

Music Education... An Introduction To Work

For many children, producing music is their introduction to work. They discover what powerful satisfaction work can give. These are the impulses people need if they are to be productive members of society." In making this terse, cogent analysis, top Washington lawyer Leonard Garment has offered the best argument yet for the benefits of a music education.

Garment, who helped found the National Endowment of the Arts when he was a special aid to President Richard Nixon, can speak from personal experience when discussing the character-building qualities of a musical education. Born into a lower middle class immigrant family in Brooklyn, he attributed a large portion of his success in later life to the early disciplines of music. In a recent New York Times interview he said, "Growing up in a lower-level economic family, music was the force that integrated me into larger society. With music, my whole world opened up. Music gave me a sense of one of the languages of the world that I would never have had otherwise."

Industry growth can be fueled only by creating more musicians. Selling instruments and equipment to non-musicians is an impossible task, whereas selling to committed musicians is relatively easy. Retailers who are interested in cultivating their market and creating more music makers should ponder Mr. Garment's observations.

In our national environment, where quality of education, global competitiveness, and a deteriorating work

ethic are grave concerns, we think that the concept of "music as an introduction to work" would strike a responsive chord with a large number of concerned parents. Gaining proficiency on an instrument mirrors many of life's activities. It requires time and hard work, it's often frustrating, and it tests an individual's discipline and cerebral and physical skills. But the end result is uniquely satisfying. Furthermore, the mental discipline acquired in the learning process will serve an individual well for the rest of his life, regardless of what career path he chooses.

Retailers who have the opportunity to communicate with parents should stress the fact that studying music introduces children to the satisfaction that comes from an applied effort. On a national scale, the industry's various associations should give some thought to a public relations effort, centering around these important benefits. The industry owes thanks to Mr. Garment for possibly the best summation of the power of a musical education.

Brian T. Majeski
Editor

The Bad News Isn't So Bad

At first glance, industry sales figures compiled by the American Music Conference, referenced elsewhere in the Industry Briefings section of this issue, portray 1988 as a rather disappointing year. AMC reports that total industry sales advanced just over 1% to \$3.7 billion. On closer analysis, though, the industry's performance looks a lot better.

Portable keyboards, which are sold almost exclusively by a variety of mass merchants, registered the biggest sales decline of any product category. Sales dropped a precipitous 36% to \$401 million. By contrast, total sales of products that are exclusive to music stores, i.e. guitars, pianos, synthesizers, amplifiers, drums, etc. advanced nearly 7%. Given the increase in interest rates

and public fear of a recession, this sales gain is noteworthy.

Equally noteworthy is the fact that the biggest gains were reported by traditional products like drums, guitars, band instruments, and sheet music. Synthesizers, by contrast, registered their first-ever sales decline. Just a few years ago, many feared that school bands, guitars, and other traditional instruments were headed for extinction, which only underscores the difficulties of predicting what the public will want five years from now.

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