Joe Harmsen

Music Education Treasure Hunt #1: William Kilpatrick

* William Heard Kilpatrick was born on November 20, 1871, in White Plains, Georgia.
* Graduated 2nd in his class from Mercer University.
* Began graduate studies in mathematics and physics at Johns Hopkins University, then transferred to Mercer, where he completed his M.A. degree.
* Began his educational career as a math teacher in Blakely, Georgia.
* After a year as a teacher, he was appointed as a principal in Blakely.
* Returned to Johns Hopkins after three years at Blakely to pursue further graduate studies.
* Then spent a year as a teacher and principal in Savannah, Georgia.
* After his year in Savannah, he took a job as a professor of math and astronomy at Mercer University. He taught there from 1897 to 1906.
* In 1906, he spent a year as a high school math teacher and principal in Columbus, Georgia.
* In 1907, he went on to study education on scholarship to Teacher’s College, Columbia University.
* In 1909, he was hired to teach at TCCU. He went on to earn his doctorate a few years later, and remained on the faculty until 1938.
* During his career, he travelled across the U.S. and the world as a visiting lecturer and professor.
* Throughout his life, he was very active in a wide array of organizations, including the John Dewey Society, the League for Industrial Democracy, American Youth for World Youth, and many others.
* He was a student and essentially a disciple of John Dewey.
* Alongside John Dewey, he became one of the most important and influential progressive educators of the 1920s and 1930s.
* While he agreed with much of Dewey’s philosophy, he was not in favor of the traditional curriculum, where teachers prepare specific subject matter ahead of time to present to the students.
* Instead, he advocated for what he called “purposeful activity”, which saw students engaged in a variety of project-based learning.
* He adapted the 18th-century “Project Method” into a philosophy of education.
* The project method aims to allow students to learn with minimal teacher direction by exploring their environment through their senses and by pursuing their own interests. Experiential learning takes the place of textbooks, and teachers serve as “guides” to the students’ learning.
* Kilpatrick split his method into four classes of projects: construction (e.g. writing a play), enjoyment (e.g. attending a concert), problem (e.g. talking about a complex social problem such as poverty), and specific learning (e.g. learning how to swim).
* He had three wives and multiple children. Unfortunately, the first two passed away.
* Authored 14 books and hundreds of articles, including *A Source Book in the Philosophy of Education* (1923), *Education for a Changing Civilization* (1926), and *Remaking the Curriculum* (1936), among many others.
* Officially retired in 1938, but continued to lecture at various universities, as well as remain active in his civic duties.
* Passed away in New York City on February 13, 1965.

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