

away from the "traditional" splintered program are in growing evidence. The trend which now seems to be asserting itself is towards exactly that which Mr. Porter urges, a plan which integrates music theory, history, and performance. Universities that are starting or have already begun such programs will be producing a brand of high school music teacher who will more easily be able to fully implement the "Laboratory in Musicianship" that Harold Brook Porter describes.

At institutions such as the University of British Columbia, evidence of the superiority of an integrated program is already at hand after only two years of operation. Through its chronological organization from ancient Greece to the present, students in this comprehensive plan are well aware of historical development. As an important adjunct, especially in the light of Mr. Porter's dissertation, they can take with them into their subsequent teaching a better understanding of a wealth of musical literature.

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John Malcom Tait

*The Significance of Musical Understanding
in Music Education*

Columbia University Ed.D., 1963

Gary M. Martin

The purpose of John Tait's study is to examine authoritative views regarding musical understanding and to propose a definition of the same. He then attempts to relate this definition to the educational process of the public schools. Musical understanding is defined as a process in which a person re-creates the sounds he hears in terms of his own feelings, knowledge, and imagination. Five areas of musical understanding are identified as follows:

- (a) Hearing music: aural recognition of the components of music, such as, rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and so forth.
- (b) Seeing music: visual recognition of musical relationships when they are presented in a musical score.
- (c) Imagining music: (see below)
- (d) Feeling music: imagining and feeling music are the most intangible of the five aspects of musical understanding. Music elements suggest to individuals concepts which may form a bridge between the music and life itself. These concepts (or bridges) are formed by individuals as an out-growth of the interaction between music and their feelings and background.
- (e) Knowing music: knowledge of music history, music theory, musical instruments, and musical forms.

Tait acknowledges that, in the opinions of some musicians, more than one

kind of musical understanding exists. However, he asserts that there is a central body of musical understanding, possessing many facets but found within a framework that is essentially unified. He also has an admitted penchant for the ability to read music notation as a major need of students and cites music performance as the best measure for evaluating musical understanding.

In Chapter 4 the author examines music in the public schools. He states that a school music program is less accurately validated by the number and diversity of its activities than by the quality and depth of learning that result from these activities. He recommends a general music class at all levels of education, each being taught by qualified and trained persons. Music education, particularly in senior high school, is criticized for its narrow scope and for the lack of opportunity for *all* students to develop musical understanding as defined in the study.

Tait's objective has been to define comprehensively the meaning of the term "musical understanding" and then to examine the school music curriculum in light of that definition. Although one may choose to argue with his definition of musical understanding, the conclusions he draws and the recommendations of the thesis would seem to be generally acceptable in music circles today.

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