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MUSIC IN AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION
An Historical and Philosophical Analysis

by

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A Field Study Report submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
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ABSTRACT

This Field Study Report represents a preliminary inquiry or prolegomenon to a Philosophy of Music Education in Australia. My concern here is with the nature and function of music in Australian education, especially of young people. I am not concerned with the technical details of education and training in the musical art itself: my aim is rather to distinguish and account for public and professional attitudes towards music in Australian education, by identifying their philosophical sources and social determinants.

The *Introduction* begins with a general historical background, including detailed references to the important developments of the past decade that have dramatically altered the role and raised public awareness of music in Australia.

Chapter I, 'The Politics of Music in School and Society' argues that the philosophy of music education derives from two classical sources: Plato, the inspiration for music educators in totalitarian societies; and Aristotle, for education in the liberal democracies. A recent review (Sparshott 1980) indicates that these two philosophies are still key positions in the field.

Chapter II, 'The Tradition of Music in Australian Education' shows how the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, with Locke's utilitarianism, have influenced music education since colonial times, and how British pedagogical traditions have been modified

by adaption to a new society and ethos.

Chapter III, 'Music in Contemporary Australian Education' reviews recent empirical studies of the subject, showing, the persistence of traditional attitudes and basic problems.

Chapter IV, 'The Right to Music: Aims and Methods' reports the empirical part of this Field Study - recorded interviews and discussions with adults and children involved in Australian music education and associated activities. These were the subject of a series of eight radio programs, first broadcast nationally by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, November 1979 to February 1980, subsequently rebroadcast twice, and now published on cassette (1981)

Chapter V, 'The Right to Music : the Broadcast Series' consists of cassette recordings of the broadcast discussions, together with minimally edited transcriptions of the text.

In my *Conclusion, 'Philosophy of Music Education in Australia: the Three Traditions'*, I offer a preliminary analysis of contemporary Australian attitudes towards music in education as revealed by the broadcast discussion. I conclude that, while Australian music educators have been untrained philosophically, their attitudes (like those of society at large) towards music in education derive, in the main, from Plato, Aristotle and Locke.

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