SPECIAL REPORT ON THE STATUS OF TECHNOLOGY IN MUSIC EDUCATION

Introduction

On the following pages you will find two reports: The first, titled "Progress and Promise in K-12 Music Education: Is Technology Working?" is a panel discussion that was presented at the Sixth annual NSMIT (2004) at Valley City, ND. The idea for the panel evolved from conversations among music technologists who have observed the uses of music technologies in education over the years–some since the availability of consumer computing. Their concern was the effectiveness of computer technology as a teaching/ learning tool in music. In reality, this concern was multi-faceted: (a) has computer technology become more prevalent in school music programs over the years; (b) has the availability of music software improved and increased (or decreased); and (c) is technology working, in the sense that it is saving teacher effort and time, effectively helping students learn (perhaps as compared to other teaching options), and enhancing attitudes toward learning. This first panel of four members described some of their experience and research related to these concerns, and as you will observe from the report, they relate both some pros and cons about music technology in K-12 education.

At least two observations from this panel are obvious: Music technology has not yet matured (particularly in regard to software), and the integration of technology in music education in Grades K-12 is moving at a slow pace. The reasons for these conditions are discussed in the report, and sometimes their solutions are obvious–but difficult to implement. In other situations, perhaps one must be patient and allow other "forces" of society to play their role in music education as time moves forward.

The 2004 panel prompted thoughts about a follow-up discussion at the 2005 NSMIT in Oneonta, NY. The rationale for a second panel was the feeling that a yearly "view" of technology in music education certainly could monitor the direction music technology was taking by offering a year-to-year timeline analysis of progress in software, integration of technology in music classes, etc. Information gleaned from this approach could be valuable in "correcting" wrong directions in technology, improving weaker areas in music technology, and perhaps even usable as data for writing grants or convincing administration to fund our needs in technology!

Thus the second panel, "Progress and Promise in K-12 Music Education: Is Technology Making a Difference?" was organized with five presenters. The 2005 report follows the 2004 report. As you read it, make your own judgment about possible changes in music technology from the 2004 to 2005 panels. Also, it wouldn't surprise me if a third panel appeared on the 2006 NSMIT program . . .

—Jack Taylor