

ABSTRACT

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The Nature, Description, and Comparison of  
Developmental and Stabilized Music Aptitudes

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Music aptitudes (potential for music achievement) stabilize at approximately age nine; they become unaffected by music achievement. Before that time they are developmental because they are a product of both nature and nurture. That is, they are highly sensitive to informal exposure to music. The younger a child is, for example age five, the more his innate potential for music can interact with environmental conditions, and this interaction takes place at a decreasing rate as he approaches approximately age nine.

The dimensions of music to which a child can attend are different in the developmental stage than they are in the stabilized stage. Moreover, in the developmental stage children are more concerned with isolated elements of music whereas in the stabilized stage children are capable of dealing with music as a Gestalt.

Children who demonstrate developmental music aptitudes recognize only the constructional aspects of music and children with stabilized music aptitudes identify expressive/interpretive aspects of music. Of most importance, and of primary concern in the paper, is how the concept of "sameness versus different" functions in regard to the way in which children with developmental music aptitudes audiate (mentally hear) music. Conceptualization notwithstanding, whether sameness in sensory perception actually exists phenomenologically becomes the central issue. In closing, implications for pedagogical procedures are discussed.

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## ABSTRACT

The study focused on music ability in elderly persons as measured by Gordon's Musical Aptitude Profile. The purpose of the investigation was to (1) examine musical ability test scores in relation to age in an elderly population sample; (2) compare musical ability test scores with the following attribute variables: morale, musical self-esteem, sex, preretirement occupational noise levels, formal education, health, income, housing type or living situation, musical experience and training, and musical activity levels.

After pilot tests were used to develop the test procedures, 182 elderly subjects, who lived in rural and urban independent living situations in various parts of the United States, participated in some aspect of the project. Of them, 119 subjects between the ages of 65 and 93 years completed the total testing procedure.

The Musical Aptitude Profile was administered to groups of subjects in free field. Questionnaires were used to collect data concerning the various attribute variables. Results showed that the MAP had high internal consistency for the elderly subjects tested. Age did not correlate with either partial or composite MAP scores, and there were no significant differences among MAP scores on the total test and on all the test parts, except Tonal Imagery, for three age groups: (1) 65 to 70 years, (2) 71 to 75 years, and (3) 76 to 93 years.

Musical activity level, musical experience, frequency of music listening, and monthly income consistently emerged as the strongest predictors of MAP partial and composite scores. Subjects with higher musical activity levels, greater musical experience, higher frequency of music listening, and higher monthly income were related to higher MAP scores. Sex and housing type were predictors for all MAP scores except the Tonal Imagery scores. Females performed better on most parts of the MAP than males and persons in most independent housing types made better scores than those who lived in less independent situations. The musical self-esteem variable predicted scores on only one test part, Rhythmic Imagery. Subjects with greater musical self-esteem performed better on that section than subjects with less musical self-esteem. There was no significant relationship, however, between musical self-esteem and other test parts. General morale was not significantly related to any of the partial scores. Subjects with high general morale tended to have high composite scores. None of the other attribute variables had predictive value for the partial and composite MAP scores in the elderly subjects analyzed in this sample.

The MAP and the questionnaires used in this study were viable measurement instruments for elderly persons' musical abilities and the attribute variables associated with them. Future research efforts with the devices may provide additional descriptive data of elderly persons in various socio-economic strata.

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must become a discipline. Moreover, ~~many~~ professors do not ~~even~~ teach musicianship very well, ~~even though music itself is a discipline.~~ ~~Is it possible that they themselves are not good musicians~~ because they are graduates of the same type of music instructional programs that they insist on offering their students.

A profession is an occupation or vocation which requires training in the liberal arts and sciences, as well as advanced study in a specialized field. Some authorities believe that in order for a profession to exist, it must be self-governing. That music education is essentially not self-governing is not really the crucial matter, although if it were self-governing, it could not help but be improved. The profession seems to have no effective way of monitoring the quality of degree programs, accreditation agencies notwithstanding. And certainly, certification for teaching music in the elementary and high schools is far too bureaucratic and political to truly concern itself with standards. Because we ourselves have not remedied such problems, I fear that matters will become even worse if and when others will have settled the problems for us in terms of competency-based certification. It will be a case of the blind and eager leading the partially sighted and arrogant.

Nonetheless, what is of most immediate importance to music education is that it develop a unique discipline. As it now stands, music education curricula at the college and university level borrow courses from music, psychology, and education, the music education courses for the most part being repetitious. That is the crux of the matter. As a result, future teachers are not adequately prepared nor are graduate students appropriately trained to conduct worthwhile research that would serve in establishing a discipline for music education.

It seems to me that to try and help college and university faculties develop a discipline for music education is, for all intents and purposes, a hopeless task. For those few faculties for which it might be possible, the process would be much too lengthy, if not brutal. Thus if music education is to survive in the schools, the practicing elementary and high school teachers must accept the responsibility. They must guide, direct, and work with responsible lay persons and competent professors in developing a discipline for music education. If they do not, I can predict with confidence that in the not too distant future, music education will not have a place in the school curriculum. It will not be extra-curricular or co-curricular. It will be taken over by private interests outside the school. We can only speculate, in relative terms, how successful they will be.

Is it possible that practicing teachers can undertake this responsibility with positive results? The answer is yes if they can be made to understand that music education goes beyond ~~simply music instrumental performance through notation & vocal performance by rote.~~ *performance by reading notation.* The teachers must ask what they and the schools can do for students and stop emphasizing what the students can do for the them and the schools. We can no longer afford to make students into music robots. Students must learn music through ~~music~~ understanding so that performance will become only one of many possible outcomes for appreciating music. To accomplish this, curricula for music education must be developed which binds vocal, instrumental, general, and theoretical instruction sequentially from preschool through high school. Startling as it may sound but consistent with current research, emphasis in time, money, and teacher quality will most correctly be placed in preschool and the primary grades rather

than in the secondary schools. The curriculum itself will become the discipline of music education for students from preschool through high school, and learning theory in music and supportive research endeavors will become the discipline of music education for graduate and undergraduate students. Materials, techniques, and methods should not be considered as part of the discipline of music education; they are simply tools an intelligent and alert music educator acquires through experience in student teaching and professional teaching. What I am saying is that public school practice will influence college and university curricula over a period of time.

Though some of us may wish otherwise, equality in aptitude cannot be legislated; only equality of opportunity in developing one's aptitude can be legislated. Thus the individual musical differences among students cannot be ignored. It must be remembered that curriculum development and research take into consideration not only the average student but exceptional students as well, both gifted and handicapped. Curriculum development and research, to be acceptable, must deal with student's individual needs. The teacher must not bore the very talented students nor frustrate the less talented students. The profession has been driving <sup>many</sup> the most talented students away from music education in the past and teaching only a minority of high school students. As a matter of fact, the instruction of many of the most talented students has already been taken over by interests outside the school, if not by the students themselves. Listen to their music and learn. You owe it to them and yourselves. They have been listening to you and your music for a long time.

To some of you, it may be a new concept that music aptitude and music achievement are not the same thing. Music aptitude is potential

to learn whereas music achievement is what has actually been learned. Without knowledge of how these two traits differ but yet interact in the teaching/learning process, neither curriculum development nor appropriate research can become a reality. Further, there is a difference between measurement and evaluation. Measurement is test development and evaluation is the interpretation of test results. Without a clear understanding of measurement and evaluation in these days of accountability, teachers will probably not find it possible to first develop curricula which demands evaluation. I can tell you that to call criterion grading criterion testing will not solve the problem of ignorance of normative testing.

It will be my pleasure to elaborate on any of the issues I have raised. If I have upset you, I hope that it will be only momentary. True professionals look beyond themselves and discuss ideas.

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