

A Connected Culture of Video Game Music and Teaching Possibilities

Quotidian activity of today's youth largely exists within the online video game cultural matrix, while its correlating offline element dominates their intersubjective communication. Just as gaming via the Internet connects players in different states, countries, islands and hemispheres, so too do common video game music (VGM) experiences resulting from dozens, if not hundreds, of gameplay hours.

VGM has dramatically evolved from its 8-bit 'bleeps and bloops' origins. Immensely popular and musically sophisticated, orchestral and choral scores, electronic themes, popular music-influenced tracks and all between now constitute VGM.

As educators, it is incumbent upon us to continue teaching traditional music values while maintaining ideational relevance for an evermore connected and critical youth. The incorporation of VGM into teaching practice represents multitudinous opportunities for all levels of schooling. It remains highly relevant to theory and analysis practices, possesses a history rich with culturally historical developments and technological advancements, and its practical application in performance offers diverse and progressive challenges.

Societal and environmental pursuits such as ensemble/composer profiling and audience/demographic studies are germane to VGM, while its variegated countries of origin, instrumentations, traditions and ethnic persuasions are propitious to ethnocultural investigation.

Upon reflection, music educators may find that VGM features little in personal habitus, lexicon and milieu. An opportunity for heuristic growth within one's intellectual discipline is thereby presented, and crossing the symbolic boundary of understanding VGM could facilitate positive new experiences for teacher and student alike.

By virtue of our shared antipodean origins, modern multiculturalism, proximity and societal similarities, the youth of Australia and New Zealand share a largely isomorphic video game culture. VGM is therefore emblematic of our islands' connectedness; a pedagogically-felicitous musical phenomenon that transcends national borders, geographical boundaries and cultural beliefs.