

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC
Annual Meeting 2013

Report of the President

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First, let me thank you for the opportunity and honor of serving as the president of this Association. It is a privilege to be among esteemed colleagues from every part of the nation, representing many kinds of institutions, all united in the pursuit of excellence in educating our students in music.

I first attended the annual meeting of the Association in 1993. That was the very first year I had served as a music executive, and after I had arrived at Vanderbilt University in the summer, I learned that this also happened to be the year we were scheduled for a reaccreditation visit. (Funny – during the interviews they forgot to mention that.) But the visit occurred, and we got through it.

With this annual meeting, we as an Association are entering the 90th year of our existence. Our history is distinguished, rich, and varied. In recent weeks I have spent a good deal of time exploring that history, and marveling at our Association's many accomplishments over the years. I have been struck by many things: the breadth of our achievements, the consistency of values that have united and motivated and driven us for nearly a century, and the quality of leadership we have all been privileged to work with over the years. Taken together, these achievements, values, and leaders form an intricate fabric that continues to unite us to this day. It serves as a model for the challenges of the present and the opportunities for the future. Woven into that fabric are the hopes and beliefs and ideals of nearly a century of music in higher education. Our 90 years have witnessed a golden age of music in society, when the role of art music reached an apex. It has been a remarkable time.

And so today I would like to review with you just a few of the highlights of our history – the times when we took steps that helped make us the Association we are today, or when turning points led us in new directions. This is timely, because we're about to encounter another turning point – the retirement of the baby-boomers. And, more importantly, let us affirm what we as educators and we as an Association believe in and advocate. These represent continuities – continuities of time, and of people. The links with our shared past are many, and they are strong.

Our beginnings, frankly, were not auspicious. Our Association was founded partly as an attempt to address conditions that were far from ideal. The first President of NASM, Kenneth Bradley, remembered that “[t]here were ... music schools which were really teachers' rooming houses. The purpose of these institutions was to attract private teachers, regardless of their merits, to teach in the conservatory and be listed as faculty members. Teachers paid for this ... by giving a commission to the school for each lesson. Teachers set their own rates. Rivalry was intense and not always ethical.”

And so several leading music executives decided that they should, as they put it, “[come] to an understanding among themselves relative to the improvements of their courses of study.” In other words, they needed to clean up their act.

And over the next few years, they did. The Standards began to take shape – for entrance requirements, the Bachelor of Music degree, a Soloist’s Diploma, and a Teacher’s Certificate. And a Code of Ethics was written. By 1950, when the Association was just over 25 years old, there were 202 members, and more Standards – for the Master of Arts, Master of Music, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

At the 30th annual meeting, we encountered the future. At that meeting, Earl Moore, the long-standing chair of the Commission on Curricula, spoke of a future that included expanding population and enrollments, and the urgent need for preparing music teachers for studios and schools. That was in 1954. The baby-boom had just hit the public schools. The first boomers were 7 or 8 years old then. And Earl Moore was already talking about the urgent need to prepare music teachers for an expanding population.

He was right. Between 1947 and 1963, the number of music students in elementary and secondary schools grew from 2.5 million to 11 million, a gain of 440 percent in just 16 years. The number of school bands and orchestras doubled in the 18 years after World War II. And over 1,200 symphony orchestras were reported to be in existence. In fact, 580 *new* community orchestras had been formed in just 10 years. A golden age, indeed.

Meanwhile, our Association continued to grow. By 1970, there were 363 institutions in NASM. In the early 1970s, themes quite familiar to us today were beginning to emerge. At the 1973 annual meeting, President Everett Timm spoke of potential federal interference in accreditation and the future impact of electronic advances on the entire field of music. That was 40 years ago. He couldn’t have known about Pandora, YouTube and MOOCs, but he nailed it.

By 1984, NASM had 521 members. The Association’s approach to accreditation began to focus even more on helping institutions to improve *on their own terms* in order to ensure that the accreditation process encouraged creativity. That has long been the philosophical underpinning of NASM, and especially in the past several years of these annual meetings. Continuities.

In November 1998, NASM signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Association of European Conservatories. For 15 years now, this agreement has facilitated communication between the two associations and their member institutions, providing the framework for specific projects and exchanges. And so this year, as in past years, we are pleased to welcome our colleagues from AEC institutions at our annual meeting, and we look forward to future collaborations.

NASM has now grown further to 643 institutions constituting a broad array of programs from preschool through graduate and post-graduate music education. And the Standards have been revised recently, just as they have been at regular intervals throughout our history. These revisions always have the same goal: to encourage institutional creativity and to share the vision of excellence that we as members have agreed upon over the decades, a vision that has served generations of music students, audiences, and communities throughout our nation.

So as we enter our 90th year, what are the principles that have guided us? What are the themes and the values? Are they still relevant today? I think they are, and I think it is essential to affirm them as we look toward the future.

Throughout our Association’s history, our approach to music has been comprehensive, all-inclusive. Together, we have undertaken a broad array of aspirations and activities. We have sought not only to train the musicians of the future, but to elevate *all* aspects of music in American society. And higher education has always been a special focus, which is all the more remarkable when we realize that NASM was formed at a time when relatively few people went to college, and when professional music training was in its infancy. Professional training has come a very long way since 1924. *Make no mistake: that professional training came to maturity because of us.* It is thanks to NASM that conservatories, colleges,

and universities have become major resources for the preparation of artists, scholars, and teachers. And their influence goes far beyond professional training: these institutions also provide introductory and advanced studies for musical amateurs, and they provide facilities that support musical activities for entire communities. From the very beginning, NASM has nurtured institutional resources on behalf of *all* serious work in music. We provide the substance, *and* we set the tone. We have made, and we continue to make, a tremendous difference.

This all occurs because we set high expectations and ambitious goals for ourselves as musicians and as institutions, and then we achieve them. Our accreditation process is based on peer review, *self*-regulation, and respect for *local* decision-making. It provides the best of two worlds: oversight *and* institutional autonomy. Peer review – all of us in this room, working together – is the essential ingredient of this fabric of mutual expertise and trust; it is *the* sustaining life force of our Association. That has always been the case, and never more so than now.

Besides accreditation, our Association provides at these annual meetings a forum for **development of leadership skills** – an array of innovations and new techniques in the profession, with opportunities for examination and questions, for exploration and debate. The Association, at its annual meetings, attends to *our* professional development. Every one of us has learned something of value at these meetings that we take back to our own institutions. That is one of the purposes of these annual meetings – to provide a marketplace of ideas that we all share for our mutual benefit.

Another essential function of our Association is **policy analysis**. NASM was founded to deal with policy. “Policy” may sound dry, but it has real consequences. Remember, we were founded in 1924 partly to turn those rooming houses for teachers into true places of education. That’s policy with real consequences. Over the years, NASM has become an educational policy force for music in higher education, and our influence has been felt far beyond music itself. Just consider the efforts in the past several years in favor of content-based accreditation in the face of rampant assessmentism. Thanks to our rigorous peer-review and the recognized integrity of our processes and our national office, we have established credibility among accrediting organizations and government agencies. We maintain an active, vital presence in arts and education policy. True, we all live with the burdens and constraints of assessment to a degree that is distracting at best. But those burdens would be far, far worse if NASM had not been active in this arena during the past decade and more. This policy analysis and activism on our part must, and will, continue. It will require constant vigilance. We are committed – as an Association, as educators, as artists, and as scholars – to maintaining that vigilance, and to creating the conditions and the working room that are necessary for music study at every level, in every dimension, and in every place.

Peer review, professional development, and policy analysis have been hallmarks of our Association for almost a century. These things are *what we do*. They are *activities* and *strategies*. But what drives them? What about our *values*? It is the *values* of any organization that give it definition, and legitimacy. At NASM, our values go to the very heart of education and the arts themselves.

Above all, we believe in **artistry and intellect**. From those modest beginnings in 1924, we have sought to promote the highest standards of artistry and intellect, recognizing that these are qualities developed in *individuals* – that is, in our students. They are *personal* qualities, not institutional traits. We really do put our students first. *They* have been the driving force of all our work, as we seek to advance excellence in music study and performance in every location, at every level. This is true in every degree offered, in every kind of institution. Whether we are part of a large public university, a small religious college, a community college, or a community performing arts school, our purpose, our mission, our goal is the development of the talents, abilities, and potential of each *student*. In this we are all united, as educators and as an Association. Developing artistry and intellect is both our goal on the horizon and the reason we go to work every day. It’s what we do.

And we do this through another of our essential values – our explicit devotion to **teaching**. Teaching is the link between mentor and student, from one generation to another, from one culture to another, from one musician to another. It is fundamental communication. It is often the link between the musician and the audience. Teaching is the generating principle of progress – in the arts, in science, in society. Teaching is, simply stated, our link to the future – nothing less. And NASM, throughout its history, has invested itself in questions of teaching at all levels – *how* to teach, *what* to teach, and how to relate teaching to our evolving profession and to the world at large. The importance and possibilities of teaching have been explored in depth at every annual meeting of this Association; it is a primary theme of *this* meeting. We recognize with pride the mission of teaching in the role of all musical activity. This principle is as old and sacred as civilization itself. It is the core of preparing music professionals, and it is essential to developing musical knowledge and skills among the population as a whole.

A third value of our Association, today and throughout our history, is **openness**. This takes many forms, but the most important one is apparent just looking around this room. NASM welcomes all sizes and types of institutions that meet our basic Standards. There are many dimensions to music study. The range of musical activities is enormous. Those of us in this room are all parts of a great kaleidoscope of musical activity, every part complementing and enriching every other part in the vast mosaic of musical activity. Each of us is proud of our place and role in this mosaic, as we should be. But at the same time, we realize the value of the other parts of this mosaic, and we learn from them. Let me cite a personal example. Since 1998, I have served as a visitor to many institutions in our Association. I come from Vanderbilt University, a private, small-to-mid-size university in the mid-South. And the institutions I have visited include large leading public universities, a distinguished private religious college, two community arts schools, and a progressive arts institute. In every case, our Standards have been applicable to the widely diverse curricula and students of those institutions. And as a music executive myself, I have learned something important on every one of those visits – something applicable at my own school of music, something that has made my school of music better than it might have been otherwise. That is one of the principles we hold dear as an Association. *Taken together in the aggregate, we – all of us in this room – are greater than the sum of our parts.* And that is why it is essential that we all recognize and understand and value the richness of the mosaic of which we are a part. We all have something to contribute to each other. We shouldn't be asking, "What's in it for me?" Rather, each of us – each of our institutions – is a citizen in the society of our Association. If we fail to recognize that, and if we fail to give appropriate value to our diversity, if we see only our own place on the continuum, without reference to our fellow citizens, then we limit ourselves and the potential of our Association. And any institution seeing itself in this fashion – seeing only its *own* place and values in the continuum – sets up a self-limiting perimeter, and diminishes itself. So let us recognize and celebrate our diversity, our inter-connectedness, and the strength of our common bonds.

In all of our diversity, we as an Association are devoted to the vitality of the curriculum, and to our ability to prepare today's students for musical life and professional activity in the coming decades. This has been a primary focus of our annual meetings for several years. We started this focus with a simple question: what skills and knowledge will today's students need 30 or 40 years from now, when they will be at the same point in their careers as we are now? This year we are continuing that conversation by considering the many opportunities that exist within our Standards for institutions of all kinds. Our emphasis is on *opportunities* – that is, on the *future*. In each of our institutions, we consider our curriculum as our students' doorway to the future, for that is precisely what it is.

These opportunities encompass the entire range of relationships that NASM represents – the marriage of artistry and intellect, the importance and integrity of teaching, our connections within and beyond the field of music, the relationship between the individual and the community, and *above all*, our dedication to students. All of these relationships are codified and given life in our Standards. That is where our relationships and our goals find concrete expression. Our Standards are the result of expert individuals –

all of us in this room – working together over a long period of time, developing a kind of group expertise, just as we hear in great orchestras, or in great chamber music. And this is only achieved when we as individuals *transcend* our own world, and enter into the mutual trust and respect that one finds in chamber music. NASM stands for – it embodies – that collective, *creative* experience.

Another hallmark of our shared history is leadership – intelligent, dedicated, and wise leadership. All of us in this room stand on the shoulders of those who preceded us, and of those who have been our esteemed colleagues. A brief glance at the names of NASM officers over the years – and of the Honorary Members who are with us today – reveals a virtual Pantheon of leadership in music in higher education. These are the people who have been our mentors and our colleagues, and we owe them all a huge debt of gratitude for helping to build the greatness and the unity that have characterized NASM over the decades.

And we owe special gratitude to our Executive Director over the past 38 years, Samuel Hope. Sam has presided over, and has helped guide, the most far-reaching growth in the Association’s history. With foresight and wisdom he has helped bring our philosophy and processes into the Twenty-first Century. With goodwill and unfailing generosity he has welcomed hundreds of institutions and new music executives into the fold of NASM. And with tenacity, vigilance, and strategic brilliance he has helped this Association and other artistic disciplines to maintain their ideals of self-improvement and democratic peer review, to retain content-based accountability, and to resist the encroachment of bureaucratic and arbitrary assessmentism. For this wisdom, generosity, vigilance, and brilliance, all of us in this room, and future generations to come, owe Sam Hope our profound and heartfelt gratitude and admiration.

We are fortunate to have the expertise and comprehensive knowledge and skills that Karen Moynahan will bring to the role of Executive Director. All of us have benefitted from her advice and wise counsel over the years. Meanwhile, NASM faces another turning point in the future of leadership among our music executives – among us. Those of us constituting the so-called “baby boom generation,” are starting to retire. We are seeing this in our own faculties, and among ourselves. Within the next five to ten years, a new generation of music executives will assume leadership of our nation’s schools and departments of music. To a large degree, this new generation will have been trained in the 1980s and 1990s, and their perspective and views of the world will necessarily be different from ours.

The coming years will witness dynamic change in our schools and departments of music – perhaps the most dramatic, pervasive changes in almost 70 years. We – the generation being replaced – are keenly aware of the heritage of the past, and we might wish to ensure that this heritage is honored, and that there is continuity in our traditions and institutions. But the fact is that each generation must find its *own* solutions to challenges, and must create the future according to its own lights and wisdom. It has happened before. Just after World War II, while we were busy being born, a generation of returning veterans was assuming leadership of schools and departments of music throughout the nation. Their faculty experience was often minimal – certainly less than ours was when we became music executives. But these leaders created the great institutions that helped lead music activity in this nation for the past half-century. They were the builders, and they were our mentors, and we have been honored to follow in their paths.

And now it will soon be our turn to hand over leadership to a new generation. This transition may appear daunting to us now, but we have the confidence that each new generation will find solutions and create realities that elude us. That has always been the case. That is the nature of change, and we look forward to the creativity that is to come, and that will shape the musicians of the future.

In all of these essential areas of music education – the preparation of teachers, professional curricula, and the change of leadership – there is one guiding light that we all follow: the importance of the musical work itself. Music, and specifically art music, is the goal and the guiding force that we all serve. We can be assured that there will *always* be art music, in one form or another. In the past, art music was often

characterized according to national and cultural boundaries. Although these boundaries have been largely blurred or eliminated by the internet and other features of globalization, there is still the deeply human yearning for music that reflects human experience and aspirations on a profound level. Opera companies and symphony orchestras – some of them – may come and go, but the art work is present in all ages, and in all places. We have often read about the so-called decline or even “death” of classical music, but such pronouncements are nothing new. Indeed, they have been with us for hundreds of years, and it is both amusing and reassuring to read them, and to know that they were wrong. As Charles Rosen reminded us, “The death of classical music is perhaps its oldest continuing tradition.”

This is not to say that we do not have challenges in the place of music in our society, in the way that it is presented to our audiences, and the way that it is taught in our schools and conservatories. We must find new and imaginative ways of engaging our society in the quality – and qualities – of our greatest works. But we also know that music, like other art forms – literature, dance, theatre – will find its means, and will find its way in the world, just as it always has. And thanks in large part to the efforts many of us are making in entrepreneurship, our students will find *their* way in the world. The forms that music may take in the future are unpredictable, just as they have always been. What is constant in every age is that the artwork will endure. That knowledge is as affirming as it is certain.

For all of us, one of life’s greatest privileges is assisting in this cause, promoting and enhancing the art form that we all embrace and to which we have dedicated our lives. And so it is a great pleasure to join with you in this Association as together we recognize and honor the past, navigate the challenges of the present, create a better future for our students and for generations of musicians to come, and ensure that the artwork endures.