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#BlackMusicMatters: Dismantling Anti-Black Racism in Music Education

#BlackMusicMatters : démanteler le racisme anti-noir en éducation musicale

Darren Hamilton



Darren Hamilton facilitating a choral rehearsal at Toronto Mass Choir's PowerUp Gospel Music Workshop held at York University, Hyunwoo Hwang / Oh Happy Day Photography - Instagram: @ohhappydayphoto @mikehwang82 / Website: <https://www.ohhappydayphoto.com/>

Abstract: Music curricula still fails to adequately represent Black music and musicians, resulting in inequities for Black students and Black music educators. The outcry from the #BlackLivesMatter movement has led to calls for institutional policies to combat violence and systemic racism towards Blacks. In this paper, I use Critical Race Theory to frame the discussion of oppressive structures that exist in music curricula, and propose Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as a means to create space for Black music in classrooms. I then present the notion, #BlackMusicMatters, calling for curriculum reform that includes Black music and suggest practical approaches for dismantling Anti-Black Racism in music education.

Résumé: Les programmes de musique ne représentent toujours pas adéquatement la culture musicale noire et ses musiciens, ce qui entraîne des inégalités pour les élèves et les enseignants de musique noirs. Le tollé provoqué par le mouvement #BlackLivesMatter réclame des politiques institutionnelles pour combattre la violence et

le racisme systémique envers les Noirs. Dans cet article, j'utilise le cadre théorique Critical Race Theory (théorie critique de la race) pour encadrer le débat sur les structures oppressives qui existent dans les programmes de musique, puis je propose l'approche Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (pédagogie adaptée à la culture) comme moyen de créer un espace pour la musique noire dans les salles de classe. Je présente ensuite ce qu'est le #BlackMusicMatters, appelant à une réforme des programmes d'enseignement qui inclut la musique noire, puis je suggère des approches pratiques pour démanteler le racisme anti-noir en éducation musicale.

Introduction

Current events have once again highlighted the systemic structures that continue to oppress Black people. In 2013, the #BlackLivesMatter organization was founded in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer.

Before then, and since, there have been countless cases of murder and violence towards Black individuals inflicted by White individuals in the United States, in Canada, and globally. The mission of the #BlackLivesMatter movement is to eradicate white supremacy and to intervene in violence and injustice inflicted on Black communities (About, 2020). Recently, this movement has sparked global protests against racism and police brutality - after George Floyd, a Black man, was murdered in Minneapolis by Derek Chauvin, a White police officer (Levenson, 2020). This murder was video-recorded and viewed widely. Public outcry has prompted many organizations to respond with official statements denouncing Anti-Black Racism and policy changes intended to dismantle systemic racism. Although such organizations include those within the field of education, educational institutions are not innocent when it comes to perpetuating Anti-Black Racism.

Peel District School Board (PDSB) serves the municipalities of Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon in Ontario, and is the second largest school board in Canada (Rushowy, 2012). In 2019, concerns about systemic racism prompted the Ontario Minister of Education to conduct a review of the board. Its findings highlighted the existence of Anti-Black Racism in many areas including curriculum (Chadha, Herbert & Richard, 2020). With the spotlight shining on Anti-Black Racism, it seems there is no time like the present for us to address the existence of Anti-Black Racism in the field of music education.

Despite the institutionalization of Jazz (Dobbins, 1988) and the inclusion of Black music courses at some Canadian postsecondary institutions (Courses, n.d.; Bachelor of Music, n.d.), Black music remains underrepresented in schools, resulting in inequities for Black students and Black music educators. For more than 20 years, I have experienced the impact of systemic racism during my journey as a Black music student and educator in Canadian institutions. In this article, I present the notion, #BlackMusicMatters, calling for curriculum reform that includes Black music in school programs and opportunities for Black students to be more engaged in music education. I use Critical Race Theory (CRT) to frame the discussion around how the dominance of Western classical music discriminates against Black and other racialized students. I draw on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) as a tool for creating space for Black music in classrooms and I suggest practical steps music educators and institutions can take to dismantle Anti-Black Racism in music education.

It is important to define key terms that will be used throughout this article. 'Black' is a term used by Dumas (2016) to refer to "a racialized social group that shares a specific set of histories, cultural processes, and imagined and performed kinships" (pp. 12-13). He asserts that

"*Black* is a synonym (however imperfect) of *African American* and replaces previous terms like *Negro* and *Colored*" (p. 13). Codjoe (2001) associates the term interchangeably with 'African-Canadian,' 'African-American,' and 'African'. I use the term 'Black' to refer to individuals possessing identities in African history and culture including African-Canadians. 'Anti-Black Racism' is defined as "prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and its legacy" (Anti-Black Racism, n.d.). I use the phrase, 'Dismantling Anti-Black Racism', to refer to the process of tearing down systemic structures that oppress and discriminate against Black people, their lives and their culture. 'Black music' refers to music that originates from Black culture including, but not limited to, Rap, Hip Hop, Jazz, Rhythm and Blues, Soul and Gospel. Sarath (2018) further describes Black music as comprising a long history of African-based and African American-based forms evolving through contact with a wide range of cultural influences. Since Black music is associated with Black culture, it is not immune to the prejudices and negative attitudes Anti-Black Racism inflicts on Black people.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that situates race at the center of social analysis (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Dumas, 2013). Ladson-Billings (1998) identifies CRT as a tool for the "deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power" (p. 9). Hess (2017a) uses CRT as a theoretical framework to "explicitly examine race-related silences and the importance of using direct language to identify structural and systemic racism" (p. 16). According to Yosso (2005), "CRT is a framework



Chorale workshop at Toronto Mass Choir's PowerUp Gospel Music Workshop, York University, February 2019.
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Music educators and music institutions can choose to reject non-Western classical music, however racialized music students cannot avoid Western classical music.

that can be used to theorize, examine and challenge the ways race and racism implicitly and explicitly impact on social structures, practices and discourses” (p. 70). In her article, Hess (2017a) focuses on three facets of CRT while analysing the state of music education: institutional and systemic injustice; Eurocentrism; and whiteness and white supremacy as being a dominant ideology. In her analysis of the state of teacher education programs, Sleeter (2017) also draws on three tenets of CRT: interest convergence, color blindness and experiential knowledge. I will expand upon and connect these characteristics of CRT throughout this discussion to identify oppressive structures that exist in music curricula, activating my agency as a Black music educator and scholar to advocate for equity and diversity in music education. I will focus specifically on the following oppressive structures: The Lack of Black Culture and History in the Curriculum; The Lack of Black Educators in the Education System; and The Socio-Economic Status of Racialized Groups.

The Lack of Black Culture and History in the Curriculum

In the review of PDSB, Black and non-Black students expressed concerns that the curriculum does not reflect the diversity of the student body (Chadha et al., 2020). Similar complaints about the absence of racialized narratives in the curriculum were reported in a review of race relations in Ontario nearly thirty years earlier (Lewis, 1992). In her article, “Black Learners in Canada”, Hampton (2010) highlights several studies representing the narratives of Black students who raised identical criticisms prompting their communities to petition for Africentric public schools in Toronto, Halifax and Montreal. A study investigating the Canadian school experiences of Black students in Edmonton, Alberta revealed “the lack of representation of Black/African perspectives, histories and experiences” (Codjoe, 2001, p. 349) amongst the concerns pervading student narratives. In a recent pilot study I conducted at the school where I teach, Black non-music students expressed sentiments that the traditional concert band and pop music programming was not for them (Hamilton, 2019). The concerns raised by these racialized

students embodies the CRT tenet of experiential knowledge, which values the counterstories of marginalized groups that call into question majoritarian stories (Sleeter, 2017). Codjoe’s (2001) analysis of student narratives highlighting the Eurocentric emphasis in their secondary history classes is an example of such majoritarian stories. An educator who participated in the PDSB review suggested that a global perspective of the world requires an expansive curriculum that speaks to the experiences of more than just Europeans (Chadha et al., 2020).

The dominance of Western classical music in music curricula is evidence of Eurocentrism in music education, which is often unacknowledged (Hess, 2017a). Hess (2017a) presents the term ‘terminal naivety’ to describe the lack of awareness of power relations and large global dynamics associated with Western classical music. Furthermore, Hess (2017a) asserts that there is an implied political disinterestedness present in the Western classical music arena that facilitates discourses of colorblindness and meritocracy that erase the material realities of musicians of color in such spaces. Sleeter (2017) points out that meritocracy in policies and practices, as well as claims of neutrality and colorblindness mask White privilege and power. Herein lies the institutional and systemic injustice for racialized students. Sleeter (2017) asserts that, “As dominant ideologies and knowledge systems based on White world views deny or mask racism, CRT theorists assume that those who understand racism best are not its perpetrators but rather those who are routinely victimized by it” (p. 162). This point serves to validate the Black and racialized voices that are represented in the aforementioned research studies as well as my own voice in this article. In Codjoe’s (2001) study, Black students expressed concerns of inequity because, while European history is predominantly taught in schools, they had to learn about Black history on their own outside of school. They identified this as one of the most impactful forms of racism in their Canadian educational experience. Parallels can be drawn between the experiences of these students in history classes and Black students in music classes, including my own lived experiences pursuing music education.

The systemic structures that perpetuate Eurocentrism while silencing the histories and experiences of racialized groups in schools is central to Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Several scholars refer to Bourdieu’s work as a theoretical underpinning for academic discourses in the fields of sociology and education (Harker, 1984; Hart, 2019; Kingston, 2001; Mills, 2008; Yosso, 2005). Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital considers the knowledges and culture (also known as ‘habitus’) of the upper and middle classes to be valuable to a hierarchical society. Bourdieu



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argues that the habitus of the dominant group is embodied in schools, resulting in the reproduction of the dominant culture in society (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Yosso (2005) uses CRT to examine Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, in which he asserts that some communities are culturally wealthy while others are culturally poor. Yosso argues that Bourdieu's concept has been used to maintain "White, middle class culture as the standard, and therefore all other forms and expressions of 'culture' are judged in comparison to this 'norm'" (p. 76). She identifies deficit thinking as one of the most prevalent forms of contemporary racism in schools in the United States.

Deficit models assume that marginalized students and families are at fault for poor academic achievement because students enter school without the normative culture knowledge and skills, and parents neither value or support their child's education (Yosso, 2005). Hampton (2010) found that teachers in a Canadian study expressed similar views, believing that 'at risk' African-Canadian students possessed social and academic deficiencies in their families, values and attitudes towards education. Harker (1984) refers to Bourdieu's work to explain that deficit models are derived from the assumption made by educational institutions that all children have equal access to the cultural capital of the dominant group. Kingston (2001) critiques Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction citing that there are often omitted variables besides the cultural capital of the dominant group that can provide upward social and economic mobility for marginalized groups in society. One significant omitted

variable is the cultural capital that marginalized groups possess. Harker (1984) posits that schools have the ability to allow for human agency through "cultural production, specifically as it relates to the production of working-class cultural practices" (p. 123). Mills (2008) suggests that when teachers broaden the types of cultural capital they value in the classroom through their curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, they can act as agents of transformation rather than reproduction.

As an alternative to deficit thinking, Yosso (2005) introduces 'Community Cultural Wealth', pointing out that, "CRT shifts the research lens away from a deficit view of Communities of Color as places full of cultural poverty or disadvantages, and instead focuses on and learns from these communities' cultural assets and wealth" (p. 82). When Eurocentrism is the standard in education, racialized students do not have the opportunity to share and expand on their existing cultural knowledge, histories, and experiences while learning. Instead, these students are expected to align their interests and learning with the recognized 'tastes' or 'preferences' associated with the dominant culture in order to be successful in school (Hart, 2019). Dobbins (1988) explains that while White Americans can choose to overlook Black culture, Black Americans are required to know a great deal about White culture simply in order to survive. Likewise, music educators and music institutions can choose to reject non-Western classical music, however racialized music students cannot avoid Western classical music.

The dominance of Eurocentrism and whiteness in



A high school concert band performing.
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society is not limited to American culture, it is also reflected in many aspects of Canadian culture. Hamilton (2011) recalls the history of Canada's all Black segregated schools that were located in Ontario and Nova Scotia in the 1800's. She points out that while Black students were legally required to attend segregated schools, the history and culture of African-descended people were either being misrepresented or completely ignored in the general school curriculum (Hamilton, 2011). Hamilton goes on to suggest that when Blacks are left out of public schools, they end up segregating to their churches and communities, further perpetuating the marginalization of their cultural practices in relation to those of the dominant mainstream. This results in racial isolation, racialized categorization of 'other', and racialized identities continuing to be viewed as inferior (Hamilton, 2011). The silencing of Black history and culture in the curriculum has a direct association with the dominance of Eurocentrism in schools. The reproduction of the dominant culture's capital can be traced to the ideology of white supremacy.

White supremacy is the belief that Whites are superior to other races and should have control over racialized people. Howard (2004) asserts that "race...acts in broadly predictable ways...to position whiteness as superior to non-whiteness in Euro-American influenced society" (p. 66). In his article, Brosnan (2016) discusses the representations of race and racism in textbooks during and after the American Civil War in southern Black segregated schools. An analysis of historical textbooks that were created for former Black slaves revealed negative stereotypes and attempts to force these freed people back onto plantation fields. Brosnan argues that this "was principally done to maintain white supremacy in the aftermath of slavery" (p. 720). He asserts that the content in these textbooks reflected the attitudes and values of "the powerful white Americans of

this period...committed to perpetuating the racial subordination of black people, both before and after the Civil War period" (Brosnan, 2016, p. 720).

In Canada, Codjoe (2001) identified racial biases in school curriculum and textbooks as one of the greatest concerns expressed by Black students. The absence of Black history and perspectives in the curriculum, as well as Eurocentrism in school courses, provides evidence that white supremacy still exists in the education system. The dominance of Western classical music in music education propels this ideology (Hess, 2017a, 2017b). Inferiority is not a new concept or experience, but rather a social condition that has been inflicted on Blacks after more than 400 years of slavery. Dumas (2016) asserts that, "slavery is how Black existence is imagined and enacted upon, and how non-Black people—and particularly whites—assert their own right to freedom, and right to the consumption, destruction, and/or simple dismissal of the Black" (p. 13). Sefa Dei (2016), echoing to Bourdieu, refers to schools as sites for indoctrination and the reproduction of inequity, calling for the reimagining of schooling and education. Paralleling Hart and Mills, he also argues that schools can cultivate empowerment, resistance and transformation. He asserts that, "for black bodies, schooling has not been 'home' for us...the school and the conventional educational site have been, and continue to be, alienating spaces for many of us" (Sefa Dei, 2016, p. 218).

The traditional Western classical music program can be an alienating space for Black students as it demands the development and use of musical literacies such as the sight reading of music notation (Countryman, 2009; Giddings, 2008; Hess, 2015; Hess, 2017b; Robinson & Hendricks, 2018; Walden, 2014). The Western classical music program also ignores the aural musicianship skills—the community cultural wealth—that many Black students do possess as part of their identity from engaging in their cultural music (Fitzpatrick, 2012; Walker, 2003; Yosso, 2005). In this manner, Western classical music repertoire and the related musical literacies required to engage in the performance of such repertoire have been deemed superior to the aural musical traditions of many racialized groups including Black students.

Hess (2017b) asserts that, "In music education, notational literacy and technical knowledge represent the currency required for further education in music" (p. 182). This has serious implications for racialized students who rarely engage in school music classes and rely on other spaces within their cultural community for musical development and engagement. This was true of my own educational experiences. Although I had taken instrumental music and strings in elementary school, I was not engaged in music classes during my high school years. Instead, I was

attracted to learning and performing gospel music at the Black church I attended and through participation in two community gospel choirs. Fortunately, I also studied classical piano privately outside of school which afforded me the skills needed to gain entrance to postsecondary music studies. However, many of my Black gospel musician peers who desired to pursue postsecondary music education either could not gain entry to music programs or were forced to drop out early in their studies due to gaps in their music theory and notation reading skills. This is another example of institutional and systemic racism that exists in music education.

Hess (2015) asserts that “Canadian music curricula assumes a universal student—a ‘Canadian’ (white, Western) student who will feel at ‘home’ in the world of Western European music” (p. 338). Wiens (2015) discusses the importance of place in music education, noting that, “each place has particular characteristics, and it is through these characteristics that people will develop a sense of belonging to the place” (p. 21). When the core literacies of Western classical music dominate, the music classroom is not a place where Black students feel that they belong. Black and other racialized students deserve to feel as though they ‘belong’ in music classrooms. I believe that music education needs to stand against the erasure and silencing of Black culture in the curriculum.

The Lack of Black Educators in the Education System

Research shows that there is an underrepresentation of Black educators in schools at all levels in Canada, and indeed, worldwide (Bergonzi, Yerichuk, Galway & Gould, 2015; Bhopal, 2016; Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2018; Chadha et al., 2020; Clement, 2006; Hampton, 2010; Lewis, 1992; Robinson & Hendricks, 2018). The PDSB review highlighted systemic racism in teacher hiring practices as a factor contributing to the disproportion of racialized and non-racialized educators in the system (Chadha et al., 2020). This points to the institutional and systemic injustices in education that are also a result of White Supremacist dominant ideology (Hess, 2017). The PDSB report identified that in 2016, only 7% of the teachers in the board were Black, while 67% of the teachers were White. Subsequently, 83% of the students in the same board identified as racialized, of which 10% were Black (Chadha et al., 2020). This paints a daunting picture of the lack of representation of Black educators in the board who possibly teach music.

The situation is even more dire at Canadian postsecondary institutions. According to a recent report, in 2016, Black educators represented 2% of university teachers and 2.4% of college teachers, while educators who were not members of a visible minority group represented 78.9% and 85.6% respectively (Canadian

Association of University Teachers, 2018). A study exploring tenure-stream full-time positions in music education at Canadian postsecondary institutions based on the 2012/2013 academic year reported that 1.4% of music faculty were identified as being of Black/African descent, while 91.4% identified as White-non Hispanic (Bergonzi et al., 2015). Robinson & Hendricks (2018) discuss racial inequality in American music education, drawing attention to the underrepresentation of Asians, Blacks and Hispanics in pre-service music teacher programs and teacher licensure exams that function as a ‘leaky pipeline’ to exclude potential music teachers from these same racialized groups.

It is evident that systemic structures impacting both the certification and hiring of Black educators exist in education, and more specifically in music education. These oppressions are evident even when forms of Black music such as Jazz enter the academy (Dobbins, 1988). Interest convergence is a CRT tenet asserting the idea that “Whites advance interests of people of color only when they converge with and advance White interests” (Sleeter, 2017, p. 157). Although the institutionalization of Jazz would have been an opportune time to engage and hire more Black music educators in academia, research confirms what is clearly visible when you visit the Jazz program at Canadian postsecondary institutions—full-time Jazz tenure positions are occupied by White professors (Bergonzi et al., 2015). Furthermore, these programs are usually dominated by White and other non-Black students.

Black students already experience feelings of alienation due to the lack of representation of Black music in the curriculum. Such feelings are amplified when they do not see themselves reflected in the teaching staff at school. Strayhorn (2011) conducted a study involving Black undergraduate students at a predominant white university in the southeastern region of the United States. One second-year music student in the study shared:

It’s easy to feel like you’re alone when walking around campus because there are so few Black

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people here. As a music major, I don't even see Black students in most of my theory classes, and there's only one Black music professor and he's part-time. (Strayhorn, 2011, p. 142)

This reminds me of my own postsecondary music education journey. I had one part-time Black music professor during my undergraduate studies and have not had any Black professors during my graduate studies. While attending a college music program in Edmonton, Alberta, I was one of only two Black students represented out of approximately 200 students in the program. During graduate school, I have often been the only Black student in my graduate courses. The lack of Black music professors and students represented in my postsecondary music programs created feelings of isolation that made me consider dropping out several times throughout my academic career. This lack of visible minority role models for Black students has serious implications for the future of music education (Clements, 2009; Codjoe, 2001; Fitzpatrick, 2012; Hampton, 2010; Strayhorn, 2011).

The Socio-Economic Status of Racialized Groups

The PDSB review highlighted Anti-Black Racism by means of streaming Black students into *applied* (as opposed to *academic* or university preparatory) and workplace level high school courses (Chadha et al., 2020). The ministry report asserts that, “for decades Black communities have complained that their children are inappropriately streamed and, as a result, are deprived of the opportunity to realize their full potentials and to fully participate in and contribute to Ontario’s economy” (Chadha et al., 2020, p. 12). This aspect of institutional and systemic injustice impacts racialized families in significant socio-economic ways, as underrepresentation in academic stream classes limits postsecondary opportunities and future income potential.

In the report, *Canada’s Colour Coded Income Inequality*, Block, Galabuzi & Tranjan (2019) point to labour market discrimination towards racialized groups, highlighting that in 2015, “racialized men earned 78 cents

for every dollar that non-racialized men earned...racialized women earned 59 cents for every dollar that non-racialized men earned...non-racialized women earned 67 cents for every dollar that non-racialized men earned” (pp. 4-5). According to this report, Blacks had an unemployment rate of 12.8% which was higher than the average 8.8% for all racialized groups and 8.2% for the non-racialized population (Block, Galabuzi & Tranjan, 2019). The income gap and employment rates speak to the economic oppressions that Black families face which contribute to inequities in access to private music lessons. This contributes to Black students lacking the traditional Western classical music literacies of music notation and in instrumental proficiency as their families typically do not possess the same financial resources as their White counterparts. Similarly, socio-economic factors contribute to the ability for Black families to afford postsecondary education. These socio-economic realities reveal that racialized children and their families do not have the same cultural capital as the dominant group and therefore should not be made victims of deficit thinking (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Harker, 1984; Yosso, 2005). This analysis via CRT uncovers the prevalence of Anti-Black Racism in Canadian society, in education, and in music education.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

I will begin this section by examining Paolo Freire’s work in critical pedagogy, as many of the ideas of culturally responsive teaching stem from his work. In his 1970 book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire argues against a ‘banking’ concept of education in which teachers ‘deposit’ knowledge into the ‘ignorant minds’ of their students while exercising pedagogical practices and attitudes that mirror an oppressive society (Freire and Ramos, 2009). Examples of such attitudes and practices include, “the teacher teaches and the students are taught...the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing...the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly...the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it” (Freire and Ramos, 2009, p. 164). Freire proposes a ‘problem-posing’ education that liberates the minds of students by using dialogue as an act of cognition rather than the act of transferring information from the teacher to the student. Furthermore, he suggests that in such an educational model, the teacher is no longer the one who ‘teaches’, but is also taught in dialogue with their students, who, in essence, teach while being taught. He asserts that:

In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not

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Darren Hamilton conducting a chorale performance at Toronto Mass Choir's PowerUp Gospel Music Workshop Finale Concert held at Global Kingdom Ministries church in Toronto, Canada.
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as a static reality but as a reality in process, in transformation. (Freire and Ramos, 2009, p. 171)

Critical pedagogy encourages students to ‘name their world’ and work to change it by identifying and resisting hegemonic systems around them (Freire and Ramos, 2009; Freire, 2013; Hess, 2017b). Freire’s critical pedagogy does not exist without criticism. One critique of critical pedagogy is that the abstract language of terms such as ‘empowerment’, ‘student voice’ and ‘dialogue’ mask the reinscription of hegemonic relations (Ellsworth, 1989). Ellsworth (1989) refers to these terms as ‘repressive myths’ that perpetuate relations of domination as there are unequal power relations between students and teachers that challenge critical pedagogy’s ability to make room for all voices—especially those of women. Ladson-Billings (1997) argues that critical pedagogy seeks to dismantle educational and social inequality primarily by ‘naming’ and ‘resisting’ social, political, educational, and economic power structures while omitting the question of race. She posits that this is why some legal scholars arrived at the proposition of Critical Race Theory (CRT), which has been discussed extensively earlier in this paper. When CRT is applied, criticisms of education can no longer be ‘color-blind’ or ‘race neutral’. Ladson-Billings (1997) asserts that CRT “recognizes that African-American students regardless of their economic standing and/or gender, suffer the pernicious effects of a racist society” (p. 131) and argues that “any effort at critical pedagogy in the context of a racialized society without significant attention being paid to race will never be empowering” (p. 137). By fusing the elements of critical pedagogy and CRT, Ladson-Billings proposed culturally relevant teaching as an instructional strategy that enables teachers and students to consciously make race the ‘problem’ that is ‘posed’ in a liberating education.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), also known

as culturally relevant teaching, is an instructional tool that educators can employ to ensure that the prior cultural experiences, knowledge, and skills students bring to the classroom are acknowledged, especially those of racialized students. Ladson-Billings (2009) defines CRP as:

A pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically, by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These cultural references are not merely vehicles for bridging or explaining the dominant culture; they are aspects of the curriculum in their own right. (p. 17-18)

According to Fitzpatrick (2012), students are empowered when their cultural identities are reflected in the classroom. This can be accomplished when teachers use CRP to align music curriculum and student cultural identities by paying increased attention to both the content of their curriculum and the process of their pedagogy (Fitzpatrick, 2012). Music educators will often attempt to integrate non-Western classical music into the classroom by using Western classical music traditions and practices, rather than engaging the authentic practices of the culture (Fitzpatrick, 2012; Gidding, 2008; Hess, 2017b; Robinson & Hendricks, 2018). For example, when conductors program band arrangements of popular songs, students are still relying on music notation and reading skills, while playing on traditional band instruments. In such cases, attention has only been given to the popular music content of the repertoire. For popular music to be authentically embedded into the classroom, students should be developing the same aural musicianship skills used by popular musicians. They should also have opportunities to develop instrumental proficiency on the same instruments used to perform and produce popular music (Giddings, 2008; Green, 2001).

Hess (2017b) suggests that recent trends to engage popular and world musics in the classroom might have consequences that result in ‘casualties’ of critical pedagogy. Specifically, she alludes to the responsibility that teachers have to educate students, particularly students of color, in the “cultural codes they must acquire to be successful in a world dominated by white cultural literacies” (Hess, 2017b, p. 182). When the curricular content focus shifts from the Western classical music canon to non-Western classical music forms, students ‘lose’ the opportunity to develop traditional music literacies. While this may be the case, music educators should consider what it means to be ‘successful’ in music education, and that most racialized students are positioned to be unsuccessful when ‘success’ is measured based on the acquisition of white cultural literacies only. In addition to engaging in the same musical practices found in a given culture, the process of CRP entails fostering an environment of greater cultural

awareness, inquiry, and acceptance through interactions, discussions, questions, and dialogue relating to cultural music (Fitzpatrick, 2012). Most forms of Black music are aural traditions that have deep cultural histories, social contexts, and identities that must be explored in conjunction with the repertoire (Dobbins, 1988; Fitzpatrick, 2012; Robinson & Hendricks, 2018; Walker, 2003; Yosso, 2005). I offer CRP as the ‘podium’ that music educators can stand on in order to successfully integrate Black music and enlist Black students in music education.

While CRP may be metaphorically viewed as a podium, it is important to emphasize that teaching cultural music does not rely on the foundation of direct instruction that is common to traditional Western classical music ensemble classes. In his work, Freire (2013) analyzes “dialogue as a human phenomenon” (p. 159). This concept of dialogue is not just about speaking with another person, rather, the root of dialogue requires love, humility, hope, and faith to nourish a “horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence” (Freire, 2013, p. 159). This reinforces the importance of dialogue as a pivotal component in the process of implementing CRP (Fitzpatrick, 2012). Educators must develop a relationship of trust in order to shift power relations in the classroom to working with students instead of teaching to students (Freire and Ramos, 2009; Wiens, 2015). Trust between music teachers and racialized students is needed in order to effectively integrate cultural music into the class. Likewise, teaching cultural music requires music educators to develop a mutual love for non-Western classical music genres, humility to explore music that is outside of their area of expertise, and faith that valuable musical learning can take place for both students and themselves. When effectively implemented in music classrooms and curricula, CRP serves as a powerful resource for dismantling Anti-Black Racism in music education.

Discussion: #BlackMusicMatters

#BlackMusicMatters is not a new concept. In his book, *Black Music Matters: Jazz and the Transformation of Music Studies*, Sarath (2018) promotes the reform of music studies, calling for a centralized presence of Jazz and Black music to ground American musicians in a core facet of their true cultural heritage. He asserts that the musical soul of America rests in Jazz and that the genre has important contributions to make with the world’s musical soul and with the soul of humanity (Sarath, 2018). Furthermore, Sarath (2018) encourages music educators and educational institutions to imagine the impact such reform would have on Black students who face the harsh realities of racism that lead to low self-esteem and self-confidence,

lack of role models, and a blurred vision of future possibilities for their lives. Including Black music in the curriculum can help Black students to liberate their Blackness and affirm their Black existence (BLM - Canada, n.d.). I propose the following courses of action for dismantling Anti-Black Racism and engaging more Black students in music education: Teaching Black Music and Including Black Music Courses; Engaging Black Music Educators and Musicians; Fostering Student Choice and Access; and Investing in Marketing and Resources.

Teaching Black Music and Including Black Music Courses

Music educators can employ the pedagogical principles of CRP to include Black music into their classrooms and engage Black students in music education. By integrating various forms of Black music into the classroom, educators can teach music concepts and promote positive attitudes towards Black culture (Fitzpatrick, 2012). Music educators often resist teaching Black music due to fear of cultural appropriation and not knowing enough about Black music genres. I encourage teachers to seek out resources that will help them better understand the history and culture of Black music (see Table 1), to take advantage of professional development workshops and related opportunities to practically engage in forms of Black music, and to leverage the prior cultural knowledge and experience of the students in their classroom. Music educators can also solicit the support of Black musicians to facilitate workshops on Black music genres in their classrooms (Clements, 2009; Fitzpatrick, 2012; Hampton, 2010).

In 2019, I conducted a pilot study involving Black non-music students ($N = 95$) at the high school where I

Suggested Reading For Music Educators

Banfield, William. *Cultural Codes: Makings of a Black Music Philosophy*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2010.

Floyd, Samuel. *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Ramsey, Guthrie. *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip Hop*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003.

Sarath, Ed. *Black Music Matters: Jazz and the Transformation of Music Studies*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

Table 1. Books for educators on black music

teach. The results of this study revealed that 56.8% ($N = 54$) were interested in taking a Black focused music course while another 31.6% ($N = 30$) would consider it if one were offered at the school (Hamilton, 2019). Music institutions can diversify their course offerings and attract more Black students by offering Black-focused music courses (Clements, 2009; Hamilton, 2019). These courses should bear course names that quickly identify them as Black music courses such as Jazz Band, R&B Ensemble, or Gospel Choir. Another suggestion would be a course titled 'Black Music' which covers a variety of Black music genres. This could be offered as a performance course or a history/studies course.

Ultimately, the Whiteness of teacher education programs and Western dominated post-secondary music programs that continue to produce music educators who are unqualified to teach Black music genres must be addressed (Clements, 2009; Hess, 2017a, 2017b; Robinson & Hendricks, 2018; Sleeter, 2017). I recommend that post-secondary institutions mandate at least one Black music history and one Black music performance course as compulsory for their music degree requirements. At the high school level, steps can be taken to include a Black-focused stand-alone music course. Music educators can also collaborate with other arts educators to propose and develop a Black-focused integrated arts course. For example, I am currently working with a visual arts educator to develop and offer a course focusing on Black art and various forms of Black music at my school for the 2020-2021 school year. Representation of Black music and Black music courses are crucial steps in dismantling the systemic structures that have excluded Black music from music classrooms.

Engaging Black Music Educators and Musicians

Recall from the earlier discussion on CRT, that research indicates an underrepresentation of Black educators in schools. This reality is magnified in the field of music education, where the lack of Black music educators serving as role models for Black students has serious implications. When marginalized students fail to see themselves represented in music classrooms they are less likely to take music once it becomes an optional subject (Clements, 2009; Walden, 2014). The resulting domino effect is that racialized students remain underrepresented in undergraduate music programs, teacher education programs, and in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary teaching positions. I recommend that institutions reflect on their equity and diversity policies and be intentional about hiring more Black music educators. Due to the cultural wealth they possess (Yosso, 2005), Black music educators are most adequately prepared to teach Black focused music courses. In cases where the pool of quali-

fied Black music educators is limited (i.e., the public school system where provincial teaching certifications are required for hiring), administrators and music teachers are encouraged to contract Black musicians and educators who can assist with facilitating workshops or teaching units on Black music genres (Clements, 2009; Codjoe, 2001; Fitzpatrick, 2012; Hampton, 2010). At the post-secondary level, an even greater effort should be made to hire Black music educators and musicians. Increased representation will allow for the implementation of more Black music courses that attract more Black students to universities, paving the way for more Black music educators in teacher education programs, and ultimately leading to more Black educators teaching in public music school classrooms.

Fostering Student Choice and Access

In my pilot study, students expressed that they wanted music classes and institutions to cater to a variety of Black music genres (Hamilton, 2019). Institutions can take steps, over time, to provide a range of courses in Black music (Clements, 2009). For example, York University in Toronto, Ontario is known for having one of the most diverse music programs in Canada, offering a number of Black music performance and studies courses such as Jazz Orchestra, Gospel Choir, West African Drumming, Rhythm & Blues Ensemble, Caribbean Ensemble, History of Gospel Music, and African-American Popular Music. (Courses, n.d.).

It is important to note that including Black music courses or units in the curriculum should not be approached with a spirit of tokenism. In her article, "Decolonizing Music Education: Moving Beyond Tokenism", Hess (2015) examines three curricular models proposed by Chandra Talpade Mohanty for the field of women's studies and rethinks how these models could be applied to music education. In her analysis, she argues against the 'tourist' and 'explorer' models. The 'tourist' model encourages that non-Western classical music genres be briefly introduced in the curriculum while

Music educators should consider what it means to be 'successful' in music education, and that most racialized students are positioned to be unsuccessful when 'success' is measured based on the acquisition of white cultural literacies only.

Teaching cultural music requires music educators to develop a mutual love for non-Western classical music genres, humility to explore music that is outside of their area of expertise, and faith that valuable musical learning can take place for both students and themselves.

maintaining Western classical music as normative. The ‘explorer’ model tends to go deeper contextually into the study of non-Western classical music genres, however, values ‘foreign’ perspectives while excluding ‘home’ (i.e., North American) from the curriculum. While this model benefits some forms of Black music such as West African Drumming or Steel Band, it would exclude others whose roots are closer to ‘home’ such as Rhythm and Blues, Hip Hop or Gospel. Hess proposes a ‘comparative’ model which would allow different musical traditions to be informed by each other. Such a model “emphasizes the interconnectedness between the musics and the contexts of the musics” (Hess, 2015, p. 341) and enables students the opportunity to “develop a deeper understanding of music as a social practice” (Hess, 2015, p. 342).

At York University, many of the Black music performance courses are offered in all four years of the undergraduate music program, being on par with the Western classical music offerings. The institution also offers private instruction in Jazz and West African Drumming (Courses, n.d.). Similarly, the Contemporary music program at Grant MacEwan University in Edmonton, Alberta allows students the opportunity to study Jazz, Soul and Blues (Bachelor of Music, n.d.) while the music program at West Humber Collegiate Institute in Rexdale, Ontario offers courses at multiple grade levels in Stage Band (performing Motown repertoire) and Steel Pan to its high school students (West Humber Collegiate Institute, n.d.). Institutions seeking to dismantle Anti-Black Racism in their music curricular offerings must do more than offer a single Black-focused course or unit within a course to ‘check the box’ of diversity.

Access to post-secondary music programs is still an area of great concern for racialized students. Students are expected to demonstrate the white cultural literacies of Western classical music notation in order to continue their music education (Hess, 2017b). In this manner, the traditional music literacies of theory and notation reading skills serve as ‘gatekeepers’ that discriminates against

racialized students and excludes them from post-secondary music education. When Black students lack these literacies, huge implications exist for the future of music education. Without Black post-secondary music students, the prospects for future Black music educators becomes very dim. Music programs should review their audition and admission policies, taking into consideration that, as students gain more access to Black music studies in secondary school, they are more likely to pursue continued studies at the post-secondary level. In these cases, students should be auditioned and evaluated for admission based on their development of the aural musicianship skills that are reflective of the Black music experiences they possess and of the studies they will engage in. I propose that music programs make intentional plans to implement and offer a wide range of Black music course offerings that will not only attract Black music students but also create opportunities for all music students to have access to a well-rounded music education.

Investing in Marketing and Resources

In order to implement the systemic changes suggested in this article, institutions must be prepared to make financial investments into the marketing of Black music courses to all students, with extra focus on Black students who are typically not engaged in the music education community at schools. Likewise, institutions will need to invest in acquiring the necessary equipment to run Black music courses. For example, a Steel Pan course cannot be run without a class set of steel drums and a R&B Ensemble cannot run without having the required professional audio (PA) equipment.

Another investment worth noting is the provision of scholarships and bursaries for racialized students. As mentioned earlier, Blacks and other racialized groups experience higher rates of unemployment and income inequality (Block, Galabuzi & Tranjan, 2019). This reality creates a financial strain for marginalized students wishing to pursue post-secondary studies in general, and more so for music students who often incur higher tuition fees due to the additional cost of private lessons. As post-secondary institutions began to include Black focused music into their curriculum, I recommend that they also make financial investments to implement and provide similar levels of financial support to Black and other racialized students pursuing Black music studies.

Conclusion

Through the lens of Critical Race Theory, I have highlighted the systemic structures that have oppressed Black students and educators in the education system, and more specifically in music education. I proposed Cultural Responsive Pedagogy as a means for creating space for Black

music in the classroom. It is difficult for music educators and institutions with large Western classical music programs to imagine or implement change which may require letting go of some elements of their program to accommodate alternative learning opportunities (Clements, 2009; Walden, 2014). Neglecting to do so, however, further perpetuates racial inequities and the whiteness of music education (Dumas 2013, 2016; Hess, 2017a, 2017b; Robinson & Hendricks, 2018; Sleeter, 2017). If music educators and institutions truly wish to dismantle Anti-Black Racism, there must be a willingness to create spaces for Black music in the curriculum. This includes engaging Black music educators and musicians in the education system. Teachers must also value the prior cultural knowledge and experience that Black students bring to their music classes, being prepared to facilitate dialogue about cultural music while learning themselves from their students (Fitzpatrick, 2012; Freire, 2013; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Yosso, 2005; Wiens, 2015). Ben Mulroney, former host of CTV's etalk Daily, made this powerful statement:

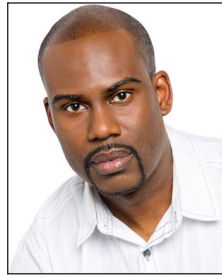
More than ever, we need more Black voices, more Indigenous voices, more people of colour in the media as well as every other profession – and that is why I have decided to immediately step away from my role at etalk to create space for a new perspective and a new voice. (Flanagan, 2020)

This action was taken after his wife, Jessica Mulroney, had her reality show, “I Do. Redo” pulled from Bell Media for threatening to sabotage the career of Toronto Black lifestyle influencer Sasha Exeter (Flanagan, 2020). The field of music education must do the same Anti-Racism work that is being done in every other facet of society. As individuals and corporations take the lead to dismantle systemic racism, I challenge educational institutions and music educators to take bold action to dismantle Anti-Black Racism in music curricula. Why? Because Black students, Black educators and Black music matter!

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Darren Hamilton teaches secondary school music in the Peel District School Board. He holds a music diploma from Grant MacEwan University (2004), a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music from York University (2005), a Bachelor of Education from the University of Toronto (2008), and a Master of Music in Music Education from Western University (2016). He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Music Education at the University of Toronto with research interests in formal gospel music education, and equity and diversity in music curriculum. As a clinician, he presents regular gospel music workshops at the Ontario Music Educators' Association's annual conference and at Toronto Mass Choir's annual PowerUp Gospel Music Workshop. In 2019, Darren became the founding director of the University of Toronto Gospel Choir undergraduate course.



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