

THE HISTORY OF MUSIC EDUCATION

Music education has grown into a crucial component of today's school curriculum. In the early development of the United States, there was no time for music; therefore, there was no need for music education. However, as our nation began to take shape, music began to find purpose. This purpose, combined with the work of a dedicated few, led to the birth of music education.

Music was not a major priority in the lives of the first American colonists. The Boston Bay Settlement flourished in 1630, a mere ten years after the settlers at Plymouth Rock. These people had an incredible amount of work to do, and little time to devote to music. However, music soon found a valuable place in the church environment. Without musical instruments, early settlers turned to singing as their mode of worship. Music was "lined out" by the minister, and the congregation repeated him. As you can imagine, this was not a successful practice. Reverend Thomas Walter made the following comment regarding early church music: "Tunes are miserably tortured . . . gloomy picture of the state of music." In response to the wretched sound of the early church music, the foundation for music education was born.

Reform began to take place in the appearance of singing schools. The first of these schools opened in 1712. The purpose was solely to improve the quality of church music. A traveling teacher would come into town, set up class, and teach basic concepts of vocal music and music appreciation. The first manual used in music education was called "Into to Singing Psalm Tunes" by John Tufts, and it was around to see 11 editions. Soon after Tuft's manual, Thomas Walter put forth 8 editions of "Grounds and Rules of Music." With the help of these early learning texts, singing schools began popping up everywhere. The groundwork for music education had been laid.

The 18th century presented us with many important pioneers of music education. In 1762, a "Renaissance man" named Jean Jasque Rousseau wrote an important book called "Emil." For the first time, it was observed that children learned differently than adults. In 1746, a Swiss teacher named John Pestalozzi came up with a revolutionary approach to education. His philosophy emphasized concepts such as child-centered learning and sequential learning. In the 1830's, a man named William Woodbridge brought some very progressive ideas to America. He made a bold statement when he suggested that singing should be taught in schools – and taxpayers should fund it! Woodbridge also believed that not only should every boy go to school, but so should every girl! These were very wild ideas at the time, and they set the course for the education systems we have in place today.

Perhaps the most influential contributor to music education was a man named Lowell Mason (1792 – 1872). Although Mason made his living as a banker, he was a protégé musician. When Mason was 13 years old, he was organizing choirs. At 16 years old, he was a master at a singing school and writing his own material. As he grew into a young man, he put into practice the principals of Woodbridge and Pestalozzi. Mason began setting up conventions and workshops everywhere. Suddenly there was an abundant supply of music teachers. In 1836, Mayor Sam Elliott authorized music class in public schools. Unfortunately, this wonderful advancement failed due to the lack of funding for these programs. In response to this setback, Lowell Mason taught at Hawes School in 1837 free of charge. His hard work was well received, and in 1838, funding was granted for public school music programs. Lowell Mason's dedication to music earned him the title "Father of Music Education."

Music education has come a long way since the days of Lowell Mason. The dedication of a few has led to the determination of many. Through the hard work of these contributors, music education has become more than just an elective course – it has become a critical aspect of the present educational system.

HISTORY AT A GLANCE

Date	Event	Information
1630	Boston Bay Settlement	Population Flourishes
1635	Boston Latin School established	First Public School
1636	Harvard established	First university
1712	Reform: Singing Schools	The first singing school opens in an attempt to improve the quality of church music
1762	Jean Jasque Rousseau writes "Emil"	Notion that children learn differently than adults
1837	Lowell Mason teaches for free at Hawes	Helps to secure funding for music education in 1838
1910	MSNC established (develops into MENC) (Music Educators National Conference)	Music Supervisors National Conference Outgrowth led by Philip Haydn from Iowa
1914	"Music Teachers Bulletin"	First music education journal
1929	The Great Depression	Money for arts is hard to find
1957	"Sputnik" – Russians go to space	Increase all education in US
1963	Yale Symposium	Music education criticized
1965	Manhattanville Project	Develops sequential music program Emphasis on learning through performance
1967	Tanglewood Symposium (MENC)	Response to Yale Symposium Results in musical requirements in education
1975	Education Act for Handicapped Students	Paves the way for music therapy