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MUSIC EDUCATION AND THE SCHOOL-SURVEY MOVEMENT

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During the first three decades of the twentieth century, American city, county, and state school systems collected vast amounts of educational data through formal surveys. The practice was so widespread that it came to be known as the school-survey movement.

Several factors led to the development of the movement. First, by the early twentieth century American public schools were enrolling a much larger proportion of the nation's school-age children than ever before, due primarily to an increasing level of affluence brought about by the industrial revolution. This fact, coupled with the progressive education movement's emphasis on making schools more responsive to the needs of society, generated a heightened awareness of and interest in matters pertaining to the public schools. Another factor leading to the survey movement was an increasing interest in the scientific investigation of educational matters,¹ especially the gradual

¹ Leonard P. Ayres, "Measuring Educational Processes Through Educational Results," The School Review, 20:5 (May 1912), 300-01; and Jere T. Humphreys, "The Child-Study Movement and Public School Music Education," Journal of Research in Music Education 33 (Summer 1985) 79-86.

⁶¹ Frank Callaway. "Vanett Lawler (1903 [sic]-1972)," International Music Educator 2 (1972): 29.

development of aptitude and achievement tests for various school subjects.²

Although school surveys were not unknown in the nineteenth century,³ surveys of the early twentieth century differed from earlier data-collection practices in that the later surveys were designed specifically to inform the lay public. Nineteenth century efforts, such as those by the federal government⁴ and individual and small groups of child-

²Leonard P. Ayres, "History and Present Status of Educational Measurements," Seventeenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, pt. II (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Company, 1918), p. 12.

³Hollis L. Caswell, "City School Surveys: An Interpretation and Appraisal," Contributions to Education, no. 358 (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University Bureau of Publications, 1929), pp. 10-18; and Edward J. Power, Main Currents in the History of Education, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), p. 599.

⁴The first nationwide survey of music instruction may have been the following: U.S., Bureau of Education, "Education in Music at Home and Abroad," The Study of Music in the Public Schools, Circular of Information no. 1 for 1886. See Martin J. Bergee, "Ringing the Changes: General John Eaton and the 1886 Public School Music Survey," paper presented at the Research Session of the Music Educators National Conference National convention, Anaheim, California, 11 April 1986. Several other large surveys that dealt with music, at least in part, were sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Education, other governmental agencies, professional societies, and business organizations during the period described in this article.

study workers,⁵ were not necessarily so intended, even though much of the information obtained was published in various ways. Another change was that these information-gathering efforts were now called surveys, a term then in common use in America's emerging social science community and in society at large.⁶ The most distinguishing feature of the school-survey movement, however, was the huge number of surveys completed, most of them by city school systems.

Selected Surveys

It appears that the first American city to use the term survey to describe an effort to collect data about its own programs was Pittsburgh, Penn-

⁵Humphreys, "The Child-Study Movement," p. 83. For examples of child-study surveys involving music see Earl Barnes, "The Child's Favorite Subject in the Elementary Curriculum," National Educational Association Journal of Proceedings and Addresses (Boston, Massachusetts: National Educational Association, 1903), pp. 420-28; and Fanny B. Gates, "Musical Interests of Children," Journal of Pedagogy, 2 (October 1898) 265-284.

⁶Ayres, "History and Present Status," p. 13; and William F. Connell, A History of Education in the Twentieth Century World (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1980), p. 97. At least one writer has disputed the claim by Ayres and others that the survey method, although not specifically the term, survey, was borrowed from the social sciences. See Caswell, "City School Surveys," p. 8.

sylvania. Its community survey of 1907⁷ included an investigation of the city's school system. Other important early city school system surveys were conducted in Boise, Idaho in 1910 (perhaps the first city-system survey after Pittsburgh), Baltimore, Maryland and Montclair, New Jersey in 1911, and Cleveland, Ohio in 1915-16. The Cleveland survey was especially comprehensive, resulting in a twenty-five-volume report, and attracted a great deal of attention throughout the country. The Vermont survey of 1914, conducted by the Carnegie Corporation, was the first survey of a state school system.

Among the first school systems to survey formally their music programs were Richmond, Indiana (1907-1912), East Orange, New Jersey (1910-11), and New York City (1911-1913). Of these, the New York survey was especially important to the survey movement because it included, for the first time in a formal investigation, educational tests as part of the evaluation process: the Curtis Standard Research Tests in Arithmetic.

⁷ Ayres, "History and Present Status," p. 12; Caswell, "City School Surveys," p. 8; and Walter S. Monroe, Charles W. Odell, M.E. Herriott, Max D. Engelhart, and Mabel R. Hull, Ten Years of Educational Research, 1918-1927, Bulletin no. 42 (Urbana, Illinois: College of Education, University of Illinois Bureau of Educational Research, 1928), p. 38.

⁸ Caswell, "City School Surveys," p. 5.

⁹ A Topical Analysis of 234 School Surveys, published as a Bulletin of the School of Education (Bloomington, Indiana: School of Education, Indiana University, March 1927).

¹⁰ Ayres, "History and Present Status," p. 13.

At the time of the New York survey there were no published tests of musical aptitude or achievement; consequently, the survey focused on the system's music "course of study," or "syllabus." The survey report criticized the music syllabus for its: (1) lack of guidance given teachers in the selection of songs that both please the child and are of "classic quality;" (2) failure to make provisions for the "teaching [of] tonal relationships necessary for sight reading" through the use of rote songs, concentrating instead on "the practice of intervals, dictated by number;" (3) overemphasis on sight-reading ability that "increasingly through the grades . . . is practically the only standard held up;" (4) lack of attention given to "individual attainment in contrast with concert work, or class attainment;" and (5) failure to establish "definite requirements for each grade, both as to application and scholarship."¹¹ This report reflected contemporary "scientific" concern over the establishment of standards and the child-study movement's principles of emphasizing children's interests, high-quality¹² music, rote singing, and individual needs.

An example of a city-school survey of a different type was the Minneapolis school survey of 1915-16. Rather than engaging a music evaluator from outside the school system, Thaddeus P. Giddings, director of music for the school system, wrote the survey report himself. The result is an uncritical report that extolls the virtues of

¹¹ Final Report of the Committee on School Inquiry, 5 vols. (New York: Board of Estimate and Apportionment, 1911-13), I:279-283.

¹² Humphreys, "The Child-Study Movement."

school music in general and of the Minneapolis school music program in particular.¹³

Most reports of school surveys during this period do not include results of analyses of music programs. One bibliography of 234 published surveys dating through 1927 includes only thirty-six surveys that deal with music instruction. The music sections of these survey reports range in length from one to sixty-six pages.¹⁴ It appears that the reasons for music's omission from most surveys were that: (1) some surveys dealt only with school subjects for which there were existing stan-

¹³Thaddeus P. Giddings, "In a Major Key," Mono-graph, no. 5 (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minneapolis Board of Education, 1916). The coverage given to music in survey reports seems to have depended upon the interests and expertise of the surveyors themselves. For example, one survey team from the United States Bureau of Education that included no musicians devoted only two paragraphs to elementary and secondary music education in the State of South Dakota, while another team from the same bureau that included the prominent music educator Will Earhart wrote an entire chapter (part) on music instruction in the Memphis, Tennessee city schools. See, respectively, U.S., Bureau of Education, The Educational System of South Dakota, Bulletin no. 31, 1918; and U.S., Bureau of Education, The Public School System of Memphis, Tennessee, Bulletin no. 50, 1920.

¹⁴A Topical Analysis. Since the writer(s) of this report makes no claim to completeness, there may have been other published surveys during the period covered. Further, this report does not include unpublished surveys like the Boise, Idaho survey, which appeared only in a local newspaper. There were, undoubtedly, many other unpublished surveys during this period. See Caswell, "City School Surveys," p. 18.

standardized or quasi-standardized tests; (2) some surveys were concerned primarily with administrative matters; and (3) music was considered unimportant in many school systems and not taught at all in others.

Research Bureaus

Surveys of school systems became such an integral part of school administration that permanent educational research departments and bureaus were established by city systems, state departments of education, universities, teachers colleges, and independent foundations. One of the first was the New York City Bureau of Research, organized in 1912 at the recommendation of the committee that was at the time conducting a survey of the city's school system.¹⁵ Other cities soon followed New York's lead and developed educational research bureaus of their own.¹⁶

Research bureaus tended to conduct school surveys in one of two ways. Some bureaus, such as the Institute for Educational Research at Columbia University, fostered the development of "professional surveyors" who surveyed school systems from the outside. The United States Bureau of Education functioned in this way, conducting numerous surveys of local and state school systems. Other bureaus, particularly those in city systems, began to con-

¹⁵Ayres, "History and Status," p. 13.

¹⁶In 1927, one author identified sixty-four bureaus in city school systems, nineteen in universities, ten in teachers colleges and normal schools, ten in state departments of education, and miscellaneous others. See Harold B. Chapman, Organized Research in Education, Bureau of Educational Research, Monograph no. 7 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1927), p. 19.

duct so-called "continuous surveys" from within the system. Early in the survey movement, most surveys were conducted by outsiders, and were one-time phenomena often intended to "justify a superintendent or school board or to settle certain questions at issue." By the late 1910s, however, many cities had incorporated the survey, usually carried out by their own employees, into their regular administrative routines.¹⁷

Educational research bureaus performed still another important function in the survey movement when university and even some city and state bureaus began to develop their own tests of achievement for the various subject areas. The school-survey movement created a large market for educational tests and measurement scales beginning with the New York City survey and extending through the third decade of the century. In fact, the movement played an important role in fostering the development and widespread use of educational tests and measurements.¹⁸

Music testing, in general, was not of great concern to most early research bureaus. One notable exception was the Bureau of Educational Measurements and Standards at the Kansas State Normal School in Emporia. This bureau, organized in 1914, was "the pioneer bureau in the field of test construction,"¹⁹ and, indeed, published the first set of standardized tests of musical achievement: the Beach Standardized Music Tests.²⁰

¹⁷ Monroe et al., Ten Years, p. 77.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 93

¹⁹ Chapman, Organized Research, p. 70.

²⁰ Frank A. Beach with H.E. Schrammel, ed., Beach Standardized Music Tests (Emporia, Kansas: Bureau of Educational Measurements, Kansas State Normal School, 1920).

Related to the work of educational researchers was Carl E. Seashore's research on his test of musical aptitude. Although Seashore did not work within an educational research bureau, the University of Iowa's Department of Psychology, which he chaired, offered to "cooperate with school officials in the introduction of . . . musical tests" through the medium of surveys.²¹

Conclusions

The school-survey movement gained momentum after the New York City survey, and became even more popular after the Cleveland survey. Writers of the day believed that surveys often caused "substantial changes" in school systems,²² although it is not clear from the evidence available today the substance of those changes. It is clear that hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of school surveys were completed, that they generated a great deal of enthusiasm and criticism, and that they were closely tied to the development and use of educational tests and measurements. The survey movement even created an industry devoted to the design and manufacture of machines for sorting and tabulating the large amounts of data collected by surveyors.²³

²¹ Carl E. Seashore, "Musical Surveys in the Fifth Grade," University of Iowa Service Bulletin 1 (October 1917). See also Carl E. Seashore, "Auditory Memory," Music Supervisors Journal 4 (November 1917), 6-11.

²² Caswell, "City School Surveys," p. 54.

²³ Two such machines were the Hollerith Sorting Machine for Classifying School Statistics and the Hollerith Tabulating Machine Used in Recording School Statistics. See Harold O. Rugg, Statistical Methods Applied to Education: A Textbook for Students of Education in the Quantitative Study of School Problems (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917), pp. 66-72.