



Editorial

I was a Music Teacher Fraud

By Benjamin Bolden, Associate Editor

When I began teaching music in schools I realized very quickly I hadn't a clue what I was doing. My wealth of experience singing, playing, listening, and creating music with some of the best musicians and teachers in the country, topped off by teacher training at one of the most prestigious educational institutions in the world, was simply not enough.

It did not take many classes to exhaust my bag of tricks, and for the students to lose interest and for me to lose confidence and faith in the music teaching I was providing. So there I stood, guiltily facing twenty-seven bored and frustrated seventh grade squawkers, with nothing left to offer but another repetition of line thirty-two in the method book. I raised my arms to conduct the pickup, and shivered involuntarily as a clammy coldness clasped the back of my neck. I felt queasy. The truth was dawning: I was not a music teacher; I was a fraud.

What exactly is a music teacher supposed to do, anyway? The problem wasn't simply that I didn't know what to do—it was that I didn't have the confidence to do the things I *did* know how to do. Music was so desperately important to me that I was petrified of teaching it badly. A music teacher colleague, a mentor, might have helped me. But as is so often the case, the school had only one music teacher, and I was it.

My principal, sensing that something wasn't quite right, wisely took me aside, thrust a brochure for an upcoming music educators' conference into my hand, told me I was registered, and that the school would be footing the bill.

At the conference I discovered that I had colleagues. From them I learned a few more things to add to my music teaching bag of tricks, and more importantly, I learned that I was not alone.

I received an edition of this journal in the post a few weeks later. The journal provided me the opportunity to re-connect with my new-found music teacher colleagues, and through their words and images re-visit my understanding of music education—what it was, what it is, and what it might be. I remember reading words that resonated deeply with me—words written by a teacher struggling with similar concerns as my own, and who had hit upon a path forward. I remember the relief not only of having

something concrete and practical to try out in my classroom, but also of knowing I was not alone in the struggle.

This journal allows music educators to benefit from the experience and ideas of colleagues all over the country, united in their care, concern, and passion for teaching music. Through this publication we can continue our learning—bettering our understanding of what music education in Canada was, what it is, and what it might become. CME

Send your messages to my email, benbolden@gmail.com

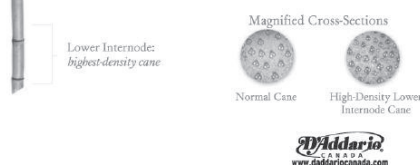


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