

Student Interview Transcription - November 2nd, 2016

Student 1: Ethan Sweitzer

Student 2: Max Witvoet

Interviewer: Aidan Witvoet

Interview 1

Aidan: What role does music play in your life?

Ethan: Well, I'm someone who really needs music on all the time to function. My family is the same way. We always have a radio playing somewhere in the house, or at night I'll put the radio on my phone. Its just a nice way for me to relax and cool down after a hard day or something.

Aidan: Yeah, so you listen to music recreationally for the most part.

Ethan: Yeah, recreationally.

Aidan: In terms of music classes in school, like if you can think back to your music classes from school, do you think that they helped support what you want to do with music?

Ethan: Yeah, I mean, I used to drum when I was younger, and I was in a quote-on-quote "band" with my best friends John and Will. And, if we had music class we would always try out some new green day song or other rock... I mean we were a 'rock' band when we were eight [laughs]. But yeah it was always kind of fun, we came together stronger as friends from that.

Interview 2

Aidan: What role does music play in your life right now?

Max: Whenever I listen to music, it either helps me focus, or it's while I'm doing school work or maybe playing video games. It blocks out all the other noise, and just makes it so [that] I can focus without other talking to me or without getting yelled at by my parents. It helps me focus while doing anything basically.

Aidan: So you use it like a focus tool.

Max: Yeah, and it makes it more fun.

Aidan: If you think back to the music classes that you've had at school, has what you've learned in those classes helped you in any way, or helped support what you want to do?

Max: It hasn't really supported what I want to do, because I either want to be a mechanical engineer, be a BMX-er, or like do something with Youtube. It might help me if I'm like making a song for me to listen to, or just for fun. But other than that it hasn't really helped me, because it's been in the way, because none of my music teachers liked me.

Aidan: But has there been anything that you've learned from music classes that has helped you? In any way?

Max: Well, sorta... It's helped me in the way to respect it (music) a little more, and I'm excited for high school music classes where I'll get to learn more about Beethoven, and, or maybe other [composers].

Aidan: And maybe more about the instruments themselves too right?

Max: Yeah. Because in grade school you just learn to play the recorder, and it kind of gets in the way.

Reflection

For this student interview assignment, I interviewed Ethan Sweitzer and Max Witvoet. I learned a great deal from this experience, as it really sheds some light on what students actually get out of music education at the elementary school level.

In my first interview with Ethan Sweitzer, I learned that his primary connection to music in his day-to-day life is recreational use. He uses music to destress and calm down after a busy day. He also mentioned that he doesn't necessarily take the time to sit down and just listen to music, but it's always playing in the background at home. In terms of what he felt music classes did for him, Ethan felt that it created a better connection between him and his friends. This social aspect of music education really shines through here, and it is made evident that his music teachers must have made a focus on group interaction and creative aspects.

In my second interview with Max Witvoet, I learned that his primary connection with music in his day-to-day life, was also for recreational purposes. Max emphasized that he uses music to focus, and also as an escape from other things that may be going on in his life. When asked about whether or not music classes have supported what he wants to do, or has taught him anything useful, he was reluctant to say that it had. Max felt as though he hadn't got much out of his music classes. Although he did recognize that he had gained a respect for music and what goes into the process of creating and performing it.

In an all-inclusive analysis of both interviews, I can conclude that music education for these students has been a varying experience. Ethan, on the one hand, really appreciated the group aspect that dealt with social connection. On the other hand, Max felt the most significant takeaway was the strengthening of his appreciation of music. I also found it intriguing how both

Ethan and Max experienced music in their daily lives, mainly in recreational settings. Neither of them showed an interest in PRODUCING music at this point in their lives. Of course, Ethan had mentioned that he had been in a “band” when he was younger, but neither of them felt that the ‘creating’ aspect of music was important in their lives. Personally, I love the creative aspect, because it is both interesting, AND relaxing to me to sit at a piano and produce music. Both of these interviews have inspired me to become a music educator that really makes a connection with their students, and makes an overall effort to highlight all aspects of the musical world. I have learned how important it is to touch on each area of music in the classroom. Unfortunately, like the music teachers both Ethan and Max had, it seems as though they had focused on certain aspects over others. I aim to be different, and teach with a holistic view of music in my future of music education.