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**Response to Howard Gardner's Keynote Address  
Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education  
Fall, 1999, No. 142**

I remember where and when I first read Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, so dramatic was the effect that it had upon me. It was terrifying to think, not only that the kind of tools for mind-control and life-control that Huxley described might be available, but that they might *actually be used!* In other words, not only the effect of those methods and the kinds of creatures produced by them, but also the minds of those who created and used them, was totally inconceivable to me. One of the images that stuck in my mind then was the use of the vapor of *soma*, which was available in public places for those people who were feeling "out of sorts." Upon pressing a button and inhaling the *soma*, one's equilibrium was restored and a pleasant kind of attitude along with it.

The other image that horrified me was the one of the rows of infants being conditioned for the kind of life for which they had been pre-determined: those who were destined for academics and higher order professions were exposed to pleasant sensations when experiencing flowers, music, and beauty; the others were given electric shocks when exposed to anything which could be described as art or beauty.

There is much that can be read into the symbolism of Huxley's images, e.g. the easy access to drugs and medications to "restore" (or enhance) our state of mind. I am also reminded of our Muzaked culture. We are so saturated with sound, someone else's idea of sound which will calm or appease or even excite us, that we do not make a conscious choice for something different, when given the opportunity. (The exception is, of course, trained musicians and discriminating listeners who have already developed their own ideas about what is *music*.) Nor are we capable of sustaining *silence*, or of experiencing what actually occurs in our sound-filled world during an enforced silence. This is why John Cage's piece, 4' 33", will always be *avant garde*.

The specter that Howard Gardner has raised, that our ability to manipulate genes in order to eliminate some predisposition to disease, *and*, in the process, reduce, or even destroy the variability in the evolutionary process that has produced our very rich culture, is even more terrifying to me. If we and our children are not allowed to inherit a particular set of genes, (simply by accident of nature, if you will), with all of their proclivities both positive and negative, how will this affect the many intelligences that we are all born with, especially *music intelligence*? Furthermore, if it is determined that external workings, such as gene manipulation and mind-control types of activities, will produce superstars in any realm, why should anyone invest time and effort in developing *discipline* in any particular domain?

These are just some of the thoughts that occurred to me in reading Gardner's address. I love the concept of the child, or the adult, being multiply talented, or possessing many intelligences, which equip them with the capacity to benefit from disciplined study and practice in any of many *domains*. This idea gives a richness to the concept of a life well-lived, one in which, at any stage, we can decide to pursue a new domain, provided we are willing to put in the time and effort to develop that discipline.