

Centering Essential Goodness: A Review of *Music, Higher Education, and Society*

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Book Reviewed: Myers, D. E. (2025). *Music, higher education, and society: Leading change through music's essential goodness*. Routledge.

Abstract

Myers, in his monograph *Music, Higher Education, and Society* (2025), examines the challenges facing Western classical music performers and organizations. The author urges innovation, a focus on the public good, and measures to gain financial sustainability. A critique Myers offers is that superficial alterations to existing Western classical music norms are unhelpful in bringing about lasting change and are symptomatic of non-commercial music's failure to adjust to the shifting needs of society. In answer, the author advocates a deep-level re-evaluation of the suppositions that undergird practices, decisions, and research in higher education and music organizations. Additionally, Myers recommends an interrogation of the function of Western classical music performers and the music's value to the public. Inspired by Small's (1998) concept of musicking, the author envisions co-creative music-making fostering connections between artists and society.

Introduction

In *Music Higher Education and Society* (2025), Myers shares insights that deeply resonate with me as a choral educator and former teacher educator. He addresses the treatment and use of global music in higher education and the challenges to gaining full-time employment as a musician. In addition, he emphasizes the need to restructure tertiary music education to lead innovation, respect all musics, and provide teaching instruction for all students. Furthermore, Myers advocates that music organizations embrace new models that are more profoundly inclusive and self-sustaining. For those who, like me, have wondered at the protracted pace of change in higher music education, Myers offers valuable perspective that illuminates the issue. Notably, he offers a thoughtful roadmap to improve the careers of music graduates while candidly identifying realities about Western classical music (WCM) consumption and systemic issues in music performance and higher education that perpetuate earnings deficits for both individuals and organizations.

David E. Myers has focused his research on learning across the lifespan (1986, 1992, 1995, 2007, 2012a, 2012b; Myers et al., 2013), advocating improved research methods to deepen understanding of the impacts of music education across ages (1995, 2008), and encouraging progressive change in higher music education (Myers, 2014; 2016; Campbell et al., 2016). His recommendations have included forging long-term community connections to universities for mutual enrichment of students and programs (2003), championing performance and composition majors learning teaching methods (2005), and connecting with the community to encourage attendance at their performances (2006). This publication, in many ways, serves to bring together many of Myers's past contributions to the field into one harmonious piece of advocacy to encourage musicians, artists, and administrators of higher education arts organizations to center music's intrinsic value in every plan and action.

Overview

Structure and Introductions

This slim volume has a strong, coherent message for music educators and college students alike: WCM must evolve with the times. Dramatic changes have been needed for some time, and Myers sees a clear path forward for Western classical musicians, arts organizations, and higher education with a strategy that relies on one principle, the essential goodness (EG) of music. The book joins five previous offerings in the College Music Society's (CMS) *Emerging Fields in Music* series. This installment is the first in a collection of works within the series entitled *Leading Change*.

The series editor, Mark Rabideau, begins his introduction by identifying the issue of musician underemployment and describing the purpose of the CMS book series as a response to

uncertain times, uncovering the difficulties and opportunities for positive change that lie before the academic community. Myers's work anchors the facet of *Leading Change* that asks, "Whose music matters?" (p. ix). In it, he contends that universities must evaluate their efforts and results with their aims, whilst being willing to examine the assumptions that underpin those aims. The author's introduction is an overview of the argument he builds in the volume. He begins by outlining several problems in WCM, including a profession that is not flourishing, the indistinct path from higher education to the profession, and the immutability of higher education's underlying suppositions, conventions, and praxes. The author explains the book's purpose is to consider higher music education from the perspective of its contribution to the collective good.

Myers contends that a flaw in the WCM network is the consumers' unimportance to the performers, casting the audience as mere spectators of their exalted technique. However, for many people, what is most enjoyable is making music together. The attitude that performing highly challenging music justifies the existence of performing ensembles is likely responsible for this view. Myers argues for a pivot in the WCM network to the original purpose of music and one that persists in many cultures around the world, that music is for "enriching...lives, living, and relationships" through "communal meaning-making" (p. 4). Such transformation will demand leaders be willing to shift their perspective to prioritize the public's needs and take on the role of changemakers.

The author provides several scenarios based on real-world higher education that he encourages the reader to peruse online prior to continuing the book. Appended to those scenarios are activities for individuals or coursework. The scenarios are applied to more than one chapter, rendering classroom application slightly complicated. The author expresses that the activities and scenarios would be best utilized in graduate programs and professional seminars that focus on issues in WCM. I suggest that arts administration courses and degree programs as well as students studying for WCM performance degrees would benefit from this volume.

Chapter 1

At the heart of this volume is Myers's assertion that music's "essential goodness" (EG) as the basis of change in higher music education and music organizations would produce the most substantive outcomes (p. 10). As he commences the initial chapter, he defines EG as music's "inherent, vital worth" (p. 10). The concept is present in many disciplines, but predominantly in religion. Herein lies a missed opportunity for Myers to explain how this concept is used and described in the other disciplines. With an absence of such background on the theoretical underpinnings of a concept that is the foundation of the manuscript, EG lacks broader context. There is, however, abundant detail of the author's views on EG in music. He uses the term EG

to capture how the creative activity of music enhances and describes what it is to be human. EG is the “essence (thus ‘the word essential’) of the human gestalt (‘the goodness’) implicit in the communal act of music making. It transpires through shared and participatory interaction with sonic/auditory material embodying dynamic creativity, expression, and kinesthetic engagement” (p. 10). The author clarifies that EG is not meant to suggest a dichotomy between good and “bad” (p. 10), or imply partiality. The concept goes beyond viewing music simply as an artefact. Myers asserts that in this frame of EG, the value of music arises from the communal act of making sound.

Myers continues the first chapter by outlining his argument that the network of WCM has yet to adapt to the changing times fully. He critiques higher education and WCM organizations, suggesting that they are not adequately interrogating their assumptions about WCM and its intrinsic value to society, or giving precedence to society’s needs. He explains that programming historically marginalized composers, giving concerts in alternative venues, and permitting alcohol in performances are superficial adjustments that do not resonate with audiences in a way that is sufficiently meaningful or lasting to build support for WCM music. Instead, he argues that change must come from deeper within, by questioning the traditional approaches to presenting the art and the current societal valuation of highly technical musicianship. Reflecting on ways to make performances interactive both creatively and physically, Myers envisions communal musicking (Small, 1998) through EG, bringing audiences and revenue as well as demonstrating WCM’s worth to society.

In higher education, he suggests “leading” the field of music in a way that centers EG rather than “following” (p. 19), and acknowledges the likelihood that performance-focused students will need to teach and play a role in enhancing society. Furthermore, he recommends that Western classical musicians and programs begin acknowledging that musical cultures do not exist in a hierarchy with WCM at the apex. Instead, WCM exists as one of countless, equal musical cultures worldwide. These assertions are further explicated in the subsequent chapters and the author provides recommendations that could lead to lasting change in WCM music.

Chapter 2

In this second chapter, Myers breaks down potential obstacles to embracing EG in higher education and in WCM music. He commences by outlining the “progressive profit sector’s” (p. 31) adaptability as a model for the evolution of WCM. The non-profit music sector, Myers points out, defies transformation, no matter how evident the need. The author provides many examples of issues in WCM that may benefit from systemic change, including composers’ racism, unfair hiring procedures, and few females and people of color in leadership positions. There is a notable absence in this list of the #MeToo movement allegations of abuse in WCM

ensembles and institutions¹; however, in chapter 5, Myers does very briefly mention the mistreatment of students by their teachers in the field of WCM.

A particularly cogent point Myers makes in this chapter is that higher education prepares more performers than the current system can compensate with a livable wage. He argues that emulating a broken professional world in higher education is futile. Instead, he suggests that higher music education take on the role played by higher education in many other fields (e.g., business, medical, and engineering) by innovating and fostering musicians' obligation to audiences and society, not imitating the professional sector. Promoting a holistic understanding of how music functions in society, guided by its essential goodness (EG), and pioneering new approaches to music-making that speak to people across cultures are the author's recommendations.

Myers envisions WCM becoming more "fluid and adaptable" (p. 33). However, arts organizations, higher education, and accreditation bodies seem content to stagnate and prioritize procuring economic support over systemic change for the public benefit. In part, Myers suggests this is because they overestimate society's perception of the value of WCM. Another aspect of the resistance is that many in these groups do not see a problem with preserving tradition with minor adaptations, such as amended concert times, diverse composers, and film score presentations. The organizations often deem these adaptations as a means to ultimately draw interested audiences to the traditional concerts. The author asserts that such measures rarely lead to increased attendance at those concerts, due to the lack of opportunities to take part and thereby connect through music. Myers describes the hindrances to concert attendance found by a National Endowment of the Arts study, and states that opportunities to "socialize...participate...and learn something new" did encourage attendance (Iyengar & Grantham, 2015, p. 42). However, beyond noting that the study's findings pertaining to audiences of color, Myers does not describe the specific barriers identified in the study, which is a noticeable gap in the reference to the results, particularly given that people of color make up 40 percent of the United States population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

Further exploring the challenges to centering society's needs in higher music education, Myers asserts that the tenure process, entitlement, minimal study of participatory musics, and unfounded beliefs are target areas. Through the tenure process, faculty may be enculturated to maintain the traditional ways that worked for them. Faculty may also feel "owed" their salary

¹ During #MeToo there were quite a few accounts in which well-known individuals in the WCM industry were implicated and some lost their positions as a result. It appears that influential figures had too much authority, and survivors felt pressured to agree to sexual encounters to secure work and were afraid to speak out (e.g. Connery, 2023).

rather than feeling accountable to society (p. 36). A WCM-centered education with brief, unintegrated study of global participatory musics does not prepare musicians to comprehend the importance of the audience and music's role in society. Myers posits that:

higher education could be perfectly positioned to break new ground by innovating new concert formats, facilitating ways for audiences to deeply engage in music, and removing conventions, such as not clapping between movements, that too often interfere with the innate human desire to respond to the musical experience. (p. 43)

There are many practices in the WCM world that are presumed to be beneficial but lack a research or real-world basis. For example, the author submits that higher education courses on self-marketing to ensure a steady income only serve to obfuscate the fact that earning a living wage in the field is difficult and that the way to amend that is systemic change.

Undergraduates would benefit from learning more than perfecting their renditions of the music, such as their duty to society and global, participatory musics more fully. Furthermore, all music majors should receive instruction in teaching techniques, as that is the foundation of most musicians' professional portfolios. Myers recommends that musicians move away from an "entitlement mentality" (p. 45) and therefore measure their accomplishment by service to society. In turn, the WCM network needs to comprehend that "the art" should not be the priority for artists and organizations, but how musicians can link music and people to add value to society.

According to Myers, higher music education often views its role as molding musicians who perform at a very high level, as it has for 100 years. This view stands in contrast with the author's assertion that there is much more to the role of higher education, foremost of which is furthering the public well-being. Accrediting bodies have shown intractability when institutions have adjusted degree offerings to align with society's needs. Moreover, Myers posits that people who are willing to make change are typically those without significant power. Unlike the higher education counterparts of other professions, music does not often demonstrate an interest in how the value of music in society could be enhanced. The author contends that for WCM to flourish, it must be guided by the EG of music and the new approaches to generating funds it may inspire. This guidance could cultivate an increased valuing of music by audiences, livable wages for musicians, and organizations steered by the greater good rather than the predilections of wealthy donors. He also argues that music institutions should create cultures open to collaboratively revisiting and critiquing assumptions as well as building curricula and instruction that are flexible. Myers concludes the chapter by proposing that leaders of this transformation come from faculty and administrators driven by their duty to the institution and its students.

Chapter 3

In this chapter, Myers describes how difficulties can present chances to disrupt the status quo and make substantial change. It opens with a breakdown of the “double loop organizational model” (Argyris & Schön, 1996) for analyzing the inner workings of institutions. He explains that this approach is helpful because it not only looks at the organization’s objectives, but also the assumptions underpinning them. He contends that identifying problems and assembling data on them allows institutions to avoid potential missteps, such as adding programs to generate income while keeping all other music department programs and approaches unchanged, and instead target areas where significant transformation is necessary. The initial goal is to find areas for improvement, and then, to “close the double loop,” by “gathering [data] to discern whether the assumption, the objective, and the curricular change” are successfully preparing musicians for the field (p. 50).

According to Myers, in the world of WCM, there is a strong assertion that the way that higher education and professional music performance operate need not be altered. It is thought that the only adjustments needed are to the existing paradigm of suppositions and teaching approaches. Additional adjustments include furthering advocacy and funding, focusing on recruitment from groups familiar with WCM, increasing donations, being clear about the benefits of music, and preparing musicians to promote themselves and diversify their competencies to earn income. Myers declaims two underlying misapprehensions in WCM. First, WCM is an asset that should be cultivated, protected, and promoted owing to its inherent intellectual, artistic, and aesthetic significance and for the benefits beyond music. Second, the current framework must be maintained to ensure employment opportunities for the many people who aspire or currently have careers in the field. Myers maintains that this widely held set of assumptions neglects the important connection between mind and body, a potent aspect of EG. He wonders about the superficial, additive approach to incorporating global musics into existing music curricula. By preventing meaningful exploration of global music, students’ comprehension of how “movement, improvisation, drama, and storytelling are embedded in the sonic expressions of world cultures” (p. 52) is inhibited. The author suggests that “culturally comparative studies” (p. 52) would facilitate students’ grasp of WCM as not superior, but one of the many expressions of sound across cultures. It could be a pathway to better understanding WCM and furthering “access, equity, and inclusion” (p. 52).

Exclusivity and lack of connection have become WCM’s hallmarks due to the separation of mind and body. Worldwide, most musicking is a holistic engagement of the psyche and the corporeal, often involving improvisation and social interaction, and has a fundamental role in people’s lives. In contrast, the WCM emphasis on performers’ technical achievements and audiences following rules are obstacles to involvement with WCM, leading people to watch rather than engage. For measures being taken in WCM to matter, they need to go further than

promoting WCM as relevant to people of all races. Without a more thoughtful and equitable approach to the issues of social and economic inequality and unsettling the “intellectual mindset” (p. 54) in WCM, the underlying complications for broadening access will not be effectively addressed.

Myers applies the concept of “VUCA...volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 57), which first gained traction at the U.S. Army War College, to WCM. For this idea to be embraced, all manifestations of music must be centered. There is a human imperative to employ sound and movement to express themselves and their creativity. With all musics and EG established as concentrations, the author posits that the next step in VUCA is planning, daring, and testing ideas to identify ways to increase access to WCM that will have a significant impact. Returning to the double loop model, Myers states that when combined with George and Clayton’s (2022) response to VUCA of “Vision, Understanding, Courage, and Adaptability” (p. 58), two stages for WCM emerge. The preliminary stage is to discern that change is necessary, even if that requires going against the majority. The second stage is planning for the distant future and interrogating accepted norms in WCM. To illustrate this, he points to the findings of the College Music Society’s *Report of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major* (2016) that, “change in and beyond that ecosystem would require more authentically educated professional musicians, building on the pillars of creativity, diversity, and integration” (p. 58). Myers emphasizes the importance of improvisation and composition in performance education and advocates for a music curriculum that facilitates thorough study of diverse musics to enhance comprehension of music’s role in society and develop future leaders for a global context. In keeping with George and Clayton’s VUCA principles, the author calls on current leaders to advocate for and implement changes that reflect the meaning of music for humanity and for its creative and expressive value. Moreover, he encourages them to contemplate the larger objectives of music schools and departments.

Chapter 4

In this penultimate chapter, Myers explores how leaders can prompt change in a music department or arts organization, despite recalcitrance. An example of bringing together EG and “shared governance” (p. 66) to create change is unveiled in his reimagining of the tenure process and hiring practices. Instead of burdening new professors with a stressful, uncertain journey to tenure he asserts that the emphasis should be on support. In shifting the attention to “mentoring, encouragement and nurture,” there should be “an institutional commitment to that person’s success” (p. 67). He envisions the tenure process, guided by music’s EG, will be a “generative and collaborative” experience for the whole department (p. 67). Furthermore, his vision includes a more transparent tenure procedure, stressing fairness, removing underlying agendas, and avoiding stoking candidate anxiety. In this model, interview procedures mirror

the department's unique culture. The hiring committees focus on modernization and candidates who represent the plurality of music educators and will drive change. It is Myers's argument that these measures are necessary because candidates who seek to drive change are often not selected in the traditional process, despite job descriptions that highlight this need.

In order to initiate meaningful change, institutions must ask critical questions regarding their motivations, assumptions, and the need for transformation. A challenge of "shared governance" (p. 67) in higher education when aiming to effect change is that administrators with integrity are discouraged from making unilateral decisions, especially when a majority-favorable faculty vote is typically expected. To encourage a metamorphosis, all parties need to understand the change's intention and purpose, as well as the inner workings of higher education. Consequently, upper-level leaders must become proficient in their capacity as change makers and "pay close attention to the goals, the rationale, and their part in it" (p. 71). Pivotally, WCM needs to back leaders in making change if there is to be progress.

Myers discusses the "excellence-access gap" (p. 74), noting that many potential music students, particularly people whose incomes are below the federal poverty threshold and minoritized groups, lack access to crucial challenging performance experiences and one-on-one instruction. As he notes, these barriers may perpetuate systemic inequalities and limit opportunities for students of color. Myers recognizes that administrators may be deterred from initiating change despite acknowledging racial biases limiting opportunities for students of color. Reforms can be slow to occur due to administrators' concerns that they will be ineffective. Structural racism is pervasive, and the obstacles it creates for future musicians reveals white cultural hegemony from the very foundations of the organizations to their current systems. While students of color are disproportionately affected, Myers suggests that more types of diversity be considered to progress from the current status quo toward greater inclusivity and belonging. Administrators committed to fostering change should view their roles as encompassing administration, management, and leadership. Leadership requires an understanding of the systems in which graduates will work, and advocacy for living-wage job opportunities that support musicians as contributors to social well-being.

According to Myers, administrators should utilize their autonomy to explore pioneering practices in performance, teaching, and research, as well as develop an adaptable curriculum. The author suggests that, for higher education, a shift to a collaborative responsibility model of governance, guided by the principle of music's inherent value and the prioritization of institutional well-being, is necessary. For WCM organizations, the author recommends partnering with all who wish to contribute to the organization's success and leading collaboratively. This redirection can enhance learning for aspiring musicians, move past traditional profit-driven mindsets, and challenge tradition by fostering supportive institutional

cultures.

Myers posits that music education institutions should explore how they can actively address systemic exclusion and embrace equality, diversity, and inclusion by reimagining their responsibilities to society. Centering the EG of music can inspire faculty and students to consider the broader impact of their work on society. Through course-required involvement in community music, musicians can build an understanding of the public's view of meaningful music-making and cultivate society's appreciation for WCM's worth. They also develop a genuine connection to the audience, thereby enhancing the quality of their performance.

The author suggests that incorporating improvisation may promote creativity and adaptability and imbue music-making with deeper significance, aligning with the concept of music's EG. Moreover, both performers and audiences can collaborate creatively and develop mutual understanding through spontaneous music creation. They can also gain mental health and neurological benefits that could contribute to resilience. Consequently, improvisation connects with the idea of inherent EG that the author argues is a basis for training musicians to engender value for their art in the broader community.

Myers resolves the chapter by offering a panoply of ways to advance the transformation of WCM, but there were two that were striking. The first was to talk about the outlook for WCM in organizations and tertiary education impartially. The second was to be cautious of "additive approaches that inflate the curriculum and disperse enrollments too thinly; think holistically and integratively" (p. 80). Initiating change must be executed with preparation and intention, cautions Myers. If accomplished by pressing a group of people to accept change without examining possible impacts, it may strengthen opposition.

Chapter 5

Myers envisions how centering EG could manifest and shape higher education, advocacy, and the professional sector in this final chapter, particularly in WCM. The author maintains that some of the friction between traditional approaches in higher education and professional music arises from insufficient examination of assumptions. Rather than allowing questioning those assumptions to create significant change, minor modifications to existing systems are the prevalent choice. In higher education, the author indicates that an opportunity for transformation exists in the weaknesses of typical curricula and admissions procedures, which could have beneficial impacts on WCM and civic perception of its worth. The value generated through civic engagement and "lived experience" (p. 88) is often overlooked in musician preparation. The predominant emphasis in education and advocacy has been on the mental stimulation and beauty music that contributes to society. Myers also highlights issues with WCM advocacy. While WCM is advocated as a means of promoting social engagement and

for its positive impacts beyond music (which are substantiated by research funded by WCM interests), this advocacy neglects underlying issues such as the mistreatment of students and inappropriate use of music in public and government spheres. Over-reporting of positive impacts may be counterproductive if actual experiences do not align with research findings as it may be alienating for participants.

As changemaking administrators begin centering EG, a strategic plan will serve organizations and institutions well, according to the author. Myers suggests that administrators develop a plan with faculty members, using the institution's overarching goals and an investigation of inherent assumptions, while also highlighting their contributions to the institution. A plan drawing on feedback from current and former students, knowledge of realistic career prospects, and alignment with the public's needs can be a tool for engendering support from administrators' superiors for change.

Myers expresses concern that WCM organizations professing concern with equity, welcome for all, and well-being will not lead to any substantive change. As musicians tend to frame service as being to the art rather than to society, these organizational declarations may be hollow. The WCM model positions audiences as witnesses to the technical achievements of the musicians, but not as contributors to the performance. He argues that recognizing music's EG can inspire performances appropriate to today's more collaborative context. In WCM, the implementation of diversity measures through programming global musics and commissioned works, hiring performers, faculty, and conductors, is often a superficial overlay on the existing framework. Nonetheless, these efforts, along with the development of strategic plans and the evaluation of assumptions, have the potential to promote substantive transformation and to educate musicians with a more complete view of music writ large and of how they can contribute to the public good.

To promote a shift in how musicians understand their roles in society, Myers encourages the view that they are active contributors to their communities. To attain this goal, the author recommends "informing and complementing performance studies with authentic knowledge of music in human experience and societies; embedding movement, improvisation (music and dramatic), psycho-sociocultural content, teaching,...learning,...and composition in the curriculum; learning how to relate with audiences through...co-creating" (p. 91). This change in higher music education could extricate WCM from the realm of elitism by restoring its purpose of adding value to the community. Communal music making and improvisation can promote audience engagement through shared musical experience, which is vital for establishing the value of musicians' work. Moreover, to counter the idea of WCM as exclusive, he encourages concert organizers to use co-music-making in ways that honor and are informed by diverse musical cultures. Myers states that "the conventions that have led to

impressions of an elitist subculture are the very ones that have disconnected WCM from ... the everyday lives of increasingly diverse populations” (p. 92). This understanding needs to be woven into music education and community engagement initiatives.

Myers outlines the contributions of multiple artists (e.g., Caroline Shaw, Bobby McFerrin, Liz Lehrman, and James Ross) who have demonstrated the power of music’s EG through illustrating interconnectedness of the arts and communal improvisation. These innovative musicians and ensembles exemplify the change and audaciousness that Myers extolls as necessary in higher education to guide exciting and engaging new co-creative models of concerts in professional WCM. Further, the author suggests increasing research examining what strategies appeal to and support the well-being of audiences. Quantifying the effectiveness of genuine rather than superficial efforts in reaching today’s diverse audience of today could have positive effects across the professional music sphere.

The author forwards Campbell and colleagues’ (2016) idea of musicians as Contemporary Improviser Composer Performer (CICP). It is a view that “transcends the assumption of the WCM performer as the core product of music school ‘training’ and opens the door to a holistic, robust, and consistent view of the musician across diverse cultural, musical, and ethnic contexts, as well as in the historic evolution of Western classical music” (p. 102). Myers conveys several recommendations for higher education coursework to foster CICP. The author declaims the lack of “systematic” (p. 94) education on teaching for music majors as it will likely be a significant portion of their careers. Additionally, Myers finds the term “non-Western” music problematic, along with the frequently additive nature of its inclusion in higher education coursework. It perpetuates the othering of people who were colonized and their musical cultures, and signals the continued superiority of WCM. Myers proposes that integrating global music should be accomplished on an equal basis and originate from music’s EG.

In closing the monograph, Myers presents his argument for reflecting on the value that music brings to society. He revisits the idea of reevaluating the coursework that is genuinely needed for undergraduate musicians and promotes internships with working professionals to better prepare them for the professional world. The author also proposes balancing cost-to-profit ratios by reducing spending on famed guest musicians and centering civic interests thereby decreasing reliance on donors to sustain music organizations. Myers states his intention to disrupt the valid view that WCM is for the few and affluent, and encourage the realization that it is not at the top of a hierarchy, but rather one of countless ways worldwide for humans to express themselves collectively. In his final remarks, Myers illustrates many ways a focus on music’s EG could be implemented in education and professional music organizations. There were several intriguing offerings, such as: more inclusive admission processes, students

engaging in immersive learning that combines “theoretical, cultural, aesthetic, and historical” aspects of music in its many forms (p. 106), and that students be taught music as part of a cohesive arts curriculum in which improvisation is underscored. In sum, the need for change offers leaders who prioritize music’s EG an opportunity to address challenges stemming from outdated practices in WCM innovatively, with a view to spearheading evolution of the field.

Conclusion

With numerous aspects of higher education in flux today, it may be the moment to make change inspired by essential goodness that will serve students, higher education music programs, and arts organizations well. The foundation of Myers’s argument for change is embracing diversity and increasing inclusion in music education programs and in concert halls. The author proposes more than performing music by minoritized composers and hiring diverse musicians; it is a change in what happens on the concert stage. He recommends more improvisation, more engaged participation from the audience, and more movement from both performers and musicians. Though there were missed opportunities in this work to delve further into issues for women and people of color, the ideas of centering music’s essential goodness are compelling, and this difficult period in higher education may be the time for them to take hold as Myers contends.

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About the Author

Dr. Leah Murthy is a music educator and scholar whose research and pedagogy centers relevance and ethical teaching practices. She has held the position of Senior Associate Conductor of the National Children's Chorus of the United States of America for nine years. Previously, she taught graduate and undergraduate students at Augusta University in Georgia, U.S. She holds a doctorate from Boston University, a master's degree from Boston Conservatory, and a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts. Her teaching and performance career spans four continents, including engagements in Europe, Asia, Africa. She has presented her research on multi-musical music educators and ethics-centered music pedagogy at national and international conferences, underscoring her commitment to advancing music education that supports all learners and promoting respect for the rich tapestry of cultures in the U.S. and across the globe.