

The School Ensemble: A Culture Of Our Own

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BUZZWORDS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Main Arguments

1. Music educators are searching to expand their repertoire to include world music.
2. World music experiences that are not including music making are ineffective and inauthentic.
3. Teachers & students must view school ensembles as a culture, not as a class.

Defining School Ensembles as Culture

Culture: "Any group of people sustained by a common interest or set of shared values ... will develop customs, conventions and conversational manners of a more or less specialized kind, creating a subculture" (Keith Swanwick)

If culture is defined as a group with common interests and shared values, one can define dominant themes of cultural domains. (Bruno Nettl)

School Ensembles' Cultural Themes:

1. **Identity** - ownership of ensemble participation as personal identity
2. **Transmission** - learning tradition from elders or "culture bearers"
3. **Social Dimension** - forming social structures based on membership
4. **Practical and Personal Boundaries** - unity from shared experiences
5. **Organizational Hierarchy** - leadership creating power structures
6. **Traditional Song** - exclusivity of music for particular ensembles
7. **Traditional Performance Practices** - ensembles aim to emulate other ensembles
8. **The Diaspora** - feeling a sense of loss when a person is not involved in an ensemble
9. **Indoctrination** - completing a milestone for entry into an ensemble
10. **Lore** - sharing stories from previous years of ensemble culture



About Steven J. Morrison

- Chair & Professor of Music Education at University of Washington
- Extensive ensemble teaching at all levels



In relation to Jorgensen...

Socialization

- Beliefs & values instilled in a group
- Members upheld to act in certain ways
- Pressure to remain in the group and express group's importance

Enculturation

- Understanding the place of music.
- Expanding range and accuracy of one's perceptions of cultures.

Implications

1. The article presents weak, unclear connections between cultural themes and impact for students/teachers, with the exception of understanding own culture to understand others.
2. This article more effectively presents the reasonings to consider ensembles as a culture, and describes uniqueness of school ensembles and the need for students' involvement.