

Myers, D. (2008). Freeing music education from schooling: Towards a lifespan perspective on music teaching and learning. *International Journal of Community music* 1(1): 49-61.

Myers talked about how it is getting harder and harder to engage students in music after they have graduated, but I have found that it's even hard to get them engaged in high school. Even in high school, there is a negative perception of the arts program, and this includes music. For many, it is viewed as an unrealistic career path and science and/or math is much more reliable for job security. This is absurd, if you ask me. Music is a multi-disciplinary study, and it has many valuable aspects applicable in the "real" world. Many skills you acquire from a music program are highly viewed on by employers, but unfortunately not by society. I think this is the root to the problem: the negative regard of music is hindering the development of lifelong music learners.

I want to find out more about this "closeted desire for music" that adults may have. In particular, what aspects are prohibiting them from feeling like they can openly express themselves through music? Why do they feel like they have to conceal this desire? Does this mean there is a negative stereotype of music? If this is the case, then we need to work towards removing this stigma. No one should ever feel like they cannot pursue the things they love just because society might look poorly upon it. Really, society should not look poorly upon it at all.

Myers also stated that we fail to ignite the music within people when they are young, and so they are less likely to be lifelong learners. Maybe they also fail to see the value, importance and fun in music! This in turn creates a lack of appreciation for music. I personally don't believe that we need to make each and every single kid in high school a musician past high school. For some people it just isn't their 'thing', just as science or math may not be other people's' things. Instead, if we fostered an appreciation for music, I think this would help to decrease the music stereotypes (and possibly for the arts in general) and increase music learners and appreciators.

I truly believe this could be accomplished through demonstrating what importance music has in day-to-day life, as Myers explained. Music educators should model positive music engagement, as well as allowing for the students to experience music learning that is relative to their lives. For many, music is a social thing, a social engagement. When teachers talk about the "formal" music education offered in high school, this literally scares them away. Myers went on to explain how we need to break down these barriers while maintaining a high standard of music education. This will be hard. Yes, we need to incorporate things such as popular music, free improvisation and other current creative processes in education. This will maintain the students' interests, but what will give them that high standard without compromising this interest? I want to know what others are saying about keeping formal music education current with the demands of students today.

My guess is it goes back to nurturing and instilling an appreciation in some of the golden formal musicianship techniques that just cannot be replaced.