Teaching the Memphis Sound:

An Exploration of the City's Music Education

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2017 Rhodes Institute for Region Studies

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In 1927, Jimmie Lunceford was hired at Manassas High School in Memphis, TN as a physical education and language teacher. While he was there, he formed a swing band with a group of Manassas students, The Chickasaw Syncopators. During his time at Manassas, Lunceford taught his students jazz over 20 years before the first degree would be offered in a jazz studies program and around 40 years before jazz would be formally introduced to the public school curriculum (Worthy, 2011, para. 10). Lunceford was encouraging students to practice a totally innovative art form that did not tend to see the inside of formal educational institutions. After teaching for just three years, he took his best high school students (and some of his former classmates from Fisk University) to create the professional band, the Jimmie Lunceford Orchestra. The band would go on to national success, touring and performing across the country. "He was more popular than Duke Ellington and Count Basie, all of those bands back in that time, among Black people" (Ron Heard, personal interview, June 2017). Lunceford started all of this with very little funding. Community historian and activist Ron Heard attributes his ability to do this as a public high school because of great support and "buy in" from the Memphis community and the students (personal interview, June 2017). Lunceford's story is just one of many Memphis music narratives that originated in the public schools in this era.

Later, in the 1940s, W. T. McDaniel was band director for both Manassas High School's band, the Rhythm Bombers, and Booker T. Washington High School's band, the Bookerteasers. Hired at a time when Memphians remembered the fame of Jimmie Lunceford's band, McDaniel continued his legacy as his bands (including among its members BTW student Phineas Newborn) played professional gigs across the city at places like the Skyway at the Peabody Hotel and the Balinese Room at the Claridge Hotel (Ellis). Like Lunceford, McDaniel successfully connected his students to community music. Lunceford and McDaniel are highlights

of Memphis' incredibly rich music history. And some of the most influential musicians of the

20th century, like Maurice White and Booker T. Jones, attended Memphis schools. Although

many local public schools currently have thriving music programs, these stories and the

successes of Memphis music are glaringly absent from the curriculum.

As a result, local high school music programs propagate prominent, dominant cultural

narratives that favor Western classical music and teaching practices and adhere to generalized

academic standards that determine what constitutes "proper" and "serious" music. This is

certainly not an issue specific only to Memphis. Western classical music and teaching practices

are the standards for academic music in most public and private schools in the U.S. However,

Memphis music education exists in a unique space. There is a legacy of great music education

and great professional music. Since the rise of the music industry in the twentieth century, it has

become not merely a means of expression, but also a tool for economic mobility. Local music

continues to be clearly integral to the city's cultural, social, and economic fabric. The current

music scene is complex, as local hip hop artist Marco Pave explains, "[Current Memphis artists]

get overshadowed, and we're competing against the narrative that's, you know, like 60, 70 plus

years old. And contemporary musicians, whether they be hip hop or R&B or country, we really

don't get the contemporary narrative of the city" (personal interview, July 2017). I argue that it

would benefit Memphis students and the local music community to diversify music education

content and pedagogies in ways that leverage Memphis' musical legacies.

To begin this argument, I will first review music education philosophies in order to

establish a set of purposes for music education that will frame the rest of my paper. I will then

review teaching practices and philosophies that support the notion of a Memphis-centric

curriculum. These include: place-based education, popular music pedagogy, formal versus

informal teaching practices, and culturally relevant teaching. After a review of these pedagogies and practices, I will discuss the landscape of Memphis music education and its relationship to the community. Finally, I propose an outline for a Memphis-centric high school unit based on the mentioned academic literature and personal interviews with those involved with Memphis music education.

The Purpose of Music Education

In discussing music education experts and scholars often find it necessary to mention the purpose and goals of a music program. This signals that the arts are treated differently from subjects that some believe are more important to students' educational endeavors. Research on arts education often works to justify the importance of the arts based on its contribution to the learning of other subjects, like mathematics, science and history. While research on math, science, etc. does not require a justification at all, and especially not based on their contribution to an understanding of the arts (Bodilly & Augustine, 2008, p. 13). While feeling pressure to justify a purpose for music education may seem disheartening for music education advocates, the process of studying and establishing clear purposes lends itself to quality and focused music education philosophies.

The RAND paper *Revitalizing Arts Education Through Community-wide Coordination* (2008) outlines various perspectives regarding the goals for arts education, which are based mostly on academic literature: mastery, appreciation, integration, and well-being. One perspective argues that art students should master a particular art form. Emphasizing the creation of art, students should gain competence as a participant in that area of art (Bodilly & Augustine, 2008, p. 12). According to another perspective, the goal is to develop artistic appreciation and outlook. This may involve, but does not focus on, the creation of art.

Advocates for this view desire for students to refine perception, develop imagination and a capacity for wonder, and acquire a deep critical understanding. Some proponents for this perspective argue for the development of an "aesthetic worldview." This involves a deep exploration and understanding of specific works of art, stimulating cognition and imagination (Bodilly & Augustine, 2008, p. 12). Another perspective is derived from research that shows that arts education is related to achievement in other subjects, and thus, an integrated approach to arts education is best for students. This means arts teaching would be incorporated into other core subjects, like mathematics and history. Fusing arts teaching into other subject areas appeals to some administrators and educators, as they are forced to allocate more class time towards preparation for accountability-testing in core subjects. A fourth perspective postulates that arts learning should focus on the well-being of students. This view relieves upon research that states that arts learning can increase motivation, social development, self-confidence, and perseverance, and can reduce stress (Bodilly & Augustine, 2008, p. 12). Through studying public schools in Memphis, I have learned that schools tend to subscribe to the first two philosophies. Band, orchestra, choir, and other performance-based classes tend to have master as the primary focus. The general music class for students with no formal music training tends to focus on appreciation. Each of these philosophies may be included in a successful public curriculum, as they each lend themselves to the fulfillment of important arts education purposes.

Harvard Graduate School of Education Project Zero's report *The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education* (Hetland, Palmer, Seidal, Tishman, & Winner, 2009) examined what quality arts education is and how it can be produced. The authors summarized the core purposes of arts education based on interviews with arts education theorists, practitioners, and administrators. These core purposes are bulleted below:

- Foster broad dispositions and skills, especially the capacity to think creatively and the capacity to make connections.

- Teach artistic skills and techniques without making them primary.

- Develop aesthetic awareness.

- Provide ways of pursuing understanding of the world.

- Help students engage with community, civic, and social issues.

- Provide a venue for students to express themselves.

- Help students develop as individuals (Hetland et al., 2009, p. 17).

Of course, high quality arts programs tend serve several of these purposes at once. A high quality arts education is compound, engaging students on different levels and helping them learn through a variety of ways. The proposed integrated approach would not successfully coincide with other philosophies, as it does not provide sufficient time for mastery of an art form, nor a quality arts education. But an arts education *can* promote mastery, inspire arts appreciation, and improve life skills at once.

The RAND paper and the Project Zero report offer a broad and comprehensive understanding why arts education is important. For this paper, my goal is to extend some of the ideas put forth in the Project Zero and reports for music education specifically. My contributions will be grounded in a social justice framework. I employ the questions of "Whose musical image does the school curriculum reflect most strongly?" and "Who among our pupils sees music in school as a possibility for them?" (Wright, 2013, p. 33). Following these questions, I will examine the images (culture and tradition) that are included in music education, how this is related to access, and offer some alternatives that will ostensibly be more relevant and appealing to students in public schools. My ideas are influenced not only by the social justice framework

but also by the aforementioned music education philosophies, other music education advocacy literature, and interviews of Memphis music educators, practitioners, and administrators. I propose that a sufficient music education should have the following purposes:

a. **To provide access to music to all students.**

"Let us give music, the best we have, to all people." (Mark, 2008, p. 93).

This goal for music education primarily falls to policymakers, administrators, and teachers. While providing music may seem obvious, there are many ways in which access to quality music education can increased. For instance, this may be through providing more equipment and opportunities to students at a reduced or without cost. Additionally, designing a program that makes music accessible and inviting to students at all skill levels and from all backgrounds would also increase access. As mentioned, this may include diversifying narratives from the Western classical tradition. Despite some incorporation of culturally relevant content and culturally diverse content, the Western classical narrative primarily drives both content and pedagogy in most education programs.

b. **To provide students certain musical skills and knowledge.**

There are many different ideas about *what* set of skills and knowledge students should receive through their music education, and these skills are the subject of much debate in academic communities. However, there are many generally accepted skills and techniques that Western music educators consider essential to a student's proper musical understanding. These skills include the ability to read music, play an instrument (in a way that is technically correct), sing on pitch, etc. The development of skills tends to get the most focus from educators, as it takes repeated practice and instruction. However, other

goals are no less important and should be included in music practice. This requires intentionality from curriculum designers.

c. **To provide students with a pathway to opportunities, musical and otherwise.**

Music education can provide students with further educational opportunities by providing a pathway to college. In some cases, successful students may receive scholarships to play music. This is the pathway most primary education programs focus on. However, engagement in community music is another pathway to musical opportunity. Students may access opportunities outside of the classroom, such as performing, attending performances, participating in music camps or clubs, and creating their own music and music groups. Music education programs should encourage these alternate paths for students. In some cases, participating in community music can lead students to a career in the industry.

d. **To use music to aid in students' general education and development.**

There is a wide range of studies on the benefits music has on young people's cognitive development. "The power of music: Its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people" provides an overview of this research (Hallam, 2010). The participatory and creative nature of arts education benefits students in many ways. It can be a break from other core subjects, while continuing to stimulate and engage students. Many teachers believe that the practice of music develops desirable traits in students, especially discipline and focus. Music education should not exist to simply develop students' musical skills, but broader ones as well, especially the capacity to think creatively.

e. **To use music to expand and develop students' worldviews.**

Music education has the potential to make connections and create understanding that students otherwise do not have access to. This can take many different forms. It may, for instance, aid in developing an aesthetic worldview through an understanding of works of art (Bodilly and Augustine, 2008, p. 12). It should also help students engage with other ideas outside of a strictly musical environment by exploring an understanding of the contexts under which music is created, learned, performed, and enjoyed. Music education has the power to expand students' understanding of social and community issues and can contribute to the development of a critical worldview.

These goals, as discussed, can occur simultaneously, but some may require more focus and intention. In performance and competition based environments, skills and practice requires a great deal of attention. Thus, my ideas attenuate this goal to some extent, in hopes of redirecting attention to other benefits of music education. In the following sections, I present certain theories and pedagogies that contribute to these goals.

Teaching Practices and Philosophies

In this section, particular pedagogies for arts and music education are explored. These pedagogies are essential for a music curriculum that takes space and place into account. The later Memphis-centric unit incorporates various aspects of these practices.

Place-based Education

Place and community based teaching is an approach that connects the local environment to what students do and learn in the classroom through civic education, contextual education, service and workplace learning, and more (Smith & Sobel, 2010, p. 21). This approach explores how learning can be rooted in the unique history, culture, and economy of a particular place. It

allows students to connect to their community and helps prepare them to participate in "real world" problem-solving. This educational philosophy encourages individual thinking and civic engagement, leading proponents to claim that it may balance (or even oppose) standards- and testing-based education. This active learning encourages students to see themselves as "actors and creators rather than observers and consumers" (Smith & Sobel, 2010, p. viii). Place and community based learning may be a reciprocal relationship. Communities benefit as students engage in service opportunities and continue to invest themselves in that place following graduation. Likewise, this involvement provides students with valuable experience and opportunities for future community relationships and careers.

Place and community based education fits easily into a music and arts education landscape (especially in Memphis). Smith and Sobel (2010) describe an approach for this type of learning that requires an initial knowledge of the local. This approach encourages students and educators to understand local culture, the natural and social environment, and the economic possibilities of the community before designing curricula or outreach projects. This is contrasted with approaches that start with the traditional disciplines and find ways to incorporate their teachings into the local environment. Beginning with local knowledge and issues could be highly effective in Memphis because the city provides a rich musical culture from the twentieth century onward, which is intrinsically linked to the city's economy and social issues. Students would elucidate social and economic understanding that incorporates music but also goes beyond it. They would also gain an appreciation for local culture and opportunities for musical growth.

There are many other benefits of place based teaching. It "gives students a reason to invest themselves in learning, and communities a reason to support their schools" (Smith & Sobel, 2010, p. 42) Learning about local culture develops both an individual and a collective

identity. Additionally, an understanding of the social environment and economic possibilities in any community allows students to understand the opportunities that exist for them and how they might create new opportunities for themselves and others. Place-based music education would provide opportunities for musical advancement outside of a traditional, formalized music education. Students may find ways to experiment and perform and to find jobs.

Popular Music Pedagogy and Formal versus Informal Teaching Practices

Since the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) sponsored Tanglewood Symposium in 1968, popular music formally entered the world of music education: "The musical reparatory should be expanded to involve the music of our time in its rich variety, including currently popular teenage music and avant-garde music" (Choate, 1968, p. 139). This declaration from the conference did inspire music educators to diversify their curricula. Though more recently, the topic of popular music has garnered attention from music education theorists and practitioners. Mantie theorizes this was initiated by the publication of Lucy Green's *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education* in 2001 (2013, p. 335).

This scholarship often includes discussions of "formal" versus "informal" teaching and learning. Formal music education is described as the systems mostly based on western models common to education institutions including public schools and conservatories. It involves the teaching of instrumental and vocal music with written curricula, syllabuses, and explicit teaching methods; professional teachers and lecturers; assessment mechanisms; a variety of qualifications such as diplomas and degrees; music notation; and a body of literature that includes texts on music, pedagogical texts, and teaching materials (Green, 2013, p. 4). Strauss described it as out of context, outside the realm of everyday life (1984, p. 195). Green notes that this is derived from Western classical music pedagogy. Informal music education, on the other hand, refers to

the various approaches that popular musicians learn outside of formal education institutions. This may be interacting with family and friends, observing performances, and self-teaching (Green, 2013, p. 5).

Mantie conducted a study comparing popular music pedagogy (PMP) discourses by American scholars to PMP discourses by other scholars (primarily European) through a content analysis of published articles. The author intended to better understand music education practices in general and especially in the United States. The results showed that American PMP literature focuses on issues of "legitimacy and quality," and emphasizes especially the quality of the repertoire and teachers. Non-American PMP studies tend to focus on "utility and efficacy." (Mantie, 2013). The emphasis in U.K., Australian, and Scandinavian articles was on how best to study popular music in the classroom without rationalizing the use of popular music in a formal education setting (Mantie 2013, p. 342).   An American scholar wrote "Western Classical Music and General Education" in defense of Western classical music as the focus of formal education systems, epitomizing Mantie's scholarship (Jorgenson, 2003). I hope to convey the importance and quality of PMP in studying its utility.

One author describes her use of popular music in the classroom as "similar to giving a child candy. You know it's not good for them, but once in a while [it] won't hurt them too much" (Jaffurs, 2004, p. 195). When popular music content is incorporated into the classroom, it often still taught through formal practices. That is, it will be taught just like a classical piece, following a specific arrangement or to teach musical elements, such as differences in tonality (Jaffurs, 2004, p. 195). A teacher I spoke to seemed to confirm this:

If you're going to thrive with teenagers, you've got to have a hook…They love that

[traditional, classical] stuff, but at the same time somewhere in the midst of all of that

meticulous study they need something that they can kind of relate to. So yeah you

integrate pop, rock, hip-hop as much as you can. Stuff that's still education, that you can

use to teach (Ronald Wilson, personal interview, 2017).

Strictly formal teaching may not promote musicality as much as it could. Small notes that

formal teaching tends to promote the idea that "Our music (which may be classical music,

marching band music, show band music, choral music, or big band jazz but rarely improvised or

self-composed music, which is difficult to control) is the only *real* music" (1998, p. 212).   This

implies that if one dislikes or is not able to play this music, one is not musical.

Green notes how the classroom can affect students' views of music. The author uses the

terms "inherent" and "delineated" to describe two different meanings of music. While these two

meaning may not be separated in practice, they provide a theoretical conceptualization for how

we experience and understand music. Inherent musical meaning is the way that materials in

music, like sounds and silences, are patterned in relation to each other devoid of context outside

of the music. Delineated meaning, on the other hand refers to the connotations that music carries

outside of the music itself, such as its social, cultural, religious, political or other such

associations (Green, 2006, p. 102). The introduction of popular music without changing teaching

strategies changes the delineation of that music for students. That is, popular music taught with

classical pedagogies changes the context of that music to simply be "school" music.

Popular music is traditionally created and learned in an informal setting; some musicians

gain skills without the educational component. The idea that music is created without the

constrains of formal conventions, that it is developed through an authentic and natural process of

feeling an expression is a part of many musical traditions, such as rock, reggae, and hip hop. The

transmittance of knowledge in these traditions is greatly different from the way classical music

skills have been acquired and shared (Green, 2006, p. 106). So, what is the role, the purpose of incorporating informal, popular music into a formal classroom setting? It is to incorporate different student narratives in what is considered to be relevant and important to music and culture. Through changing educational pedagogies to include students' own narratives, formal music education extends musical possibilities to those who do not traditionally have access to musical teaching (Wright, 2013). Incorporating PMP into a formal, rigorous, classically based program may build bridges between the personal musical narrative and the narrative that the program promotes as important.

It is necessary that popular music is taught in an authentic (or nearly authentic) way for students to benefit from its incorporation in a formal setting. Incorporating popular music without a change in teaching strategies, creates a "ghost of popular music," but not popular music itself, and a positive delineated and inherent musical experience is lost (Green, 2006, p. 107). Informal teaching offers a new opportunity to promote musicality in students through a greater focus on creation and music-making, rather than performance or final product.   It is also worth noting the shift in the way in which popular musicians are learning, creating, and sharing. A Shelby County Schools fine arts advisor notes that much has changed for musical communities since the influx of cloud-based sharing (Dru Davison, personal interview, July 2017). The role that technology has taken for popular musicians has made sharing and collaborating easier in many ways. As popular music and its methods shift, PMP should shift as well. I later discuss a Memphis-centric curriculum the implementation processes that PMP can take. Much of this is derived from essential literature by scholars like Green, but it also reflects the changing nature of popular musicianship as well.

Culturally Relevant Teaching

Culturally relevant teaching attempts to develop a closer fit between students' home culture and what they experience at school (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 159). Many culturally relevant teaching studies focus specifically on language and speech. Additionally, there is a major body of culturally relevant teaching literature that focuses on the experiences of African American students. This body of literature is especially relevant, as Memphis' population is 63.3% Black or African American and 89% of Shelby County Schools students are African American (Census Bureau, 2010).   Ladson-Billings, a prominent culturally relevant pedagogy theorist, defines culturally relevant teaching as a pedagogy of opposition that is committed to collective empowerment (1995a, p. 160). A successful use of this pedagogy requires students to experience academic success, develop and/or maintain cultural competence, and develop a critical framework which can be used to challenge social structures (1995b, p. 160).

Some related teaching methods are referenced as culturally "compatible" or "responsive." However, these often suggest that student success is achieved through the existing social structures. Under these ideas, the goal of education becomes how to fit students viewed as "other" or "different" (based upon constructions such as race/ethnicity, language, or social/economic class) into the existing hierarchal structure that does not act as the meritocracy that it presents itself to be (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 476). This suggests the need to accommodate student culture into what is considered mainstream. Instead, educational settings should *reflect* students' cultural narratives under culturally relevant pedagogy. This allows more students to achieve at higher levels and develops the critical consciousness students need to challenge inequities that schools and other institutions perpetuate (Ladson-Billings, 1995b. p. 469).

This framework requires administrators and educators to question not only how to create student success, but also how to define student success. Applying these ideas and questions to music education is essential. Public music education has collectively made efforts towards diversifying its musical curriculum. Former music teacher and community advocate Daniel Henderson mentioned examples of successful culturally relevant programming within the Memphis schools, referencing schools with large latinx populations using mariachi music and schools with large African American populations having gospel choirs and the Black marching band style used by historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) (personal interview, 2017). However, American formal music education continues to be based most closely on the European classical and conservatory model, through both teaching and content. Performances, competitions, and pathways for advancement tend to follow this model. This certainly does not invoke culturally relevant teaching following Ladson-Billing's model. It perpetuates a singular pathway for student success within an academic setting.

Memphis Music Education

Memphis Musical Narratives

"I think music education and art education in any place is actually almost like a microcosm of the socioeconomic, geopolitical, race environment in which it is situated" (Daniel Henderson, personal interview, 2017). Through studying the civic and social environment in which Memphis music education was distilled, one can develop a greater understanding of the current situation of music in schools. It is necessary, too, to understand contrasting narratives that exist throughout the space of the city. As education propagates narratives, it is worth understanding *which* narratives it propagates most strongly. Additionally, music and arts

education should be intrinsically linked with community music and arts, more so than other core subjects. This is because of the arts ability to entertain, allowing them penetrate aspects of students' lives outside of a formalized educational setting. This may be through informal arts learning that naturally takes place between families and friends, or through community arts institutions which provide opportunities for young people to participate and observe the arts.

One musical narrative, church music, has especially strong ties to schools. As much of American music education originated in churches—Memphis is no different. Music programs in schools are often an extension of faith-based communities in the city, especially for the choral tradition (Dru Davison, personal interview, July 2017). A SCS choir director, who himself has a church background, states,

> The truth of the matter is the choirs around here are really strong because of the churches and singing in the church choir. [Students] come with these amazing ears that they can hear all of these amazing harmonies… [Students] come with those skills because of their gospel background (Ronald Wilson, Personal Interview, June 2017).

Some Memphis schools have their own gospel choir groups, a clear indication of this continued tradition.

Another musical narrative is that derived from the European tradition beginning with the migratory patterns of European settlers off of the Mississippi River (Daniel Henderson, personal interview, June 2017). These is where the conservatory model started. In the 1880s-90s, the Beethoven Club was created as a club young pianists. The club continues today in its pursuit of enjoying and supporting classical music. A functioning outgrowth of this cultural narrative exists in an even greater scale with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra and Choir. This narrative of

European and Western classical music and the conservatory model is reflected strongly in public schools' curricula.

Specifically within *educational* history, the Orff Program is a strong narrative in Memphis. Lynne Turley, a music teacher at Lincoln Elementary school, spearheaded the Orff program, a way of teaching young people music in Memphis (Daniel Henderson, personal communication, 2017). This music education philosophy was designed for young students with the intention of fostering children's natural creativity through play. It involves imitation, experimentation, and personal expression for learning music at an early age. The Orff programs continues to be alive and strong in the Shelby County elementary schools.

Returning to music narratives in the city outside of education, one of the strongest is the popular music that emerged from Memphis throughout the twentieth century, including blues, soul, rock, and jazz music in particular. This tends to be the most common narrative that people know about when they think about Memphis music. Studios like Stax and Sun, and artists, like Elvis and Isaac Hayes, were part of the rise of a thriving music industry in Memphis. Some of these artists learned and practiced in Memphis public high schools. "According to Stax, there [were] neighborhood kids who just came and played; they learned in church" and would go on to play professionally (Daniel Henderson, personal interview, June 2017). The city often uses the popularity of this music to market itself to visitors and tourists. And of course, the differing genres that were popular among Memphis artists have unique and interesting origins. And along with this, there are other unique Memphis musical narratives emanating from communities throughout the city beyond those mentioned above. Those included were most commonly referenced by music educators and advocates for music education throughout the city. As a Memphis-centric unit would invite students to share their own musical narratives, not only those

commonly understood, new traditions will find their way into public schools and the consciousness of the city.

Shifting Narratives

The narratives above continue to be shared in Memphis through a variety of ways. Communities continue exist within churches and other faith-based organizations, and occasionally other cultural institutions like community centers. (Dru Davison, personal interview, 2017). However, studying the city shows the way in which Memphis musical narratives have changed. This is often related to generational changes and to community changes. First, the dissolution of neighborhood schools due to educational reforms and increase of school choice has changed the way that communities have formed. The relationships between schools and their communities may be less strong. Second, the changes in popular music creation and sharing has also contributed to a shift in the musical community. The introduction of technology and different community environments have changed the way musicians in the community work and the way in which the larger musical community relates to music education.

As musical communities change, so have genres. Hip hop artist Marco Pave speaks to the development of the genre: "[Sampling] is how hip hop was created. We didn't have the instruments and we didn't have the resources pay for a band or do all of this, so sampling became the art form" (personal interview, July 2017). This is not the only artistic element of hip hop, but this music exists alongside and because of the introduction of technology in music. And though rap and hip hop are often not promoted as much as other genres, they greatly contribute to the musical narrative of the city. In fact, I would argue these artists are responsible for Memphis continuing to be known as a music city. Community historian and activist Ron Heard explains, "Memphis music, rap music has a distinctive sound. You listen to three Six Mafia, they

have a distinctive sound…I think that's like Jimmie Lunceford too; he had a sound… you could easily recognize it. There's something about it" (personal interview, June 2017). Heard connects Memphis hip hop to Memphis jazz of the 20s and 30s. This connection can be strengthened by the way in which Memphis artists create new styles. For instance, Lunceford was using a two-beat rhythm while most swing groups were doing 4/4. Because the two-beat was different and very danceable, many other band leaders attempted to use that sound (to the point of paying Lunceford's chief arranger Sy Oliver $5000 a year during the depression era to replicate his sound) (Ron Heard, personal interview, 2017). "Memphis already had this distinctive thing. This is before Stax and all of that; before Sun. This is happening in the twenties" (Heard, personal interview, 2017).

In the more current narrative, Memphis hip hop artists are innovating and developing new styles. Though Atlanta is often credited with developing the style of crunk, its origins are in Memphis rap (Ron Heard, personal interview, 2017). Another example of this is jooking, a style of dance originated from Memphis. Lil Buck brought this style of dance into the mainstream by gaining popular on the Internet and eventually being featured in in large performances and on television. "He became the king of the jook dancers. But Memphis had been doing that stuff for decades" (Heard, 2017). Like the jazz narrative in the twenties, hip hop is one that is developed a distinct Memphis style.

There are certainly many other music narratives in Memphis and they are much more complex than this limited discussion. Yet it is clear that there *are* these distinct narratives, and the tensions between them are prominent. Some of these narratives exist much more distinctly in the formal music education system—the Orff program and the European classical conservatory model. Some, like church music, find themselves intrinsically linked to music within schools.

The popular music of the 20th century has a limited involvement in Memphis' music education.

Though there is the Stax Academy and Soulsville Charter School built upon the legacies of rock

and soul music and artists like Booker T. Jones and Otis Redding, this popular music is not

integrated into Shelby County Schools curricula. There are many overlooked narratives that are

essential to understanding what Memphis music is and what it means to different communities

within city. This was echoed in my interview with Daniel Henderson, "for communities of

affluence, the arts are a tool of leisure, but for communities who have particularly precarious

circumstances, the arts are a tool of world making" (July 2017). Communities that use music as

a tool of world making find their sounds often overlooked. By adding these sounds in an

educational environment, schools may reflect all students' narratives, portraying their importance

and power.

The Current Landscape

Through my research, I was given the opportunity to speak with music teachers and

administrators who have some formal experience with the public music education system. I also

spoke with community members with a special interest in music education and community

music, including Memphis artists who attended Memphis public schools. And I spoke some

individuals involved with community-based efforts to improve and support the Memphis public

music education system. Each person had a unique and interesting perspective on Memphis

music education, but all spoke to the incredible potential that a community like Memphis

possesses to foster artistic talent at a student level. Because Memphis is famed for being a

"music city," stemming from legacies of blues, soul, rock, and jazz music, there is a range of

organizations, businesses, and individuals with special interests in cultivating the music industry

and promoting young talent. The legacies of Stax, Sun Studios, Elvis, and other notable entities

have created a historical collective identity that has been imposed on the city. Current artists often feel like they are competing against these historical legacies to create a new, contemporary narrative of Memphis music. Yet there are ways of recognizing the historical legacies of Memphis in ways that cultivate a rich future for Memphis music starting with its music education.

Advocates for music education in Memphis face the many common challenges for American music education in general. As discussed previously, arts education is often forced to justify its importance, while other core subjects do not. Traditional formalized music in schools is expensive. A Western classical and performance-based education requires qualified instructors, instruments and uniforms, transportation to performances and competitions, etc. Public schools often struggle to finance all that is required to have a successful music program. A former music teacher said, "In order for you to have a really thriving program, you really need some help" (Daniel Henderson, personal interview, July 2017). He referenced the need for financial and temporal support from parents to make a music program successful. Memphis has a poverty rate above the national average, making it especially difficult for some schools to develop thriving programs (Delavega, 2016). Shelby County Schools provides instruments to those who need them, but some teachers still expressed difficulties with funding field trips, especially transportation costs. There are true inequities within the SCS system. Schools with smaller enrollments are unable to provide as many arts opportunities to students, simply because of hiring restraints (Dru Davison, personal interview, June 2017). Administrative support is very important for a successful program, as two teachers I spoke to were grateful for a principal that cared deeply about arts education and providing opportunities in the arts to students (Ronald Wilson, June 2017; Sheryl Lane, June 2017).

Another structural issue, again not unique to Memphis, is what arts administrator Dr. Dru Davison described as a "transient nature of stakeholders" (Davison, 2017). As with many urban areas, the Memphis population shifts constantly, meaning that arts teachers and administrators often do not stay in one position for long periods of time. Additionally, as the general population shifts, students do as well. This makes it difficult to provide stable and consistent music programs, which, Dr. Davison says, is necessary for success (June 2017). Shifting populations are simply the nature of urban areas which tend to have an abundance of reform efforts, school choice, and poverty.

Despite these challenges, some believe that the "music city" narrative allows for more community support for music education. "We're really fortunate in the Memphis area because we have Elvis, and we have blues, and we have Beale Street, and we have Sun Studio…In Memphis, there's a really strong support system for music education" (Sheryl Lane, personal interview, 2017). Many arts organizations in Memphis do work with schools to create opportunities for students. A few of these include the Memphis Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, performing arts theaters like the Orpheum Theatre and Theatre Memphis, and even some that incorporate technology and creativity like Cloud901 at the Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library. Memphis Music Initiative is helping directly at the source by sending fellows, all Memphis artists, to help with in-school music programs and to provide field trip opportunities to community music performances. The aid of outside organizations has become necessary as schools require more assistance to provide opportunities to students. These places may become cultural centers for students that promote narratives, just as schools do. Still, many lament the inability of both quality public music education and community opportunities to sufficiently reach all Memphis students.

Memphis Music in the Classroom

"Not necessarily about remembering history but recreating something, like resurrecting

something, an idea" (Ron Heard, personal interview, 2017).

While there are many thriving musical programs in Memphis and a number of

community connections, the rich musical legacies in Memphis are not being used in schools to

their full potential. In particular, there is a lack of Memphis music, both past and present, in

music curricula. SCS Fine Arts Advisor stated that the schools and teachers have the flexibility

to embed the material from local cultural institutions like the Rock and Soul Museum, the Blues

Foundation, and the Stax Museum (Dru Davison, personal communication, June 2017). But

when asked about their use of Memphis music and contemporary music in schools, current and

former teachers could offer examples tended to describe this music as used on special occasions,

for special performances, and taught in the same way as any other performance piece (Sheryl

Lane, June 2017; Demetrius Robinson, June 2017; Ronald Wilson, June 2017). Teachers were,

however, committed a rigorous, prescribed performance-based system that may not lend itself to

change. SCS offers a "General Music" course which is intended to satisfy the state fine arts

requirement and is for students that are not involved with a musical ensemble, such as band and

choir (Shelby County Schools, 2015a). Performance-based courses require the majority of

instruction time to be devoted to technique development and learning individual pieces, whereas,

a general music course may be a logical place for a Memphis-centric unit to exist. That is not to

say that more experienced students, like those in band and choir, would not benefit from this

curriculum as well, because they would. Additionally, SCS also offers a "Contemporary Music History" course (Shelby County Schools, 2015b). This course is only offered in a few schools, but include some ideas for content that I will mention, such as technology in music and Memphis music history (specifically, historic radio stations like WDIA and WLOK) (Shelby County Schools, 2015b). The general music course does not include technology or local music history in its aim to introduce otherwise inexperienced students to the components of academic music, such as notation and language (Shelby County Schools, 2015a). The incorporation of Memphis music legacies would be beneficial for Memphis students and for Memphis community music. The remainder of this paper will focus on how a Memphis-centric unit could be used to supplement extant music education programming.

I propose that popular music pedagogy and informal learning, place-based learning, and culturally relevant music may coalesce into a successful Memphis-centric unit. While it is true that these Memphis music could constitute a full course, it is my hope that music teachers explore the different options and choose what best fits their teaching preferences, their resources, and their student population. These ideas all focus on my proposed purposes of music education, framed by the intention of creating a music curriculum that reflects students' own narratives and increases access to musical education and musical opportunities. The proposed unit includes learning objectives, learning outcomes (goals for student learning), and there are a few examples of sample lessons that may be used to achieve a few of these objectives. I hope this unit may provide a starting point for teachers in including more local music and more culturally relevant teaching into their programming.

A Memphis-centric Unit

Learning objective 1: *Students will explore the history of Memphis blues, rock, soul, jazz, and gospel music.*

Description: The aim of this learning objective is to include historic culturally relevant narratives in the curricula. The various outcomes of this should promote musical learning and understanding, as well as a social consciousness. This objective employs the idea of using culturally relevant pedagogy. The use of historical narratives can be used for students to develop connections between community, school, and their "own" music. This objective requires the selection of certain musical selections for study. Local music institutions (examples are provided under resources) may be helpful in selecting what music to include. This goal aim to focus on the specific genres above, based on their prominence in Memphis music of the twentieth century. Other styles of music that teachers find relevant may also be included. Specific musicians to include may be Elvis Presley, B.B. King, Stax musicians (such as Isaac Hayes, Booker T. and the M.G.'s, and the Bar-Kays), Phineas Newborn Jr., etc. However, under culturally relevant pedagogy, the best practice would be to ask students to incorporate their own narratives (as found in the sample lesson).

Resources:

Memphis Rock n Soul Museum https://www.memphisrocknsoul.org/

Stax Museum http://staxmuseum.com/

Blues Foundation https://blues.org/

Student learning outcomes:

a. Respond and identify:

   a. Students should be able to identify the musical components of selected Memphis music (categorized by genre and/or specific artist).

   b. Students should be able to analyze selected music by defining and classifying music styles.

b. Understand and connect:

      a.   Students should be able to articulate an understanding of the ways in which culture has influenced the development of selected Memphis music (categorized by genre and/or specific artist).

      b.   Students should be able to articulate an understanding of the role of music in the Memphis community by studying the development of music styles.

c. Practice and create:

      a.   Students should be able to incorporate elements of Memphis music into their music practice though activities such as replication, composition, and improvisation.[1]

Sample Lesson[2]: Students should ask someone in their community between the age of 30-40 and someone between 50-60 about what Memphis artist they listened to when they were the student's age. Students should bring the name of a song by that artist and the teacher will make those songs available to the class. This lesson focuses on students with limited musical training. Students will conduct individual research and develop a classroom presentation on their artist and song. These questions will lead the project:

- Where in Memphis did this artist grow up?
- Where was the song recorded?
- How would you describe the style of music? What other artists recorded in that same style? Was this style original to Memphis artists? If not, where did it originate?
- What is this song about? Does it make any connections to Memphis?
- What does this song say about the time it was recorded?
- How does this music differ from what you listen to now? Explain.

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[1] The specifics of this learning outcome rely upon what musical skill and experience a student has already learned. Students in a more advanced setting may be able to improvise melodies and rhythms on a selected instrument or vocals in the selected style. Less advanced students may work to replicate rhythms and sounds. Discussions on learning methods and assessment will include options for scaling objectives related to practice and creation.

[2] This lesson may incorporate other genres by asking students to bring music. Students should simply be able to make connections to the genres mentioned.

Learning objective 2: *Students will explore the history of Memphis rap and hip hop.*

Description: Like the previous, this goal intends to include culturally relevant and place-based narratives in the curricula. The various outcomes of this should promote musical learning and understanding, as well as a social consciousness. This objective employs the idea of using culturally relevant pedagogy. The use of local narratives can be used for students to develop connections between community, school, and their "own" music. This objective requires the selection of certain musical selections for study. The intention is to focus on Southern Rap and Memphis Rap that began in the 1980s and 90s. Specific musicians to include may be include Project Pat, Three 6 Mafia and Juicy J, Frayser Boy, Yo Gotti, Lil Wyte, and La Chat, 8ball & MJG, Drumma Boy, Gangsta Boo, etc.

Resources[3]:

Dirty Decade: Rap Music and the U.S. South, 1997-2007 (Matt Miller, Emory University)

https://web.archive.org/web/20100918045732/http://www.southernspaces.org/2008/dirty-decade-rap-music-and-us-south-1997-2007

Student learning outcomes:

a. Respond and identify:

    a. Students should be able to identify and analyze the musical components of selected music.

b. Understand and connect:

    a. Students should be able to articulate an understanding of the ways in which culture and place have influenced the development of selected music.

    b. Students should be able to articulate an understanding of the role of music in the Memphis community by studying the development of Memphis rap and hip hop.

c. Practice and create:

    a. Students should be able to incorporate elements of Memphis rap and hip hop into their music practices through replication, composition, and improvisation.

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[3] Educators may struggle to find extensive resources for this objective. As a more recent style, there are not official online databases or cultural institutions dedicated to Memphis rap and hip hop.

Learning objective 3: *Students will explore the business of music through studying the Memphis music industry.*

Description: The aim of objective is for students to understand the music industry, especially that in Memphis. The outcomes of this goal should promote an economic and social understanding of the music industry. Additionally, this objective aims to demonstrate to students what career opportunities are available in the music industry. Thus it involves the exploration of skills and specific careers such as recording and production, sound engineering, marketing and business, and design. Students should study both the history of the Memphis music industry and the current industry. Referencing labels and studios may aid in this study. Historic institutions to study include Stax Records, Sun Studios, Ardent Studios, and Royal Studios (both Ardent and Royal continue to be working studios, but were prominent in the mid- to late-twentieth century). Other working studios and labels include Unapologetic, Blue Barrel Records, Archer Records, Music + Arts, and Young Avenue Sound.

Resources:

Memphis Music Industry Guide http://memphismusicindustry.com/

Ardent Studios https://www.ardentstudios.com/

Young Avenue Sound http://www.youngavenuesound.com/gallery/

Music + Arts, Blue Barrel Records, and Archer Records https://archer-records.com/collections/store

Student learning outcomes:

   a. Respond and Identify:
      a. Students should be able to identify skills and careers associated with the music industry.
   b. Understand and Connect:
      a. Students should be able to articulate an understanding of the relationship between economic and social conditions and the music business.

Learning objective 4: *Students will explore the relationship between technology and music.*

Description: The aim of objective is for students to understand the music industry, especially that in Memphis. The outcomes of this goal should promote an economic and social

understanding of the music industry. Additionally, this objective aims to demonstrate to students what career opportunities are available in the music industry. Thus it involves the exploration of skills and specific careers such as recording and production, sound engineering, marketing and business, and design. Students should study both the history of the Memphis music industry and the current industry. Referencing labels and studios may aid in this study. Historic institutions to study include Stax Records, Sun Studios, Ardent Studios, and Royal Studios (both Ardent and Royal continue to be working studios, but were prominent in the mid- to late-twentieth century). Other working studios and labels include Unapologetic, Blue Barrel Records, Archer Records, Music + Arts, and Young Avenue Sound.

Resources:

Audacity

Garage Band

Cloud901 at Benjamin L. Hooks Public Library http://www.memphislibrary.org/cloud901/

Student learning outcomes:

    a.   Respond and Identify:

        a. Students should be able to identify the basic functions of music technology.

    b. Understand and Connect:

        a. Students should be able to articulate an understanding of the functions of technology in music.

    c. Practice and Create:

        a. Students should incorporate the use of music technology, such as Audacity and Garage Band, into their musical practice through replication, sampling, and composition.

Learning objective 5: *Students will explore current community music.*

Description: This objective aims to promote a connection to and appreciation for the current musical community in Memphis. This goal intends to include culturally relevant and place-based narratives in the curricula and thus promote social consciousness. Like other mentioned objectives for the incorporation of Memphis music, the use of local narratives can be used for students to develop connections between community, school, and their "own" music. Additionally, this goal may combine easily with the study of music business and/or popular

music (incorporated in the next goal). This objective does not focus on one genre. Rather, it aims to incorporate varied musical narratives found throughout the city. Some working Memphis artists that may be referenced include Marco Pavé, Preauxx, Cities Aviv, the North Mississippi Allstars, Valerie June, Lucero, etc. This is certainly not a complete list of current Memphis artists or narratives. It may be helpful to ask students what community music they have listened to.

Resources:

Memphis Music Industry Guide http://memphismusicindustry.com/

Student learning outcomes:

    d.   Respond and identify:

           a.   Students should be able to identify and analyze the musical components of selected music.

    e.   Understand and connect:

           a.   Students should be able to articulate an understanding of the ways in which culture and place have influenced the development of different styles of current music.

           b.   Students should be able to articulate an understanding of the role of music in the Memphis community.

           c.   Students should be able to connect selected music to the history of Memphis music studied in previous objectives.

           d.   Students should be able to connect selected music to music business learning objectives.

Learning objective 6: *Students will explore the creative processes of popular musicians.*
Description: The aim of objective is for students to explore new creative processes. As discussed in the body of my paper, popular musicians tend to learn through informal processes (self-teaching, playing with friends and family, watching performances, etc.). By definition, music in schools is considered formal. However, under this objective, students will aim to practice music in ways that popular musicians often learn. This goal explicitly focuses on

musical process and aims to stray away from performance-based teaching, and it may be particularly useful to students with more musical and technical experience.

Resources:

Audacity

Garage Band

Student learning outcomes:

    a. Understand and Connect:

        a. Students should be able to connect Memphis music studied under other objectives to this process of music creation

    b. Practice and Create:

        a. Students should create through the use of selected instruments and vocals.

        b. Students should create through the use of music technology, such as Audacity and Garage Band, replication, sampling, and composition.

Sample Lesson: Students should ask someone in their community between the age of 30-40 about what popular artist they listened to when they were the students age. Students should bring the name of a song by that artist and a song by an artist that they enjoy listening to. The teacher will make those songs available to students. This lesson is aimed at students with musical training. Students will form groups of 4-6 and a teacher will help them select a song from the older community members and a song from those that students enjoy. The group will then listen to the songs together and identify and discuss its musical elements and its musical style. Students should observe changes in the sounds of the music and identify connections. Students will then practice using preferred instruments (may be vocals or electronic tools) to mimic and practice that song. Successful students may also add their own sounds and improvisations to the songs.

Conclusion

        Through studying Memphis music in the classroom, students will be able to connect more strongly to a music education that reflects narratives of space and place with which they are familiar. "I have seen what can happen when a young person goes and identifies and thinks 'I want to do that'" (Taylor Brighton, personal interview, July 2017). In a musically rich

community, there is an abundance of connections that students may make. The inclusion of these musical traditions uses culturally based teaching through place-based lessons. Not only is this important for the classroom, but it connects students outside of that space, to the wider community. And by inserting new narratives into the educational setting, it creates more opportunities for more students by making music feel accessible. The stories of local music are found throughout the city, but are not a focus in the place where, arguably, it matters the most. Studying Memphis music in a variety of ways grants students with the opportunity to not only understand local history, but also to participate in their own community.

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