MAARC’s Educational Philosophy

Largely because of decreasing budgets, advocacy has become a hot topic in archives in recent years. In her 2015 SAA Presidential Address, Kathleen Rice called on archivists to be much more active and imaginative in showing how archives can be relevant to and inspiring for everyone. Classes (adult, teen, and children), webinars, podcasts, and instructive games are some of the most powerful tools for advocacy work. Yet, compared to museums and libraries, many archives—particularly smaller institutions—have not invested deeply into educational programs. Similarly, the archival literature on educational programs geared towards the general public is rather slight.

Educational programs that are geared towards groups that are underrepresented in the education system might be particularly effective. This is because:

- They demonstrate that archives are essential for helping underrepresented groups feel a sense of representational belonging.
- These programs often showcase items in the collection that are not easily located in traditional finding aids. This is especially true of colonial collections.
- They can spur new research and community activism that lead new users to come into your archives.

MAARC’s Educational Philosophy

Asian American music provides unique opportunities for teachers and scholars who want to engage public audiences on issues of race and cultural competence. This is because all Asian American musicians have to navigate numerous conflicting discourses. In North America, music genres are defined largely by race—primarily Black, White, and Latinx. Musicians who write or perform in the “wrong” style are almost automatically (and not always wrongly) labeled “inauthentic” or, worse yet, cultural appropriators. This practice, coupled with the model minority stereotype, has led many people to view and hear Black, White, and Asian musicians as “inauthentic” or, worse yet, cultural appropriators. This practice, coupled with the model minority stereotype, has led many people to view and hear “inaccurate” Asian American music as music. To bring Asian American music into the educational setting is to bring a complex set of discourses into the classroom.

How Many Asian American Musicians Can You Name?

Top Row (l. to r.): Masaaki Iwasa (Japanese traditional and contemporary classical music, Taiko), Aiko Horiuchi (jazz), Brown Myers (R&B, pop), Vina Tran (singer-songwriter), Viole Yer (jazz)

Bottom Row (l. to r.): Kai Zhang (Western classical music, Kungfu), Shirley Ishigure (EDM), Bochan Oun (rock, K-pop), Xian Zhang (Western classical music, Kungfu)

Outline of SE Asian Refugee Unit

In our unit on the coming of Southeast Asian refugees, we “receive” our audience by introducing them to Cambodia Town in Long Beach, Little Saigon in Houston, and Hmongtown in Minneapolis. We then tell the often neglected stories of why people from not just Vietnam, but also Cambodia and Laos, became refugees. Expecting “resistance,” we “repeat” these stories using oral histories and music, such as Bochan Oun’s “Chinnam Oun 16” (scan QR code on the right). We ask our audience to “reflect” on the music through a live discussion or a writing exercise. Finally, we encourage our audience to “reconsider” by asking, “How has the refugee crisis changed in the past 40 years, and where do you see yourself in today’s refugee crisis?”

Pedagogical Approach: The 5Rs

Much of this course explores uncomfortable topics and ethnic histories that are largely absent in most high-school and college-level American history textbooks. We therefore expect a certain amount of resistance from our audiences. In thinking about how we can get audiences to challenge their pre-existing ideas and to overcome their resistance, Julie Rosa’s Commemorative Museum Pedagogy (CMP) is particularly helpful. Here is a summary of her guidelines—the “5Rs”—for engaging audiences with difficult knowledge in a museum setting:

- Receptiveness: Allow visitors to air resistance to the narrative you are imparting. These expressions demonstrate that visitors are engaging with your materials and experiencing them in meaningful ways.
- Repetition: Allow visitors to reread information and revisit artifacts both at the museum and online. Also retell information in different ways.
- Reflection: Encourage visitors to ask questions and to converse.
- Reconsideration: Encourage visitors to provide feedback. Also, offer relevant social action information.

Progs. #1 & #2: Lesson Plans for Teachers & For Lifelong Learners

The Program:

The Program: We are constructing a course that explores five pivotal moments in Asian American history and culture through music. The five moments are: (1) Early Asian immigrants and their labor, (2) The Japanese Internment during World War II, (3) The Growth of the Asian American Movement in the 1970s, (4) The Arrival of Southeast Asian Refugees after the Vietnam War, and (5) 9/11 and its Aftermath on the Asian American Experience. A free version of this course (five 30-minute podcasts) will be available on our website. The full version (about 12 hours) will be given live or be available for purchase for a nominal price in Fall 2019.

Audience:

Our intended audiences include 1.5- and 2nd-generation Asian Americans in the process of identity formation, teachers/scholars who are interested in issues of diversity and inclusion, Asian American artists who want to find an Asian American artistic lineage or voice, and musicians/music scholars who are interested in fusion and identity in music.

About MAARC

Vision: Advancing knowledge about and social justice for Asian Americans through music.

Mission: The Music of Asian America Research Center (MAARC) strives to empower our communities through collecting, promoting, and teaching music created by Asian Americans.

Working with You:

- To create a comprehensive information center for Asian Americans, educators, researchers, and students
- To build a digital archive for Asian Americans, researchers, and students
- To develop education programs for K-12 teachers, college professors, and lifelong learners
- To collaborate with musicians, artists, archivists, researchers, programmers and others to organize community events

MAARC’s Educational Philosophy

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