Harmonisation with Nature: Enhancing Health Education through Empathetic Ecomusication

by

Kylie Deborah Smith, B. Mus. (Hons), A. Mus. A.

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Statement of Originality

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University’s Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Statement of Authorship

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis contains a published paper/s/scholarly work of which I am a joint author. I have included as part of the thesis a written statement, endorsed by my supervisor, attesting to my contribution to the joint publication/s/scholarly work.

Candidate’s Signature: 

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Date: 

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Abstract

This is a thesis about the spiritual connections between music and health and health and the environment. These connections might at first blush seem problematic, but I aim to show that elucidating these associations at a deeper level can make an enormous difference to the purpose of education at every level. I shall endeavour to show that we are a culture that has paradoxically come to sacralise what is sacred in our world, while at the same time sanctifying what is secular. In contrast to such sociocultural currents, I believe that music education, environmental education and health education can all be reconceptualised pedagogically as modalities of spiritual education. To comprehend the purport of this disquisition involves reframing each of these areas in a new way, while also discerning the ideological impediments which are structurally exemplified to militate against our doing so.

The argument I shall advance in this thesis is that if we are to become guardians for spiritual values which give to our lives a special sense of meaning and purpose, it is essential that we identify and expose the covert ideology of technological materialism propagated in our schools, and to which we have thus often inadvertently given our allegiance and commitment. I shall argue that the effect of this ideology on the evolution of musicology serves as an impediment to the spiritual well being and health of our children and the integrity of the environment which sustains them. It is
my belief that it is only by making explicit the things that oppress the human spirit that we can discern what it takes to emancipate it. Once the human spirit is set free, the task of liberating ourselves from the spell of technologies of power and the unauthentic lives to which they may give rise is just a step away. With the will to see the truth that was always before us, it becomes possible at last to restore the vestiges of humanity that somehow got left behind as a consequence of the preoccupation always to look ahead to technological innovation as the ultimate panacea for our social, and perhaps even our spiritual, salvation. I argue that the restoration of the music we sing to God in gratitude is one such vestige of this liberation. In the pages that follow I shall devote myself to the delicate task of making explicit the paradigmatic value assumptions and hidden presuppositions of the technological materialism which continue to engender the cultural madness of depersonalisation, dehumanisation, and mindless destruction of the environment. This is the lifestyle that has seduced us, and it is the lifestyle from which we have yet to escape, thereby establishing empathetic and loving connections with other people and the world around us.