

Zoom Recital--Promote Multiple Musical Identities

Introduction:

Surprisingly, children continue to follow a western classical model in instrumental learning just as when I started to learn the piano twenty years ago. Scholars in this topic confirm the several elements constituting the paradigm: teacher-oriented activities, technique superiority, western notation, and less improvisation (Bartel, 2004, xii-xiii; Kennedy, 2004, p.67). Students follow teacher-oriented instructions to practice techniques over musicality (Bartel & Cameron, 2004, p. 42-43).

Competitions and examinations evaluate one's musical achievement by Western constructs for expressing dynamics and articulations (Hess, 2015). Fewer improvisational exercises are enrolled to enhance students' creativity skills (Song, 2013). The regular repertoire is primarily limited to the Western classical genre in tune from western notation (Hess, 2015). Consequently, the curriculum contexts behind the music reinforce the privilege of Eurocentric music.

It is vital to recognize a colonizing theory underlying this whole music lessons. While the backgrounds disconnect from one's lived experiences, our students fail to acknowledge and express their feelings toward musicking. The European tradition framework does not address various populations of students whose music preference may range across all kinds of genres and styles (Hess, 2015). Thus, I intend to invite my students to create a digital composition representing an individual's musical identities. They can use the Digital Audio Workspaces, such as Soundtrap, to record, use pre-recorded loops, mix, manipulate and compose their own songs (Hein, 2017; Soundtrap, 2018). The final work will present in the zoom recital.

Guided questions:

- How can private music teachers modify the practices that put forward a critical understanding of an individual's identities in children's music learning?
- Who benefits from acknowledging multiple identities? Why it is important?
- What resources or pedagogical change can private music teachers utilize to promote decolonization?

Purpose and Rationale:

- To explore possibilities to adopt an inclusive method in private music lessons
- To enhance the decolonization and multiple identities concepts by offering a broad range of music, contextualizing the music and “introducing multiple musical epistemologies” (Hess, 2014)
- To explore possibilities to adopt a digital method to have positive and open dialogues that invite students to express themselves musically and orally.

Literature review:

Chavez and Skelchy explain that colonization refers to "autonomy and self-determination, which addresses access to land, resources, and representations of indigenous communities from within" (2019, p120). However, the power of coloniality has influenced not only social and political classes (i.e., colonizers as the dominant group) but also on various knowledge production fields (Chavez & Skelchy, 2019; Mignolo, n.d.). The impact of colonizing in music education has led to a privileging of western classical music paradigm in music training. The European colonial worldviews shape the music curricula and aesthetic appreciation. For instance, western canon genres have been advertised as a high-end product for general audiences; however, the hidden notion is the "hierarchy of civilization" (Hess, 2015, p.338). Thus, the idea of particular aesthetic values is deeply rooted among parents and their children. It is not unusual for people to pursue Western cultures that possess "advanced" or "high quality," which motivates thousands of students to begin their instrumental learning annually.

As a country of immigrants, Canadian students bring distinct identities and lived experiences to the class. Is it beneficial for them to adopt identical character derived from the western classical practices? Or do they want to? I assume the answer will be no, as this power paradigm restricts students' beliefs on many levels. It primarily restrains the learners' potential to be playful with making music, as we never ask the individual's music taste. Though some teachers wish they could assign different music styles based on students' preferences, there are limited choices to be able to accommodate for western standard notation (Hess, 2015, p.337).

Moreover, Western music tradition promotes notated sheet music, which also limits the students to be creative and expressive with a personal understanding of the pieces. Hess (2015) suggests that the Western construct provides general guidance for students to express meter, dynamics and articulations of the music (p. 336). Meanwhile, fewer improvisation activities are included in music teaching, which is treated as a genesis of personal comprehension of the piece (Zuckerman, 2014). Song (2013) argues that improvisation is not frequently integrated into music curricula outside Jazz-related idioms. Therefore, the paradigm needs to shift for enhancing individual musical identity and decolonizing music learning.

| This recital project utilizes technology like Soundtrap and zoom as a tool to promote multiple identities. Due to the restrictions on social distance and larger gatherings for COVID-19, piano teachers are attempting to employ technology solutions to run an online recital that still provides students with an opportunity to perform and share their musical progressions. Soundtrap is a free Digital Audio website with a short learning curve. It will enable students to explore musical concepts (e.g., rhythm, melody, and tempo) and manipulate those elements to create a new piece (Soundtrap, 2018). This activity is beneficial for students to be musical and creative in a funny way. Inspiring by the inclusive course took this summer; I plan to have a distinctive theme this year called multiple musical identities. The zoom recital will work with another private studio for promoting diverse music tastes.

The plan of the Project:

Based on Maxner's Zoom recital tips (Maxner, 2020)

Two studios will work on this plan simultaneously.

GETTING STARTED: The parents' consent forms will offer to explain that this project will adopt technology as the tools to help participants explore and narrate multiple identities throughout the activities. Also, present the planned dates for parents to schedule in advance.

Step 1: Introduce Soundtrap (3-4 months before the recital)

Present the steps of how to use Soundtrap to make your own loop

Ask them to try by themselves

Soundtrap tutorials

<https://www.youtube.com/c/Soundtrap/videos>

A Soundtrap represents you (Project):

Each student needs to recreate a piece to narrate your musical identities. You can use any favourite songs (no genre or style restriction) as the loop to manipulate. The work should be no less than 2 minutes.

Step 2: Coordinate compositions (2 months before the recital)

Make a complete list of work for each student and then create a timeline for "performance." Make sure students will introduce why they choose the piece to represent them and how they feel about the process.

Step 3: Guest Invitation (6 weeks before)

Create an invitation for guests and send them to the families. It is appreciated if grandparents and friends want to join this event. The email will attach the invitation showing the time and zoom link that everyone will click to join. Instruction for the zoom is helpful to them who have not used zooms before. The sample of the invitation is attached to the resources list (Maxner, 2020).

Step 4: Guest List (4 weeks before)

The next step is to ask the families to give the guests' names. This one is good not only for solving technical problems but for security purposes.

Step 5: Printable Program (2 weeks before)

Here comes to a printable recital program. In the program, it shows the participants' names, pieces as well as the timeline.

The sample of page borders link is given in the resources list.

Step 6: The recital (Now)

**Remember to record the meeting for sharing with families.

Teachers will introduce each presenter to the audience and keep all muted except for the presenters to cut down on background noise.

Invite each student to share the screen to play the product they recreate and explain their thoughts and process of the work.

When one student finishes their explanation, unmute everyone to give the applause to the presenter.

Each will upload their work to the studio blogs with permissions, and parents can download it as a ringtone. Each download accounts for one dollar, and all the money will donate to SickKids hospital.

**As a solution to poor connections and sound quality, all the participants may send their Soundtrap and the video of the presentation to the teacher beforehand. Then the teacher will play the video and Soundtrap through screen sharing.

Resources

Zuckerman, B. (2014). Is Eurocentricity a Problem In Music Schools? Five Intriguing Solutions Revealed. Retrieved July 26, 2020, from <https://musicschoolcentral.com/eurocentricity-problem-music-schools-five-solutions-revealed/>

Teaching Tolerance: <https://www.tolerance.org/>

Zoom Recital: 7 tips and strategies for success. <https://rebekah.maxner.ca/2020/04/30/zoom-recital-tips-and-strategies-for-success/>

Soundtrap tutorials

<https://www.youtube.com/c/Soundtrap/videos>

Ethan Hein Blog- Decolonizing (teaching plan) <https://www.ethanhein.com/wp/2018/teaching-whiteness-in-music-class/>

Zoom tutorials

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-video-tutorials>

Page border for the recital program

<https://pageborders.org/category/spring/>

Sample of invitation letter (Maxner, 2020)

<https://rebekah.maxner.ca/printables/>

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