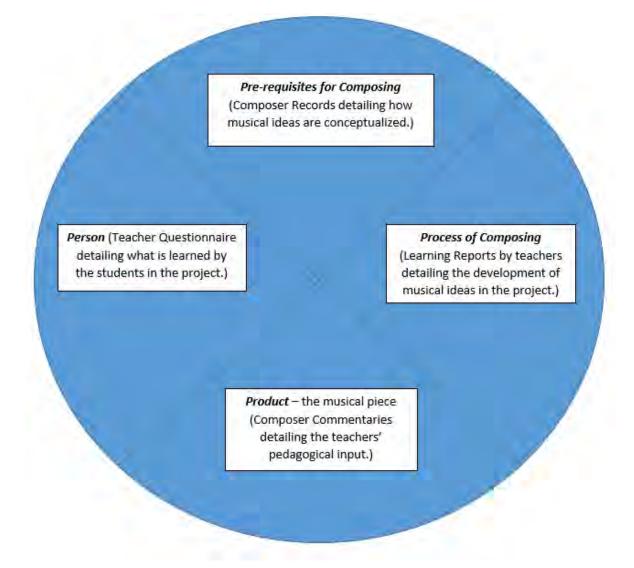
Figure 1. Making Music Project Conceptual Framework.

The Making Music Project: Person Dimension

This article focuses on the *person* dimension of the Making Music Project. Consequently, it reports on the findings from the qualitative analysis and interpretation of the teacher questionnaires[5] to respond to the research question:

What do students and teachers learn from collaboration with professional composers?

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[5] Teachers also completed learning reports, specifically addressing students' knowledge and skills, and the research is reported elsewhere (Wendzich & Andrews, 2017).

Teacher Questionnaire Protocol

The teacher questionnaires (Appendix) were initially developed through an international study (Andrews, 2004c), and then reviewed by members of the Ontario Regional Council of the Canadian Music Centre. These members were comprised of composers, professional musicians, music educators, research professors, and representatives of the media. Questions focused on the teachers' observations of student learning and experiences during this collaborative project. The teachers not only addressed the development of student knowledge, skills and values, but their own personal learning. Moreover, teachers were asked to comment upon the project's congruence with provincial-mandated music curriculum, and the effectiveness of composer involvement. One teacher duly noted, "[the composer's] introductory sessions, shopping around for motivic material from the students, gave opportunity to line up well with this expectation from the arts curriculum, both in philosophy and in practical, activity-based execution."

Teacher Questionnaire Analysis

The teacher questionnaires were analyzed through a pragmatic lens. A pragmatic approach was adopted as the project was concerned with "what worked" in the classrooms and on identifying solutions to pedagogical problems (Cherryholmes, 1992). The questionnaires were analyzed through a process of thematic qualitative coding. The first cycle coding was inductive: descriptive and In Vivo codes were used to highlight what was pertinent to the research question(s) (Miles et al., 2014; Saldana, 2015). Descriptive codes summarized the primary topic of the excerpt while In Vivo coding regarded a word or phrase that was directly taken from what the participant said and was placed in quotation marks (Saldana, 2015). Once first cycle coding was complete, a second cycle of coding (or pattern coding) was conducted (Miles et al., 2014), where first cycle codes were re-assessed and potentially reconfigured to discern patterns and common themes (Miles et al., 2014).

Participants & Site

There were eighteen transcripts, reflecting the eighteen teachers who voluntarily responded to a call for participation by the Arts Instructional Coach of the school board. These teachers collaborated with students and their corresponding composer to write new educational music for school-based programs (Andrews, 2017). Although this interaction occurred in grades six through twelve (students-age 11 to 18), the majority transpired within secondary school classrooms (i.e., grades nine to twelve). Thus, most of the students involved in this aspect of the project were between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. Teachers reported their own experiences and observations in one of the three time periods: the 2012-2013 school year; the 2013-2014 school year; or the 2014-2015 school year. The same protocol administered in different time periods over an extended period of time assists the researcher to obtain multiple

perspectives on the object of inquiry (Andrews, 2008). Teachers observed students gaining an understanding of the creative compositional process.

Analysis

Throughout this collaborative project, teachers perceived the young musicians learning about the compositional process. In so doing, they built relationships with the music instructors and learned theory through the process of creating (a pedagogical strategy). They also gained an understanding of musical elements and concepts while developing skills in listening and peer- and self-assessment. Not only did students become familiar with this process, but teachers did as well. They learned more about the creative compositional process, and utilized such pedagogical strategies as, student-centred/led musical sessions and band balance.

Compositional Process: Students

All teachers expressed the extent to which their students learned about the compositional process as they perceived the young musicians' facial expressions, body language, and comments. The teachers observed the composer conversing with the learners about their own experiences writing a composition and the steps taken to complete it. As one teacher noted, "the composer learns by his/her 'mistakes'… revise[s] and edit[s] their work to get their final product." This discussion spawned another regarding musicianship. The students were surprised and intrigued, commenting upon the complexities and difficulties associated with composing and being a composer. As a result, the teachers perceived students learning music composition and its associated culture. They observed them attaining an understanding of film composition, studio musicianship, and the composers' contract-by-contract lifestyle. This led to an appreciation of composers' works and the "creativity required to develop motifs and ideas for composing in general." Moreover, student-composer conversations helped the young musicians to honour what a composer intends in their composition, such as key signature, articulations, and dynamics. One teacher noted, "[t]hey also learned about investing in performance quality in a deeper way as a responsibility to the creator or creators of the music."

Following composer-student introductions, the young musicians were encouraged to be creative and utilize their current musical knowledge and skills to independently compose a short melodic piece. Within the traditional band formation, many students began formulating ideas based on prompts provided by the teacher or the score title which was agreed upon by the composer and students. Students then tested melodies on their own musical instruments which they finalized at home. The young musicians developed skills in creativity and applying the creative process as they had freedom to experiment with different melodies reflecting the theme/title of the class composition, explore the different musical possibilities,

and revise their pieces. Most of this was done on their own; however, they had the opportunity to present their melodies to their peers in small groups and in some instances, in front of the entire class. Moreover, the composer and peers provided input which helped students revise their melodies. According to many of the teachers, it was a joy to observe students employ their current knowledge and learn about the creative aspect of music. By encouraging creativity and allowing students to "work with whatever skills and knowledge" they currently had during the beginning compositional stages, students "latched onto"[6] the Making Music Project. Encouraging students to work with their own knowledge and skills is about an asset-based approach to music education.

Pedagogy & Musical Elements

Students' musical education became "fun" as they collaborated with the composer, as one teacher claimed, "[m]y students already knew [the composer] by name so he was fun to work with." The students enjoyed working with the composer since they established a positive rapport with him. This "fun" atmosphere continued as students explored musical variations on their instruments and improvised with their peers. Moreover, they were able to discuss with the music instructors their likes and dislikes in class, which were incorporated into the class composition and was an important part of developing positive teacher-student relationships throughout the creative compositional process.

The process of writing a composition not only shone a light on student-teacher relationships, but it introduced the young musicians to the "composer's toolbox."[7] Students learned how to manipulate musical elements by using the box to create a composition. They also learned about such musical concepts as instrumentation, expression, "precise execution of rhythmic patterns," scoring, chords, time signatures, phrasing, the effect of tempo on a composition, in addition to key and harmonic relationships. One teacher specifically mentioned music notation: "They increased their knowledge of musical terminology, rhythms, and in particular, sixteenth notes for the grade 9's." While learning musical terminology, students also developed bowing strategies and "techniques for arranging supporting parts - arpeggios, held chords, etc." Consequently, according to teacher perceptions, students (often without knowing) developed an understanding of musical concepts. As one teacher expressed, "I learned that the students I have now … learn more theory by accident, in the process of

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[6] Many students engaged in and were excited about the project; they verbalized their enthusiasm and participated (with little protest) in every aspect of the creative process.
[7] A "composer's toolbox" refers to those compositional techniques used to create a composition; for example, use of a melodic motive, repetition of a motive at different pitches, and motivic development.

creating, than they ever seem to learn through the old 'forewarned is forearmed' approach to building a skill base."

Musical Skills

The majority of the teachers expressed that through the collaborative process, students' listening skills were also enhanced. While students played their instruments, they "listened for melodic transfers throughout" the composition. Consequently, their awareness of balance and following a score heightened. Students also began listening for blends and ways to blend within ensemble performance.

While listening to the composer's instructions and their peers improvising on instruments, students gained skills in peer- and self-assessment. The composer's and classroom peers' feedback provided suggestions that helped individual contributions attain a degree of usability. Not only did students assess their peers, but also their own work as they experimented and revised their own compositions. Since the composer listened to the students' pieces and incorporated many suggestions into the main compositional work that would be played by all in the class, students felt a sense of group ownership. As one teacher noted, "[the students were] part of something bigger than themselves."

Compositional Process: Teachers

Not only were the young musicians part of this work, but teachers were so as well. Through student/teacher/composer interaction, all the teachers learned about a creative compositional process. Part of this process was understanding different parts of a composition and their interaction with each other. According to the teachers, the creative endeavour also helped them understand why or when certain compositions were written, what the meaning behind a piece is, and what composers intend to convey. As one teacher claimed, "[w]orking collaboratively with a composer allows us as teachers to really look at what makes up a piece, which we can then pass on to our students."

Pedagogy

The creative process enabled instructors to reflect upon their own teaching strategies, how they related to their own music classes and students, and how much personal musical history must be shared. It also allowed them to reflect upon how they could re-evaluate course plans to ensure students are provided with the necessary knowledge and tools for creating a composition. Many expressed how the creative process led to a variety of pedagogical notions, even ones concerning rehearsal, for example, "[s]eeing another person work with them musically gave me ideas I can use with them in rehearsals myself." Other musical ideas pertained to problem-solving and student-centred learning, as one instructor claimed:

I was truly part of the group in that I was participating and collaborating with the class and [the composer] the entire time. I was impressed by his approach to musical problem-solving and the degree to which this was a student led composition. We worked together on notation and this helped me formalize my training.

Although teachers developed new pedagogical ideas such as integrating more student-centered/led sessions in music class and ensuring students have the opportunity to "notate some of the piece," in some cases – like in the case with addressing band balance – not all of them functioned well. To address band balance, all the teachers and composers listened to the students, wrote an overall score, and then listened once again to the students play. In many instances, the composer and teacher had difficulties adjusting the timing or range of the piece to suit the students' needs. This was due to the wide instrumental range and abilities of the students. Some students were more advanced than others. If the timing or range was simplified for the less advanced students, then the score became too simplistic for the more advanced musicians, resulting in student boredom. Consequently, the teacher and composer collaborated to brainstorm other possible pedagogical strategies to address band balance. One such strategy pertained to challenging the students; according to a teacher, it is better to challenge the musicians than write a generic score. This creative compositional process not only helped teachers "gain a whole new perspective," as one expressed, but led to positive student reactions. These reactions and the success of this collaborative project strengthened their musical knowledge as they helped "the composer understand what qualities and characteristics we look for as teachers when choosing our repertoire for our groups, such as rhythms, range, key, etc., for various levels and abilities." This new musical knowledge, coupled with positive student reactions, strengthened teachers' musical confidence levels. Consequently, many instructors would like to compose more with their bands, and as one teacher concluded, "[c]ollaborating with a living composer has added another layer to the 'how' I teach."

Many teachers learned unique ways of presenting the music curriculum that students enjoyed. In order to help create an engaging and enjoyable atmosphere, the instructors learned to balance that which is familiar with what is challenging. If a musical piece is too easy, students will become bored and if too difficult, students will become discouraged. Consequently, one teacher expressed, "I learned what the students enjoy and find challenging." Although striking a balance between familiar and difficult is ideal, it may be more pedagogically appropriate for teachers to focus on challenging students, as one teacher said, "[s]tudents react better to a challenging task, even if a little too challenging, than they do to tasks that underestimate their capabilities." When presenting students with a difficult task while simultaneously respecting the limits of an ensemble, the musical atmosphere becomes very enjoyable.

Overall, students and teachers learned about the compositional process. In so doing, the young musicians learned about musical elements while developing musical skills. Moreover, teachers gained an understanding of various pedagogical strategies to employ in a music classroom. According to one of the teachers: "I [the instructor] enjoyed this project very much, especially for nurturing the creative process, which is a pillar for arts in schools."

<div align="center">**Recapitulation**</div>

Since creativity was a pillar in this collaborative compositional process, the four dimensions of creativity (*place*, *process*, *person*, and *product*) frame the discussion section of this article. More specifically, creativity (in relation to music composition) frames this section. Consequently, the aforementioned dimensions are as follows: the *pre-requisites* for composing (training, emotions, context); compositional *process* (strategies, techniques, sequencing); *person* (characteristics, pre-dispositions, motivation); and musical *piece* (features, style, impact) (Andrews, 2004b).

Pre-requisites

During the initial classroom visit, composers revealed their life-style, professional standing, and contract-based work. A significant aspect of composers' work is creating a composition that is playable, has a message, and is appreciated by the audience (Fanelli, 2009; Lenzini, 1999; *The Instrumentalist*, 2014). Upon hearing the composer, all the teachers expressed students gaining an appreciation for the music culture. This appreciation for art culture and life-style is replicated in Andrews' (2016) and Carlisle's (2011) findings. Andrew (2016) mentions the successes and challenges associated with being an artist (composer, visual artist, sculptor), as well as the way art culture fosters student creativity, while Carlisle (2011) focuses on creative critical thinking and the social (relational) aspects of art collaboration.

Throughout the creative process, composers used their musical training to write the class composition. Consequently, many teachers learned from the artists' expertise (Andrews, 2016; Wendzich & Andrews, 2017). It enabled them to develop new pedagogical strategies as it offered alternate ways of teaching and learning. Understanding the value of an artistic project and the ways in which it is carried out are also consistent with findings from Upitis et al. (1999).

Furthermore, most teachers claimed they learned how to create an engaging atmosphere by presenting the music curriculum in unique and enjoyable ways. One unique tactic instructors employed was providing students with the freedom to explore and experiment on their instruments which is consistent with Bowden (2010), O'Neill (2014), Smithrim and Upitis (2005), as well as Duncan and Andrews (2015). Moreover, teachers created an enjoyable

setting by adhering to students' emotions (their likes and dislikes) (Wendzich & Andrews, 2019). When understanding what one enjoys, it is easier to write a fun, balanced composition - one that is both relevant and challenging for students to play (refer also to Duncan & Andrews, 2015; O'Neill, 2014; Wendzich & Andrews, 2019).

Process

Throughout the Making Music Project, students, composers, and teachers all became composition learners as they collaboratively employed creative thinking to produce a musical work that young musicians could play (Randles et al., 2012). Collaboration was encouraged in this study since it is pertinent in establishing the parameters for creating educational music (Rusinek, 2011; Schubert, 2011). Moreover, group work and peer assistance encourage composition learning as composers learn about what works and what does not within the music classroom (Paynter, 1982; Schafer, 1977). Through interaction, composers, teachers, and students brainstormed and generated different perspectives on music composition. Collaboration with artists was essential for the success of an arts-related project within the classroom setting. A sharing of leadership responsibilities created a true collaboration among partners and was essential for sustainability of the arts partnership (Andrews, 2016).

As the young musicians collaborated to write the class composition, they engaged in a very non-sequential creative process (Berkley, 2001; Emmons, 1998). The students explored, wrote, and re-wrote musical ideas with the assistance of the commissioned composer to create a final product (Colgrass, 2004). This fluid non-sequential experience was consistent with Katz and Gardner's (2012) understanding of a creative process, as well as Hsieh's (2012) "Geneplore model" of generative and exploratory creative functioning. Pedagogically speaking, this non-sequential process can benefit amateur musicians as they develop concepts and skills when specific media, forms, or pitches are not required of them (Camphouse, 2007). Because these students were not constrained with predetermined pitches and forms, they were able to select their own balance of freedom (selecting notes, pitches and melodies with which they were familiar) and constraints (range limitations) as creative boundaries that guided their compositional strategies (Burnard & Younker, 2002).

Moreover, the non-sequential process was reflected in the musicians' creative exploration (Hargreaves et al., 2004; Mazzola, et al., 2011). As students explore, they develop improvisation, listening, and performance skills (Paynter, 1982; Wendzich & Andrews, 2017). When improvising, they are exploring different musical variations, which in turn, develops students' listening skills. As they use their instruments for improvisation, they practice fingering techniques, posture, and breathing. All of these skills have been found to be important when performing a musical score (Camphouse, 2007; Paynter, 1982).

The teacher data also suggest that the young musicians had the freedom to explore musical ideas and concepts, while experimenting on their instruments, which is consistent with other studies on students composing (O'Neill, 2014; Wendzich & Andrews, 2017, 2019). Students had the freedom to explore as the teachers and professional composers decided to foster creative thinking. By enabling students to experiment on their instruments (listening to the different sounds being generated), students began to discern what sounds and musical blends worked well together; they began to creatively think and problem-solve (Hickey, 2012). Overall, students' approach to the compositional process was one of musical exploration and experimentation. This process allowed them to develop quality musical ideas (Giesbrecht & Andrews, 2015).

The collaborative nature of the project also enabled students to share musical ideas (Andrews & Giesbrecht, 2014; Freed-Garrod, 1999). Sharing ideas allowed the young musicians to feel group ownership of the compositional work, thus feeling empowered (O'Neill, 2014). Group ownership helped encourage student engagement which Andrews (2016) and O'Neill (2005, 2014) also revealed in their studies. Moreover, the data suggest that a communicative, nonthreatening forum—small groups or an entire class with the teacher and composer— enabled students to freely articulate their ideas, discuss feelings, and ask questions without fear of reprisals (also outlined in Andrews, 2016). Moreover, this nonthreatening collaborative setting enabled the young musicians to develop rapport with the music instructors—an important pedagogical strategy.

Furthermore, this "sharing" atmosphere enabled students to develop listening (Davis, 2013) and peer- and self-assessment skills, which Paynter (1982) also observed in his study. Students listened to blends and melodic transfers, as well as feedback from peers, the composer, and teacher. Randles and Sullivan (2013) detail the importance of meaningful instructor-student assessment (feedback) when helping students compose a musical piece. According to the questionnaire data set in this study, when listening to how their ideas were instrumentally played, the young musicians often helped the composer revise musical notes, keys, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, and range. This finding is consistent with research by Katz and Gardner (2012) who found that hearing an initial piece helps one shape and reshape the material. When listening to blends and band balance, the young musicians often explored musical ideas, thereby learning the importance of improvisation in music creativity (Freund, 2011). Furthermore, the questionnaire data also suggested that listening to input taught students about respectful disagreements and constructive suggestions. Constructive criticism and praise can help the composers to craft a composition with a degree of usability (Andrews, 2016; Denner et al., 2005; O'Neill, 2012). Hearing others and their own musical pieces also allowed the learners to develop musical decision-making and problem-solving skills which is consistent with findings in other studies (Andrews, 2016; Isaksen, et al., 2011; Teffinger, et

al., 2008). Moreover, listening to their own musical out-put enabled many students to explore and revise their own compositions without the distraction of decoding notation, which is consistent with Thornton's (2013) study. In another arts-related project (Andrews, 2016), students' listening skills were also enhanced when the learners engaged in peer- and self-assessment. Overall, this collaborative atmosphere enabled students to gain an understanding of the creative compositional process.

Person

As students experienced the compositional process, they learned about using a composer's toolbox or tools (Wendzich & Andrews, 2019), and the role of creativity (Burnard & Younker, 2002) as they discovered that which musically inspired them. Most of the students were inspired by social, school cues, or by media with which they were familiar (i.e., certain songs, films, etc.) (Stauffer, 2002). The students integrated their musical notions—including familiar melodies—in their compositions, which was replicated by Stauffer (2002).

Teachers' characteristics shone as they used their own skill set to encourage students' creativity. They also encouraged teacher-student feedback (Wendzich & Andrews, 2020) and motivated the young learners. Motivating and encouraging students are skills that many instructors have and employ in their classrooms on a daily-basis (Svinicki, 2004). Many of the music teachers employed their own teaching skills (motivation, encouragement, etc.), concepts and strategies (it is best to learn music theory "accidently"), to show young musicians how to compose interesting and exciting music, which is consistent with Hickey (2012).

Musical Piece

In order for groups of children and adolescents to create original artistic works, a discussion of melodic elements and musical concepts (or artistic concepts and elements according to Green, 2001) should ensue. Learning about musical concepts and elements helps one understand how to create, write, and revise one's own composition (Giesbrecht & Andrews, 2015; Katz & Gardner, 2012; Webster, 2011). Creating their own compositions, conveying them through performance or writing, is also expressed in Wendzich and Andrews (2019a), Colgrass (2004), as well as Menard (2013). The former describes students playing their own melodic fragments to their peers and the composer, while Colgrass (2004) and Menard (2013) discuss students using graphic notation and writing musical notes when possible. Once short melodies have been completed and communicated, scaffolding can help children expand upon and refine their musical ideas (Menard, 2013).

As the musical piece was being composed, teachers also began to understand the features and impact of the composition (e.g., the "voices" of a composition, why and when musical works were written, as well as their intended meanings). This learning encouraged all the instructors to honor artists' voices. This finding is consistent with Andrews (2016). As teachers honored the intended meaning of the music while encouraging student creativity, instructors provided an avenue for students to "accidently" learn music theory; that is, they did not learn music through the old 'forewarned is forearmed' approach to building a skill base. Other arts-related studies (Andrews, 2016; Duncan & Andrews, 2015; O'Neill, 2014; Wendzich & Andrews, 2019) indicate the benefits associated when students learn without realizing.

This pedagogical approach of composer/teacher/student collaboration to write a musical piece represents a paradigm shift—from a traditional teacher-directed approach to one that is creative and interpersonal. The approach was found to be quite beneficial as it highlighted the extent to which learning music composition can be engaging and enjoyable. It can also encourage teachers to learn new pedagogical strategies and further value the creative compositional process. These types of collaborative projects, as Andrews (2016) notes, really do act "as a vehicle for improving the teaching and learning of the arts in the school curriculum" (p. ix).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study, Making Music: Composing *with* Young Musicians, was to obtain an in-depth understanding of how composers can collaborate with teachers and their students to create educational music. In order to address the *person* dimension of musical composition, the following question was asked: What do students and teachers learn from collaboration with professional composers? The teacher questionnaires (refer to Appendix), submitted over three years, revealed that students gained an understanding of the creative compositional process. During this collaborative endeavour, students also developed skills in listening as well as peer- and self-assessment. Teachers learned to create an engaging and enjoyable music atmosphere while valuing the creative compositional process.

Most of the teachers claimed that composer involvement was an effective form of professional development. The composers often encouraged students and teachers to learn a new musical concept or break free from their comfort zones. As a result, the teachers began to apply what the composers taught them in other music classrooms. Composer involvement also encouraged some participants to re-evaluate course plans, thereby providing students with the knowledge and tools necessary for them to succeed at creative compositional tasks. Moreover, this opportunity enabled teachers to analyze student achievement and potential from a new perspective. Professional development (PD) music workshops could incorporate the learnings from this study and reinforce the effectiveness of student/teacher/composer collaboration.

Future research could focus on more fully describing pedagogical strategies that could foster collaborative music composition. Such studies could further explore the idea that, as one teacher noted, "[c]reation and composition is an important element in music education."

Acknowledgement

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Appendix

Making Music: Composing with Young Musicians

Teacher Questionnaire

1). What did your students learn (i.e., knowledge, skills, values) overall from their involvement in the Making Music Project? Please elaborate. You may wish to refer to your comments in the learning report.

-Knowledge:
-Skills:
-Values:

2). Was the students' learning congruent with the Ministry of Education's curricular expectations for music? Please provide concrete examples of expectations from the arts guidelines. [8]

3). What did you personally learn from your involvement in the project?

4). Is composer involvement an effective form of teacher professional development? Please explain.

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