

Personal Statement  
Nomination for ISME Board

*When you learn, you know your own deficiencies; when you teach, you know the difficulties of learning. Only after you know your deficiencies can you turn around and examine yourself; only after you know the difficulties can you stimulate yourself to further efforts. Hence it is said, "Teaching and learning help each other." (Book of Rites)*

This profound excerpt from the *Book of Rites*, the wisdom of the great master teacher Confucius and his followers in ancient China, exemplifies my teaching philosophy in general, whereas Christopher Smalls' concept of "musicking," the action of making music, characterizes my teaching in particular. These two threads have tied together my various roles as a music education scholar, a performer, and an educator since I started my career in higher education. Through musicking, I learn about my own deficiencies, and through teaching, I learn about the difficulties of learning. In a sense, my teaching career of constant musicking is a series of learning opportunities, perfectly demonstrating the intimate relationship of these three, teaching, learning, and musicking, and I strongly believe that such qualities shown as part of my professionalism qualify me to serve as a Member at Large for the Board of the International Society for Music Education (ISME).

Musicking, its psychomotor, cognitive, and affective activities, is the highest form of all learning in music. I have experienced such complicated learning since the age of six when I started to take piano lessons, which I enjoy much. As I was given one piano book after another, I began to understand that the process of learning is endless. Later when I became serious about studying world musics, I fully understood that I faced the boundlessness of the amazing musical cultures around the world. My non-stop musicking experiences as an adult learner studying various instruments and styles of music, constantly encountering difficulties and deficiencies, thus becomes a cycle of teaching and learning.

To me, such difficulties and deficiencies are a blessing that have helped me examine myself constantly to improve not only *what* but also *how* I learn and teach in this endless realm of music and the arts. Knowing how challenging it can be to learn, as a teacher of pre-service teachers, rather than merely imparting theoretical knowledge cognitively, I can efficiently demonstrate how a form of music education can be conducted by embedding such a learning process into educational theories and breaking down a difficult task that I have newly experienced. As a teacher of musicians, I use myself as an example to encourage them to constantly challenge themselves in studying new genres, developing new techniques, expanding the repertoire, fusing new musical ideas, and seeking opportunities to collaborate. As a teacher of non-music majors or the general public, I use my continual learning experiences to connect with them on a more "equal footing" as I share my struggles to acquire knowledge and develop new skills.

Such "equal footing" in learning also leads me to believe that music should be for everyone because everyone can enjoy music, and that a student-centered teaching approach should be celebrated. Playing in and teaching several world music ensembles, I see the possibility of inclusive learning, a valuable goal especially important in all music settings in the 21st century. Usually in such settings, no strict hierarchy separates the performers into soloists and accompanists because through constantly listening to each other, creating music together, and enjoying the collaborative experience as a group, all "musicking" participants have a particular role to play in order to obtain a true harmony.

My purpose as a music education scholar, an educator, and a performer is to help educators at all levels and students with different abilities enjoy what they learn in music and culture. I believe that learning flows into teaching and teaching flows into learning. Therefore, to practice and implement what I have learned every possible way in my teaching career is always the greatest pleasure. I am proud that my continual teaching and learning in world music in cultural contexts and their application in music education have demonstrated this belief and supported my commitment to student success and lifelong learning.

When it comes to diversity, inclusion, and equity in music education, I am proud to share that I have benefited tremendously from being part of the ISME community since I was a graduate student. I have always believed that ISME is the leading professional organization in music education because of its increasingly diverse content that meets the needs of music educators in the globalized 21st century. Following the recommendations and strategies ISME has led in response to important educational and societal movements, I have been able to implement into my curriculum the critical points shared by outstanding ISME members and to engage in necessary curriculum modification to keep up with emerging societal needs in the U.S. Such guidance not only helps me become a sensitive and competent music educator but also pushes me to consider my role to be an educator of humanities striving to promote cultural understandings through music, as demonstrated by my teaching and many of my scholarly activities.

As the educational trends in the 21<sup>st</sup> century continue to diversify, I believe that in this coming term of ISME, the Board must continuously lead music education field by establishing a more solid theoretical foundation that helps music educators explore various instructional strategies to meet the needs and expectations of those who are outside the mainstream. To do so, decolonizing music education by challenging the canon of Western European music and the hierarchal elitism that has long been associated with its performance practice will be the first step. Resultantly, there would come a broadened scope allowing interconnectedness among music cultures that share equal footing for us to expand our pedagogical and musical horizons for a more culturally diverse music program. Such cross cultural connections would also serve to facilitate a response to the emergent need of culturally responsive education and provide a pathway to initiate a dialogue that encourages music educators to look beyond the *authoritarian* Western resources and ideas in conventional music pedagogy and to seek “the unique cultural experiences, values, and knowledge students bring to the classroom and uses these resources as tools to teach more effectively” to make students’ overall learning experience more connecting and relevant.

To help fulfill this goal, I consider my experiences developing world music curriculum and creating pedagogical materials for college students (music and non-music majors) and in-service music teachers an asset to ISME Board. My training in music performance, music education, and ethnomusicology has allowed me to look into the many facets of non-European classical music traditions and apply what I learn to the music classrooms in the U.S., Taiwan, other Chinese-speaking communities, and countries in Southeast Asia, such as Indonesia and Thailand, where I’ve established professional relationships for years. Such efforts include examining contextually the sociocultural functions of music, documenting pedagogical systems used by cultural bearers who believe the values of such music and still proudly practice it, modifying teaching methods that work in 21<sup>st</sup> century music classrooms, and making learning music a relevant and meaningful experience for all students in our society. Furthermore, I believe that my own cross-cultural background and bi-musicality (well versed in Western classical music and selected world music cultures, e.g., Chinese and Indonesian traditional music) can be beneficial to bring to the Board because my ample

transnational perspectives would help break the Eurocentric ideology deeply rooted in the teaching and learning of music for decades.

My career development as an educator and scholar in music education has always been in accordance with the mission and vision of ISME. I highly value the significant role ISME has played throughout these decades in guiding music educators around the world to effectively serve learners of all backgrounds in a meaningful manner. To me, “Music for All,” is never just a slogan but a life-long dedication that can be carried out only through the inclusion of various “music making traditions and opportunities” in music education programs with a collective effort from a diverse music educator workforce. Proud to be part of this diverse music educator workforce, I hope to pursue the opportunity to be on the Board to help “promote the understanding and making of music by *all*” in the 21st century.

Thank you again for your support and consideration of my application. I look forward to participating in the ISME community with a more significant role of leadership.

Jui-Ching Wang, DMA  
USA/TAIWAN