

Oregon

MUSIC EDUCATOR

Fall 2021

THE WHAT & THE WHY OF OMEA

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APPROPRIATION VS. APPRECIATION

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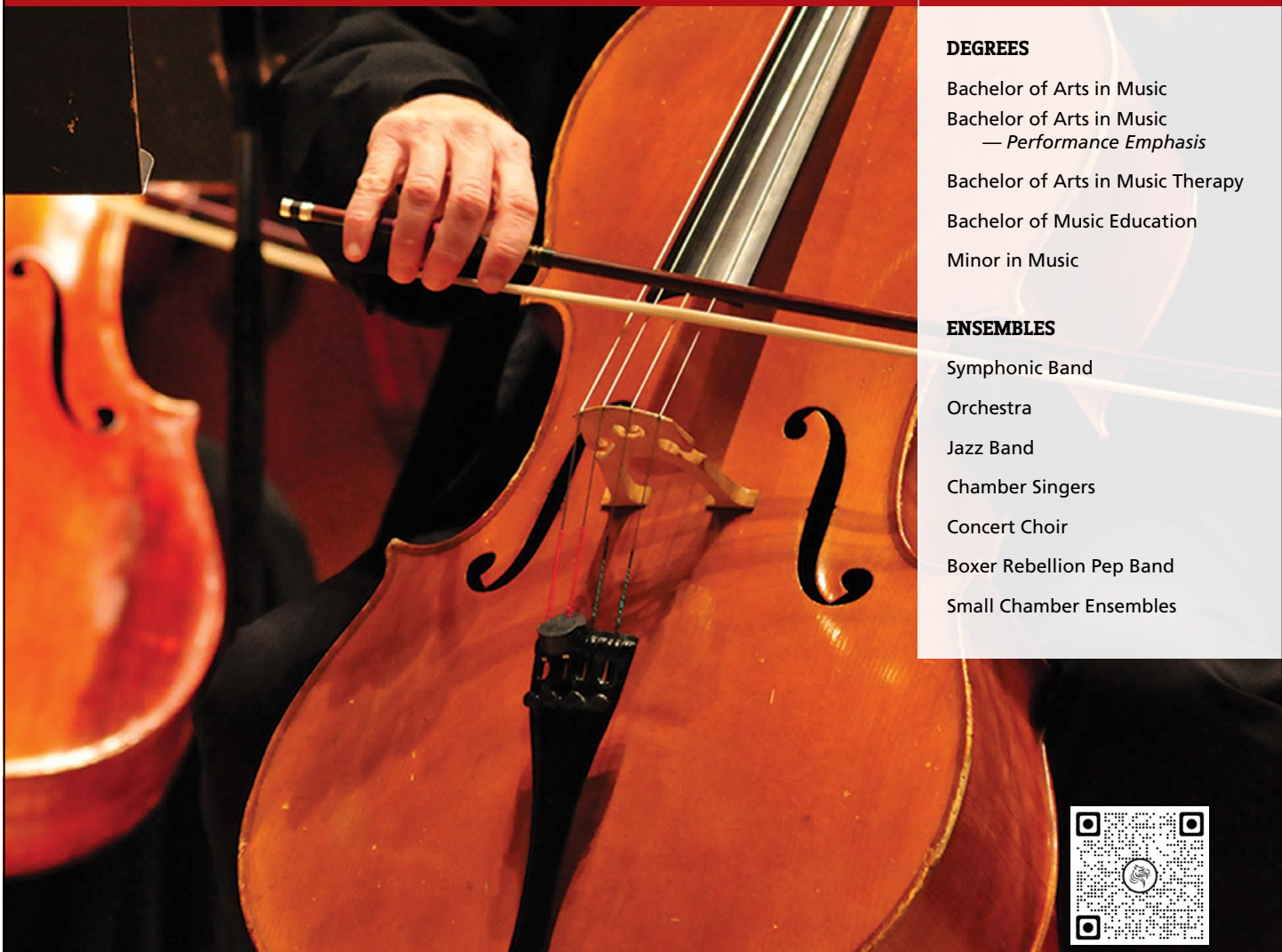
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- Orchestra
- Jazz Band
- Chamber Singers
- Concert Choir
- Boxer Rebellion Pep Band
- Small Chamber Ensembles



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume LXXIII #1 Fall 2021

- 3 President's Column**
Jeremy Zander
- 4 All-State Co-Chair Update**
Branden and Megan Hansen
- 4 Cultivating Inspiration**
OMEA State Conference 2022
Ben Lawson
- 5 Looking Ahead to the 2023 OMEA Conference**
Sean Williams
- 5 Middle and High School Choral Directors Take Note! New Festival Rules and Procedures**
Erika Lockwood
- 7 OMEA Elections and Awards Who Has Inspired You?**
Kathy Briggs
- 9 Opinion The What and the Why of OMEA**
Laura Arthur
- 10 International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study**
Updated Guidelines 8/12/21
- 11 The Year We Were All Small Schools Directors**
Melissa Jmaeff
- 13 Stress, Burnout, and Stage Fright in College Resources For Music and Music Education Majors**
Paul Fox
- 18 Equity In Music Education: Cultural Appropriation Versus Cultural Appreciation— Understanding the Difference**
Karen Howard
- 21 Recording Strategies For Auditions Tips for Quality Recordings**
Dr. Tomás Cotik
- 25 Revive and Revitalize Your Orchestra Program**
Dr. Michael Dalton
- 28 OMEA Jazz Column**
Dan Davey
- 31 Don't Try to Whistle a Symphony**
Krista DeBolt
- 33 Culturally Responsive Practices, Conversations, and Repertoire**
Kendra Kay Friar
- 36 A Helping Hand**
Steve Phillips
- 37 An Open Conversation on the Mental Health of Music Teachers**
Nathan Irby

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- IFC** Pacific University
- 8** Corban University
- 12** University of Portland
- 17** Linfield University
- 24** Oregon State University
- 30** University of Puget Sound
- 35** Western Oregon University
- 39** Yamaha
- 40** University of Oregon

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Jeremy Zander OMEA President

As I reflect on the last eighteen months, I am truly amazed by the accomplishments of OMEA. While circumstances prevented us from holding so many events, we were still able to provide meaningful experiences for our music educators and their students, including pivoting to an online state conference, virtual Solo & Ensemble events, culminating events for Band, Choir, and Orchestra (in partnership with OSAA), and much more. Fiscally, OMEA was able to 'ride the storm' of the global pandemic and come out intact on the other side. I am beyond proud of our state's music educators for the resilience and resourcefulness you have shown in the face of unprecedented challenges.

I would like to take special note of some of the strides we as an organization have been able to make in the realm of advocacy. A year ago, guidance from the Oregon Department of Education for how to safely return to in-person music classes was ambiguous and not based on the most recent data and research coming from NFHS. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our Advocacy co-chairs Laura Arthur and Julie Bounds, we were able to make inroads with ODE so that the most recent guidance from the state makes clear provision for the resumption of in-person music classes in a safe manner. We are optimistic that the connections forged with ODE will allow us to be more effective advocates for music education as a part of the state's comprehensive education plan.

As of the due date for this journal article, OMEA is planning to resume in-person activities for the 2021-22 school year, including All-State Honor Ensembles, our statewide conference, a State Jazz Championship and the State Chamber Ensemble Championship. We are working with OSAA for the State Solo Music and State Band/Choir/Orchestra championship events and are hopeful that these will also be in person.

The landscape is ever-changing, of course. By the time this article is published, things may be drastically different, but for now I am optimistic, and I look forward to seeing you all at our January conference!

From the Band Room

I wrote earlier about the collective resilience and resourcefulness of our state's music educators. But I also acknowledge that many of us are facing the daunting prospect of rebuilding programs that have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. It is natural to be discouraged anytime circumstances force us to 'start over', but I hope to offer some measure of encouragement and advice.

If your high school program is at all like mine, your strongest leaders have now graduated and it is likely that you are working with an entirely new group of section leaders, drum majors, or other student leaders. And if you are at all like me, you are probably at least a little discouraged at the loss of institutional memory and the need to 'reteach' a lot of things that were formerly automatic in your program.

I teach at Mountainside High School in Beaverton, Oregon, which opened in the Fall of 2017. Our inaugural year presented a unique challenge in that the oldest students in the program were sophomores. At most, students had one year of experience in high school band, and they suddenly found themselves in leadership positions typically occupied by juniors or seniors. But with that relative inexperience came an opportunity. I was able to sit down with my student leaders and together arrive at a vision of who we aspired to be as a band program. My new student leaders were coming from three different high school band programs in the area. When I met with them individually and as a group, many expressed their opinion about things they liked about their former programs that they wished to continue at Mountainside, but also things that they would rather not have in our new program.

Today, programs around the state are in similar (though not identical) positions, at least as far as student leadership is concerned. The entrenched leaders in our programs have all graduated, and the students who were freshmen or sophomores when the pandemic first closed schools are now the juniors and seniors in our programs.

Even though it is just four years after those first meetings with my first student leaders at Mountainside, I am taking the opportunity to sit down with my new student leaders and ask them the same questions. "What do you like about the Mountainside band program that we should continue doing?" and "what aspects of our band program should we change?" Their answers are surprisingly insightful. Further, the students appreciate having their voice heard! Perhaps most importantly, the new student leaders are bringing a renewed energy and optimism to the table that I, for one, am refreshed by.

I urge you to seize the opportunity to take stock of your current program, its values and goals, and use this time to refocus and refine aspects of your program. Involve your student leaders in this process. See if they have ideas for how to revitalize the program, recruit and retain new students, how to address the learning loss of the last eighteen months, and more. I think you will be pleased by the outcome!



ALL-STATE CO-CHAIR UPDATE

Branden and Megan Hansen OMEA All State Co-Chairs

At the time of this writing, we are just heading into the start of the school year. You've likely already done it, but let's have a communal "knock on wood" that everything proceeds as hoped for this school year! As far as OMEA is concerned, preparations are moving along nicely for a regular 2022 OMEA Conference.

Of course, we all know that flexibility has been the name of the game the last several years, but right now we are planning for a traditional conference with full all-state ensemble offerings for your students. All conductors have been selected (see the OMEA

website for more) and the state's amazing ensemble managers are preparing for the return of the all-state ensembles.

More information will be coming out soon regarding the specifics of the 2022 all-state ensembles. In the meantime, however, please feel free to reach out to us at allstatechair@gmail.com with any questions. In addition, we are always open to ideas and suggestions that may improve the all-state experience for students. We look forward to seeing everyone and reconnecting in person at the 2022 conference!



CULTIVATING INSPIRATION

OMEA State Conference 2022

Ben Lawson OMEA President Elect

Welcome to the start of a new school year! This year marks my 18th year as an Oregon Music Educator, and I am cautiously optimistic that this year will have a sense of normalcy that we have lacked the past 18 months. Even with the delta variant on the rise and vigorous debates on masks and vaccines across the country, I am planning a year filled with events and activities that will show my students and my community that not even a global pandemic can stop the music.

As OMEA President-Elect, my main responsibility is acting as the Conference Chair for the 2022 State Conference. This will be my second time chairing the state conference. In 2011 the theme was "Planting the Seeds of Inspiration". Since chairing that event, I've had a constant thought in the back of my head. "What would I do if I had this opportunity again?" I've decided to take the 2011 theme to the next step, and this year we will be "Cultivating Inspiration". During our year and a half of online learning, hybrid scheduling and restrictions on performances, I rarely felt that I was able to inspire my students to do anything, let alone love music. I am looking forward to a year where I can focus on bringing inspiration back into my teaching as well as my classroom. I hope that with an in-person conference filled with great sessions and amazing performances, we can all bring a little more inspiration into our lives and the lives of our students.

I am excited to announce that this year's Banquet Entertainment will be the acapella ensemble m-pact. *Hailed "one of the best pop/jazz vocal groups in the world" by the San Francisco Chronicle, m-pact is respected worldwide as a cutting*

edge trailblazer in the realm of vocal music. Emerging from an age of auto-tune and overproduction, this Los Angeles-based ensemble has cultivated a new generation of ears hungry for the fresh, raw power of nature's "first instrument" - the human voice. Besides their banquet performance, m-pact will be presenting a session, and performing for our HS Honor Students.

This year's Keynote Speaker will be Scott N. Edgar, author of *Music Education and Social-Emotional Learning: The Heart of Teaching Music*. I had the pleasure of attending Scott's session at our virtual conference last year, and knew immediately that we needed to bring Scott back to Oregon. In Scott's presentation at the 2019 NAFME National Conference he said: *"Music education helps our students learn how to be dedicated, to persevere, and to work together. It is our job to help students see that these skills are not isolated to the music classroom. These are the skills they need to be successful outside of music and to confront their challenges with strength and skill. Music can be the preventative mental health our students need so they have the skills to confront the life challenges ahead of them."* Looking at this upcoming school year, our students will be struggling with a variety of mental health issues, many of which we as music educators are not trained to tackle. However, we all know that our rooms are a safe and engaging place for our students, so I am eager to learn all I can to support them.

I cannot wait for this year's conference and having the opportunity to see you all again! I look forward to meeting new teachers, catching up with old friends, and filling my bucket. See you in Eugene!



LOOKING AHEAD TO THE 2023 OMEA CONFERENCE

Sean Williams OMEA 2nd Vice President, 2023 Conference Chair

Greetings, colleagues! I have recently been appointed to serve as the OMEA 2nd Vice President; my predecessor, my friend Chris Nelson, has left to pursue a Doctorate at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. (Best of luck to you, Chris! I know you will make McNary – and Oregon – proud!)

It has been several years since I was last on the OMEA Board, and I am excited to have another opportunity to serve our membership. My primary responsibility is to work with our

outstanding OMEA team to plan the 2023 Conference. I welcome your input and suggestions even at this early date – session topics, performing ensembles, keynote speakers, etc. Please feel free to reach out with your ideas!

Best wishes to you all on the start of yet another interesting school year! Here's to hoping for good health and good music for you, your families, your students, and your communities.



Middle and High School Choral Directors Take Note! NEW FESTIVAL RULES AND PROCEDURES

Erika Lockwood OMEA Choral Chair/ACDA Liaison

Welcome to a new school year, one that finds us making music in person with our students much more than last year! I hope this finds you enjoying a healthy and joyful restart and reunion with your students.

Your Oregon ACDA board kept themselves busy throughout the summer, delivering on our promise to update procedures for the OSAA Choir protocols. The updates we have developed are divided into three proposals, to be brought to the OMEA board at the fall 2021 meeting. After adoption by OMEA, the proposals will be brought to OSAA leadership. By the time this journal is distributed, these changes should be incorporated into the OSAA handbook and notifications will be sent to all OMEA members. Since these updates encompass a significant and meaningful shift in rules and procedures, I have summarized our work below.

Many thanks to our Past-President Scott Tuomi, President Karen Bohart, and the entire ACDA board. We are appreciative of all members who participated in surveys and fruitful discussions, and thank you for your hard work on behalf of our Oregon choral community.

Proposal 1: Revise the Oregon Required Literature List

The following is from our proposal rationale, written by Dr. Scott Tuomi.

“The selection of contest repertoire is one of the most important tasks to be addressed during any academic school year. The art of choosing music carries a great responsibility because our students’ growth depends on the wisdom of each decision by the director. The purpose of the Oregon Recommended List is to provide worthy musical selections in a graded format that will accommodate yet challenge the diverse array of performing ensembles within our state.

While this list will be a tool in selecting the required piece for contest situations, it must be remembered that artistic growth and musical literacy is the ultimate benefit to be gained from the study, preparation, and performance of this music. Contest music is only one component of the educational process; consequently, it must never be viewed as an end in itself.

Oregon ACDA endorses and seeks to promote choral programming viewed through the lens of diversity while acknowledging the rich heritage of choral literature that exists prior to the 20th century. With this in mind, all choirs attending festivals and contests must choose one piece of literature from a list of music comprised of pieces created by composers who lived and were active prior to 1900 to be considered in compliance with the rules.

In addition, Oregon ACDA suggests rounding out the remainder of the program with pieces drawn from a wider set of traditions which may include the following:

- Music from the 20th and 21st centuries
- Music from non-European based cultures
- Music sung in a foreign language

Music from composers and groups who have been under-represented in the choral canon. These groups include composers of color, female composers and composers of diverse gender identities.

This list is intended to be a "living document" that can be added to as conductors around the state discover new pieces in their programming research. Conductors wishing to submit a composition for consideration should contact the ACDA board. We welcome those suggestions."

For the updated list, see our website: oracda.net/approved-music-list

Proposal 2:

Revise the OSAA/OMEA/ACDA Scoring Guide to Reflect the Importance of Literature Selection

In accordance with the emphasis on literature choice as stated above, the ACDA board felt that our scoring guides for festivals should reflect this educational priority. We have adjusted point values on the scoring guide as follows:

- Quality of Sound: 25 points
- Technique: 25 points
- Musicality: 25 points

The above three categories and their descriptions remain unchanged on the adjudication guide, but their point values have been reduced by 5 points.

In lieu of the "Other Factors" category on the previous Scoring Guide, there are now the following categories:

- Literature and Programming: 20 points
- Engagement: 5 points

Further description can be found in the Scoring Guide, revised by Aubrey Patterson, Repertoire and Resources Chair:

Literature and Programming (15-20 points): "Literature selected to be performed is appropriate for the ensemble and aesthetically pleasing. Programming is both effective and of many styles and periods and an appropriate balance of secular and sacred. Composers include the underrepresented: women, BIPOC, varied cultural backgrounds, and diverse demographics. Music performed challenges the choir, the soloists, and the accompanists musically and intellectually, yet is within demonstrated musical capabilities. The performance is culturally informed, respectful, and appropriate."

Engagement (5 points): "The choir consistently demonstrates unified emotional engagement, while expressing an appropriate visual representation of the literature presented. The choir

approaches and exits the stage and risers in a prideful, poised, and orderly manner. Riser formation and spacing is excellent. All choir members remain focused and confidently attentive between selections. Choir members focus on their director, sing with excellent posture, and great expressivity. Choralography, if used, is performed with remarkable commitment and purpose."

Proposal 3:

OSAA Championship Rating System

The following is from our proposal rationale, written by Dr. Scott Tuomi.

"Oregon ACDA proposes discontinuing the system where performances are ranked in order by numerical score. Instead, we propose a system where every choir participating will receive a rating of either Superior, Outstanding or Excellent according to the range where their score falls. As many choirs as are eligible will be recognized by one of these ratings. Our organization believes that choirs that both achieve our state performance standard and are selected to perform at state should be celebrated. We feel this is a more egalitarian way to recognize, celebrate and reward the accomplishments of each and every group who qualifies for state.

Choirs who are adjudicated according to the following rubric will be rated as Superior, Outstanding or Excellent as averaged by the judge according to rankings in specific areas."

This change will only apply to the OSAA Choir Championship. All league festivals will continue to be ranked numerically in order to determine eligibility for the state festival.

State Choir adjudicators will use the existing delineated adjudication guide to determine festival ratings in each scored category to inform the overall rating along with the sight reading score. This guide will also be revised and published to include the rating language; Superior, Outstanding, Excellent.

Finally, *"while ORACDA proposes the discontinuation of a numerical ranking for performance, we also propose continuing the current specific numerical ranking system for sight-reading as a separate award within the OSAA state choral competition."*

Please visit the [Oregon ACDA website](http://OregonACDA.org) and the [OSAA Choir page](#) for more detailed information on these changes, in addition to the revised festival documents. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to a member of the board.

We are committed to serving you and maintaining our high standards for ensembles of all levels as we work toward a more inclusive educational experience for the choral students of Oregon.



OMEA Elections and Awards WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU?

Kathy Briggs OMEA Past-President

OMEA Presidential Elections

My tenure on our executive board will end at the conclusion of this school year. I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve our profession and the music teachers in our state and to work with the exemplary people and educators on our OMEA Board. Leadership matters, and I have witnessed this first-hand as I have worked with and navigated our organization, managed challenges with the help of our board, and done my best in facilitating changes to improve our organization and profession. I am a big believer in all that OMEA offers to our music teachers and in turn to our music students, and we need strong leadership to continue the good work that is already being done. Representation on our OMEA board matters, and I highly encourage music teachers in our state who teach vocal/choral music and elementary music, along with women and individuals who identify as BIPOC to become involved on our board. We want a board that represents all the music teachers in our state. Our OMEA Board, Conference Planning Team, and Executive Officers are comprised of the best teachers you will know. I am extremely grateful for my time on the board, and I highly encourage you to consider being our next President. If this isn't the right time for you to serve in this leadership role, I encourage you to think of someone who would be great in this position and encourage them to run. Think of who the leaders are in your area, in your discipline, in your district, and in your school and who you want to join our extraordinary team to lead and shape the future of OMEA for you.

Nominations are through the OMEA website.

oregonmusic.org/President-Elect-Nominations.html

OMEA Awards

We all have had influential people in our professional lives – those whose teaching, musicianship, work-ethic, and heart have inspired us to be better teachers ourselves. We have colleagues who inspire us with their creativity and artful teaching strategies. We have colleagues who inspire us with the level of musicianship and passion exhibited by their students. We have colleagues who inspire us by their advocacy and support for music education. This is your time to acknowledge, thank, and honor them.

OMEA annually recognizes exemplary, influential, and inspiring educators at our annual banquet. I encourage you to take a moment to nominate an outstanding colleague or someone who has supported you in your career.

Nominations are through the OMEA website.

oregonmusic.org/award-nominations-winners.html

1. Complete online form.
2. Provide a letter of support for the nominee addressing your relationship with the candidate, as well as the nominee's career accomplishments and contributions to music education.
3. Solicit additional letters of support from colleagues, administrators, and/or other relevant reviewers of the nominee's work (at least 2 letters).

Excellence in Elementary Music Education Award

This award recognizes commitment to elementary music education and remarkable achievement in focusing on teaching children through music. Criteria:

- Current member of OMEA
- Currently teaching in Oregon
- Demonstrates excellence in music education and teaching at the elementary level

Outstanding Music Educator

In recognition of exemplary teaching in music education. Criteria:

- Current member of OMEA
- Currently teaching in Oregon
- Exemplify outstanding achievement in the field of music education

Outstanding Administrator Award

In recognition of outstanding contributions to music education through administrative support. If possible, OMEA will recognize more than one administrator if their efforts were key toward saving music programs. Additional Criteria:

- Currently employed in Oregon education.
- Promotes good relationships with music faculty.
- Support for community cultural events.

John C. McManus Distinguished Teacher Award

This award is to honor those with a lifetime of service to music education with a highly distinguished record of professional accomplishment. John C. McManus defined the standard of service for music educators through a life of selfless service to his students and colleagues. He inspired his students to achieve the highest of performance standards and a comprehensive music education teaching instrumental, vocal, and general music to students of all ages. He served OMEA in positions including President, Historian, Directory Editor, Retired Newsletter Editor, and Chairman of the Retired Oregon Music Educators, as well as providing leadership to MENC at the regional and national level. John was awarded the Oregon Teacher of the Year award in 1965, the Distinguished Music Educator Award by the Northwest Bandmasters Association in 1966, the Distinguished Service award by OBDA in 1986, the OMEA Outstanding Music Educator Award in 1989, the MENC Distinguished Service award in 1989 and the OMEA Distinguished Service Award in 1996. Criteria:

- A lifetime of exemplary service to Oregon music education, characterized by the highest professional standards.
- A distinguished record of leadership and teaching.
- Record of significant and notable honors and influence.

Exemplary Service to the Profession Award

In recognition of support and commitment to music education in Oregon. Criteria:

- Individual, business, or organization that has contributed to music education in an extraordinary manner through service, leadership, or advocacy
- The recipient does not need to be a current member of OMEA

Outstanding Contributor Award

In recognition of significant contributions to the Oregon Music Educators Association. Criteria:

- Individual, business, or organization that has contributed to music education in an extraordinary manner through service, leadership, or advocacy through music business, arts organizations, or advocacy.
- The recipient does not need to be a member of OMEA or NAFME and is typically not a professional music educator.



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Opinion

THE WHAT AND THE WHY OF OMEA

Laura Arthur OMEA Advocacy Committee Co-Chair

Through the last 15 years, I have worn many hats in the Oregon music education community: CNAfME member, middle school band director, OMEA recording secretary, OMEA District Chair, and now the state-wide Advocacy Co-Chair with my friend and colleague Julie Bounds. I currently serve as the K-12 Music Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) for Portland Public Schools.

In my current Music TOSA role, I have the privilege of being able to spend a significant amount of time both defining and aligning the *mission, vision, and goals* (the *what* and the *why*) of my work with my values as both a music educator and a music education advocate. In my role as OMEA Advocacy Chair, I have also found that one of the best advocacy tools educators and allies can employ is defining values and crafting strategies that align with those values.

During these past 18+ months, music educators were asked to pivot away from the *what* we have known for so long, as well as go through a huge amount of self-reflective *why*. The resiliency and the capacity for growth shown by music educators in Oregon has inspired me to reflect on the *what* and *why* of our OMEA Organization. The current *what* and *why* (the OMEA Purpose, Mission Statement, and Core Beliefs), can be found on page 1 of the OMEA Bylaws:

Purpose

The association shall function as a nonprofit educational association whose purpose is to provide professional in-service educational experiences through district and state conferences, clinics, and journals for music educators and music students in Oregon's schools. The association will provide leadership for district and state educational activities in music to serve the students of Oregon.

OMEA Mission Statement

The Oregon Music Education Association promotes excellence in music education and serves the professional needs of music educators.

OMEA Core Beliefs

1. The act of making music inspires creative passion and encourages aesthetic sensitivity.
2. Through music we have a powerful way to express meaning in our lives.

3. Music is a celebration of our humanity.
4. All students deserve to have access to a quality music education taught by a qualified music educators

In the last few years, OMEA has made significant strides in our ability to serve the professional needs of its educators as well as providing educational experiences to our members and their students. We have also made Advocacy progress, including a new website, continued collaboration on the national level, and a new Arts Education position at the Oregon Department of Education.

But is it enough?

OMEA has grown in capacity, and I firmly believe that we are capable of doing more. Moreover, doing more is critical to our continued relevance and our ability to impact music education throughout the state. The above Purpose, Mission Statement, and Core Beliefs no longer fully reflect the current focus, capacity, or values of OMEA.

While I applaud OMEA for the excellent work we have done in the past to support music educators and students, as well as streamlining systems ensure the health of our organization, I find the the lack of focus on OMEA Core Belief #4 to be concerning. Where have we, as an organization, taken the steps to ensure *every student in Oregon* has access to a comprehensive music education? Where have we taken steps to ensure that Oregon will continue to have qualified music educators for future generations of students?

Throughout this school year, I plan to work with my OMEA colleagues to co-create *OMEA Educational Objectives*. Current OMEA Educational Objectives are included in the [Advocacy Chair Responsibilities](#), but my hope is that after some collaborative work, these will become a "north star" to help guide our organization from both an Advocacy and operational standpoint. I will be encouraging the OMEA board, membership, and additional stakeholders to work together to craft plans of action, both big and small, aligned to objectives around:

1. Defining music as part of the core curriculum in Oregon
2. Prioritizing a comprehensive and equitable music experience for students and encouraging stakeholders to provide adequate resources as defined by our Program Standards

3. Ensuring that music instruction is delivered by highly-qualified, licenced, and endorsed music educators
4. Providing opportunities for growth and professional development to K-12 music educators in our state
5. Prioritizing Inclusion, Equity, Diversity, and Access when making policy decisions that impact music students and music educators.

I look forward to continuing my collaboration with the Executive Board, Area Chairs, District Chairs, and the OMEA membership at large to define our *what* and *why* as we move forward. As evidenced by our resilience last year, I believe in our capacity to work towards crafting tangible steps to improve our organization, our profession as a whole, and ultimately, outcomes for all music students in Oregon.

INTERNATIONAL COALITION PERFORMING ARTS AEROSOL STUDY

Updated Guidelines 8/12/21

Dr. James Weaver (NFHS) and Dr. Mark Spede (CBDNA) Chairs

Dr. Shelly Miller, University of Colorado Boulder and Dr. Jelena Srebric University of Maryland, Lead Researchers

As the United States continues the process of moving to the next phase of the pandemic, questions about music activity abound. Many questions still exist for the fall and the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. Although the United States is reaching a higher level of vaccinated adults, the vaccination rates for those ages 12-17 remains low. Importance will need to be placed on local and state respiratory disease transmission rates for use of mitigations. Depending on developments with respect variants such as the Delta variant and other potential risk factor enhancements, these suggestions are meant to provide some best practices as we move into the next phase in the pandemic.

Outdoors: Outdoors remains the safest space No mitigations needed depending on the level of local and state transmission rates.

Indoors: Indoor environments vary greatly

- **Masks.** Masking with appropriate material* remains the best way of reducing potential infected aerosol from circulating in an indoor space. Masks are recommended be worn while singing and speaking.
- **Bell Covers.** Bell covers made from appropriate material* remain the best way of reducing potential infected aerosol from circulating in an indoor space. Depending on your comfort level, instrumentalists can wear masks only when speaking and slitted performance masks are optional.

- **Rehearsal Times.** In spaces with good ventilation rates and HEPA filtration, increased indoor rehearsal times of 50 minutes may be considered. A minimum of 3 air exchanges per hour should be used, if there are spaces with higher air change rates, you may consider longer rehearsal times.
- **Physical Distancing.** Distancing may be decreased to 3 feet, adjusting farther or closer depending on local conditions.
- **Hygiene.** Continue good hygiene practice moving forward, including appropriate elimination of brass fluid.
- **Face Shields and Partitions.** Plastic face shields only stop large droplets, not aerosol; room dividers inhibit the function of the HVAC system and are not recommended.

Please refer to the Association for Heating, Ventilating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) guidance on ventilation during COVID-19: [ashrae.org/technical-resources/resources](https://www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/resources).

*Material should consist of MERV13 material or ASTM F2100 (or similar) standard.

Click here to view the full research release [Measurements and Simulations of Aerosol Released while Singing and Playing Wind Instruments](#).

Click here to view [Performing Arts Aerosol Study: A Conversation on Mitigations Fall 2021](#).



THE YEAR WE WERE ALL SMALL SCHOOLS DIRECTORS

Melissa Jmaeff Music Director, Sutherlin Middle and High Schools

The 2020/2021 school year was one for the books.

Like all the years that have come before, last year music teachers were tasked with creating a meaningful musical experience for students. The difference is that in 2020/2021 we were also working to adhere to an ever-changing set of rules and realities. Over the course of the year in speaking with peers in person, virtually and throughout the ringing halls of social media, I realized that these conversations were echoing the same types of conversations that my small schools colleagues and I have been having for years.

So I am calling 2020/2021 The Year We Were All Small Schools Directors (and how we can learn from this experience).

Something that I heard a lot last year was the concern around kids not being able to take music because it wouldn't fit into their schedule. This is something that small schools directors grapple with every single year. In tiny schools where most if not all classes are singletons, scheduling is a major challenge for everyone involved. I've had years where none of my juniors were in band because it conflicted with their math class. Losing those kids, even for a year, is a heartbreaker to be sure, **but what did I learn from this?** I learned to focus on who was there, not on who wasn't. When I shifted my perspective away from what we were missing towards what we had, I found that the gaps in my ensembles were quickly closed by enthusiastic musicians who were eager to step into a new role, or simply fill out theirs. It's sort of like when a large tree falls in the forest. Yes, there is a gap in the canopy but before long all the little trees are clamoring towards the light.

Another thing I heard a lot of last year was that students of diverse musical backgrounds were all lumped together into one ensemble, regardless of level. My experience teaching in small public schools is that they are rife with these types of ensembles. My goal with teaching these ensembles has always been to shine a light on people's strengths and work to support people's weaknesses. I mean, that's what we all do, right? But when you're looking at an ensemble of 10 kids of varying musical backgrounds, 7th-12th grade, it becomes pretty obvious where strengths and weaknesses lie and it's up to you to somehow make 'em shake hands in the middle.

A few years back I had an all-comers 9th-12th grade choir composed of 6 treble voice singers and one non-singer. My non-singer was enrolled for some socializing opportunities. Since she made it very clear that she was never going to sing I tasked her with being our hype guy and she was AMAZING at it. Whenever someone looked blue, she was right there cheering them on. She took it upon herself to hand out folders

and check in with everyone every day. And we absolutely took the time every day to have those daily check-ins. This was her contribution and it mattered to all of us. My queen would encourage us loudly when we sounded great. She would also loudly yell and dramatically plug her ears when she thought we sounded terrible. She was a tough critic but even that feedback we learned to appreciate (and she learned to be less dramatic about) because she was a part of our team and we all had mutual respect for the contributions of each member of our choir, musical or otherwise.

What did I learn from this? With these types of ensembles I learned to use music as the jumping-off point. No matter our backgrounds we all share a love-- or at least some sort of appreciation-- for music. We are bound by this commonality and that's pretty powerful. The rest, I feel, is about having students find their voice within the ensemble, learning what unique skills they can bring to the table and how their peers and I can help them improve areas of weakness-- from technique, to performance, to attitude. It is my job to facilitate this.

The third thing that I heard an awful lot about last year was selecting literature for new-to-you ensembles. In most of the small public schools that I've taught, the music library was ancient and my budget needed to be spread across a wide spectrum of levels and ensembles. Rejuvenating my library was a non-option for many years. So what to do when you need tunes?

Picking appropriate literature is, in my opinion, the second most important thing that I am responsible for. (Relationship building is number one.) In my opinion, the only thing worse than picking something that is culturally inappropriate is picking something that is too hard. I don't mean "just out of reach but still motivating" too hard, I mean, "I sang this piece in college and I loved it so my kids will too" too hard. Too hard can absolutely kill motivation, self-worth, and good singing or playing. The easy solution, however, is to consider that nothing is "too easy". I mean, of course you won't spend a term on something that provides little educational value, but if all you've got is all you've got for a week or two, sing those unisons, rounds, or two-parts kicking around in the library, or do a singalong with some favorite pop tunes or folk songs while you figure out what your students like and where they will shine. In the meanwhile, talk to colleagues about what you're hearing: "I have two great high treble voices, a very timid low treble section, and a bass who is always singing the octave. But they all really seem to like songs about ice cream. Who has literature recommendations?" The more specific you can be with your observations the better. What do *they* need? Not, what do *you* need.

Some of the most rewarding musical experiences I've had have been with Y'all Come Sing/Play ensembles (read: funky instrumentation, timid singers, people unsure of their abilities). In many of these instances we took one of those easy tunes or motives and arranged it specifically for our ensemble. "Ok, you sing this harmony line, she'll play the solo after the A section, let's throw an ostinato in here, how about a little improv over the coda?" I've always found that the less it is about my expectations of what we "should" be singing/playing, the more I can get out of my own way to better guide my students' progress. Where are they now? Where are they going? How can I help them get there? Further, these types of ensembles and ensemble-specific collaborations, aside from being tailored to the specific needs of your group, are also tremendous team-building activities.

So, what did I learn from this? I learned to be flexible, and I learned the importance of being able to let go of preconceived

expectations. I learned to meet my students where they are and to let their strengths and areas yet to be improved guide my literature selections. I learned that "literature" has a very broad definition. Especially in times like these students need to sink their teeth into something that they will enjoy, that will bring them comfort, and that will hopefully bring them together. Great literature choices can absolutely do all of this.

As we are rapidly discovering, 2021/2022 is shaping up to be another challenging year. My sincere hope, however, is that music teachers will continue to see the value in focusing on what we have, celebrating the strengths of our students, and exercising flexibility of mind and of heart. Good luck out there, friends, and don't be scared to ask questions of your small schools colleagues. Much of this road we have travelled before.

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Stress, Burnout, and Stage Fright in College

RESOURCES FOR MUSIC AND MUSIC EDUCATION MAJORS

Paul Fox State Retired Member Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA)

Increasingly, in some parts of the country there are new shortages of qualified, experienced, skilled, and engaging public and private school teachers, even in the fields of performing arts.

For examples, see [washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/08/28/teacher-shortages-affecting-every-state-as-2017-18-school-year-begins/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/08/28/teacher-shortages-affecting-every-state-as-2017-18-school-year-begins/).

At the same time, although it may not seem to be documented to a great extent, stress, burnout, and stage fright have become real concerns for music education majors completing their coursework, juries/recitals/concerts, methods exams, student teaching, and other field experiences. This may be affecting statistics on college enrollments, graduation rates, and job placements!

It would seem we should be recruiting more music educators (not losing them as “failed” music/music education majors). Where should we look for answers to this problem?

“Burnout is fatigue and diminished interest caused by long-term stress. It is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. In the university music atmosphere, stress and burnout are prevalent and accepted as part of the culture. Symptoms and causes of general stress and burnout have been well researched, but much less has been presented on college musicians’ burnout, let alone how to deal with it.”

Helen Orzel

The purpose of this article is to share studies, surveys, and articles of research on the causes for stress and “drop-outs” of music and music educator majors, along with proposals of remedies for reducing college student anxiety and recommendations for alleviating the problem of attrition.

An overview of collegiate performance anxiety elucidates numerous emotional triggers:

1. College funding
2. Academic pressures: acquiring new knowledge, understandings, skills, etc.
3. Competition (both in self-perception of achievement and in relation to peers)
4. Trends in seeking perfectionism

5. Coping with being away from home
6. Sleep deprivation
7. Challenges with personal relationships
8. Development of new strategies and systems of personal organization and time management

If you find additional sources or statistics, please pass them on.

College Student Stress

The best summary I have found on this subject is from the recently released Fall 2018 issue of the state journal of the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) – *PMEA News*. (For full access, become a member of PMEA.) Read the article on page 52, “Music Major Anxiety – Causes and Coping” by Kevin Shorner-Johnson, National Association for Music Education (NAfME) Society for Music Teacher Education (SMTE) PA State Chair and Director of Music Education at Elizabethtown College. He talks about anxiety as “the leading mental health issue among adolescents and college students,” and examines the stressors of academic expectations, time management, “perfectionism,” and amygdala and cortex-rooted stress disorders, as well as cultivating practices of self-care and coping skills.

Shorner-Johnson recommends the book, *Rewire Your Anxious Brain: How to Use the Neuroscience of Fear to End Anxiety, Panic, and Worry* by Catherine Pittman and Elizabeth Karle (2015).

“Pittman and Karle provide beautiful guides and checklists that may assist students in building coping skills such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, prayer, yoga, exercise, and chanting. Coping strategies can allow us to enter into tension, getting to know origins and triggers, and transforming anxieties into new forms of centered awareness. Like music, coping strategies are skills that can only be cultivated through practice. When we practice self-care, we rewire associated connections and empower new responses.”

- Kevin Shorner-Johnson

For a comprehensive survey on the stressors of music majors, peruse the illuminating thesis of H.J. Orzel (2010) “Undergraduate Music Student Stress and Burnout.” She states that her study has a two-fold purpose:

- Examine sources of stress and burnout for undergraduate music students, and
- Examine existing methods of controlling stress and burnout.
- This information can also be a tool for college music students needing
- help with stress and burnout.

"A college musician's environment can significantly influence stress levels. Environmental stressors include overworked professors unable to provide support,

competitive peers, lack of resources such as practice space or counseling services,

overburdened schedules, and high standards and expectations set by institutions...

Developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help reduce the effects of environmental stress, promoting resilience."

- Helen Orzel

In her conclusion, she mentions these possible strategies to alleviate stress:

1. Learning to "manage your burdens," class schedules, assignments, calendar, etc.
2. Improvement of personal time management towards greater work/life balance
3. Development of coping skills for new environments
4. Exploration of new practice venues and study routines
5. Allocation of more time with supportive peers
6. Learning to make manageable choices, setting of limitations and reasonable expectations for making future commitments
7. Practice of relaxation, slow breathing, and meditation exercises
8. Strategies for reduction of performance anxiety and "stage fright"
9. Reflection on and rehash of personal mission, goals, and motivations, and "what first inspired them to pursue music"

H. Christian Bernard II from the State University of New York at Fredonia offers his research-based article *Contemplative Practices in Music Teacher Education*, describing efforts to incorporate contemplative studies within a music curriculum

(Sarath 2006), mindfulness instruction on the music listening experiences (Diaz 2013), mindfulness-based stress reduction intervention instruction (Shapiro, Schwartz, and Bonner 1998), short-term meditation practices on attention and self-regulation (Tang 2009), "deep listening" as "a way of hearing in which we are fully present with what is happening in the moment" (Barbezat and Bush 2014), contemplative movement activities including methodologies of Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze, and Gordon adapted for other music teaching contexts (Benedict, 2010), walking meditation, tai chi ch'uan, yoga, and labyrinth walking (Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, 2016), contemplative reading, writing, and other self-help practices.

"Contemplation is not the opposite of thinking but its complement. It is not the emptying of the mind of thoughts but the cultivation of awareness of thoughts within the mind. Through contemplation, the mind is open to itself."

- D.P. Barbezat and M. Bush.

"Utilizing contemplative practices including meditation, reading and writing, movement, and listening can offer students and teachers opportunities for meaningful experiences while simultaneously reducing levels of stress and anxiety. While mindfulness is a prerequisite for all contemplative practices, this secular and academic application goes beyond deepening of awareness and compassion to also include deepening of thinking and learning. Care should be used when selecting resources and activities, as the use of contemplative practices should always serve as an aid to, not a replacement for, effective music teaching and learning."

- H. Christian Bernard II

Bernard also provides an excellent bibliography for further study, and has also written many other related articles:

- "Burnout and the College Music Education Major" in the *NAfME Journal of Music Teacher Education* (2005) journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/10570837050150010107
- "Contemplative Practices in Music Teacher Education" in *New Directions* (Issue #3) newdirectionsmsu.org/issue-3/bernhard-contemplative-practices-in-music-education

Burnout

An outstanding series of YouTube video presentations dives into what "five different research studies have to say about burnout and the undergraduate music education major, and the implications these studies have for students, professors, and administrators when it comes to managing the stress often associated with this degree." As a requirement for her

graduate music psychology class, Meghan Johnson presented “Burnout and the Undergraduate Music Education Major: Surviving the Stress” in 2010:

- [youtube.com/watch?v=DZ_fCDDCOuY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZ_fCDDCOuY)
- [youtube.com/watch?v=qdD4CCWci5U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdD4CCWci5U)
- [youtube.com/watch?v=HQqrWzN5hCg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQqrWzN5hCg)
- [youtube.com/watch?v=OB4IPI_u4mU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OB4IPI_u4mU)

Additional resources regarding pre- and in-service music teacher burnout:

- “When Music Goes Up in Flames: The Impact of Advising on Music Major Burnout” by Marilee Teasley and Erin Buchanan in *NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising* (2016)
nacadajournal.org/doi/full/10.12930/NACADA-15-002?code=naaa-site
- “A Survey of Attitudes Towards Burnout Among Music Students at The University of South Carolina School of Music” by Philip David Castro (2016)
scholarcommons.sc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4546&context=etd
- “Reducing Music Teacher Burnout and Its Consequences” by Sung Eun Kim and David Barg in *Music Education Policy Briefs* (2010)
bu.edu/muedpolicyproject/brief2.pdf
- “Ways to Manage Stress and Avoid Teacher Burnout” by John Hylton in the *NAfME Music Educators Journal* (1989)
- “Teacher Burnout...” *NAfME eNEWS* and *Music in a Minuet* blog-posts
nafme.org/tag/teacher-burnout
- “65 Things You Should Do Right Now to Avoid Burnout” in *Monster Teaching Community*
teaching.monster.com/benefits/articles/7938-65-things-you-should-do-right-now-to-avoid-burnout

Performance Anxiety

Dr. Natalie Ozeas, formerly Professor and Head of Music Education at Carnegie-Mellon University (CMU), shares a new local initiative for addressing the problem of stage fright by Anne Jackovic Moskal, a member of the Pittsburgh Benedum Orchestra and solfège teacher at the CMU School of Music.

“The text that I use for my class is Musician’s Yoga by Mia Olson. We work a lot with meditation, especially focused towards the music we are currently working on. We practice by either listening to recordings or simply thinking of the whole work in their mind and how to continuously breathe through it. The thought is that they will be able

to move past anxious moments in performances and feel the constant breath instead. Additionally, we take meditation walks and practice the same method. Some of these methods are addressed in this book. We also have a physical practice to reinforce breathing through challenges. However, a significant part is to stretch, repair, restore, and strengthen our bodies from the damage of long practice sessions.”

- Anne Jackovic Moskal

There are a myriad of sources on the web geared to performers for lessening stage fright, including blog posts like “A Few Things Every Musician Should Know About Stage Fright” by Noa K Kageyama from *BulletproofMusician*.

NAfME members have free access to numerous articles on performance anxiety. Several articles published in the *Music Educators Journal* (MEJ) include “Stress in the Lives of Music Students” by David J. Sternbach (January 2008), “The Other Side of Stage Fright” by Donald L. Hamann (April 1985), and “Stage Fright – Its Cause and Cure” by Rowland W. Dunham (1953).

“To help your students reduce stress, address the ways they critique their practice and prepare for performance... Excessive self-criticism in practicing can be a predisposing factor for performance anxiety.”

- David J. Sternbach

“When musicians think about performing, they eventually think about performance anxiety — ‘stage fright.’ Performance anxiety can be defined as a physical and mental deviation from a ‘normal state’ and is perhaps one of the most misunderstood areas of performance practice... A reduction in anxiety levels especially with musicians with extensive formal training may actually diminish performance quality. For musicians with low mastery skills, the prudent approach would seem to be to undertake more formal training.”

- Donald L. Hamann

“Here is the cure for stage fright. If you have strength of mind and a conscientious determination, you can walk onto the stage for a solo with almost the same certainty you have in practicing. There is the added and thrilling incentive now of an audience. By ignoring what you may fancy to be their opinion of you — which does not matter anyway — you have a new angle: giving emotional joy, spiritual nobility, or dramatic stimulation. With an honest artistic outlook, stage fright goes out the window. In its place you have the pleasure of adding something to the lives of your listeners.”

- Rowland W. Dunham

Additional resources on stage fright and other anxiety issues:

- “Reducing Music Performance Anxiety” by Ruth Rootberg in *Majoring in Music* (2011): majoringinmusic.com/reducing-music-performance-anxiety
- “How to Overcome Stage Fright and Performance Anxiety” by Corey Lee (2017) liberatedperformer.com/stage-fright-blog1/how-to-overcome-stage-fright-and-performance-anxiety-ultimate-guide
- “Music Performance Anxiety and Teaching Anxiety – A Review of Literature and Implications for Music Education” by Christopher E. Strong (2013) cardinalscholar.bsu.edu/bitstream/handle/123456789/197255/StrongC_2013-2_BODY.pdf;sequence=1
- “Depression and Anxiety in University Music Students” by Brenda G. Wristen in *NAfME Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* (2013) journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/8755123312473613

Finally, even though there is so much more to cover, a good “coda” on the subject of stress in music school might be to look at the article “Reality 101” by Gary C. Mortenson in the December 1991 issue of *Music Educators Journal*. Citing the University of Massachusetts student Erin Martin’s column “Real World 101: A Needed Course” in the October 1990 issue of *U. — The National College Newspaper*, college students could use help in areas not traditionally included in undergraduate curriculum:

1. Job placement
2. Financial planning
3. Raising a family
4. Stress management

Mortenson creates several excellent “mock scenarios” fostering critical thinking and problem solving of teacher-student relationships, teacher-parent relationships, and criticism and stress that are issues in every teaching career.

“Life would be much easier if we could learn to handle real-world problems before we have to face them on our own.”

- Erin Martin

“Teaching requires the ability to manage a variety of challenging situations. It is as complex and changeable as the society we live in. In college, future teachers assimilate a great deal of information that prepares them to share knowledge with their students. No one, however, can teach all of the skills needed to make complex decisions on all possible future real-life circumstances. These must ultimately be arrived at on an individual basis according to one’s own instincts and conscience. By giving more thought to how the problems and issues that confront students, parents, and colleagues will affect us, however, we can better equip ourselves to respond in an intelligent way to these challenges.”

- Gary C. Mortenson

*Articles compiled by Paul K. Fox. He is State Retired Member Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA), Chair of the PMEA State Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment, and Retention, Artistic Director of the South Hills Junior Orchestra, Steering Committee/ School District Representative of the **UPPER ST. CLAIR TODAY** magazine, Staff Announcer for the Upper St. Clair High School Marching Band, Co-Director of Communications for the Community Foundation of Upper St. Clair, and Volunteer Escort for the St. Clair Hospital.*



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EQUITY IN MUSIC EDUCATION:

Cultural Appropriation Versus Cultural Appreciation— Understanding the Difference

Karen Howard Associate professor of music and coordinator of graduate music research at the University of St. Thomas

To avoid cultural appropriation, music educators need to take the time to explore the source culture and approach the traditions of others in a respectful manner so the people and musics studied are neither demeaned nor exploited. Students can be part of this exploration and share what they learn from their research with the class.

Keywords: cultural appropriation; culture; intellectual property; musics; research; respect

NAfME is glad to offer one hour of professional development recognition to you for reading this article. Please follow the link below and complete a short quiz to receive your certificate of completion.

bit.ly/AppropriationVsAppreciation

How can you share a wide variety of music and cultures with your students in a manner that respects and honors these traditions?

A familiar scene is repeating itself in numerous school music settings. We might see a choir director who is uncertain how to prepare a meaningful discussion with his singers about the history related to the African American spiritual they will begin learning next month. It could also show an elementary music teacher wanting to include songs related to the Mexican holiday Día de los Muertos, but she feels that she does not have the time to learn about the holiday with all the other demands put on her schedule. Next up might be a middle school orchestra teacher wishing to include a melody from the Native American community in his region, wondering what steps to take to receive permission before proceeding. These situations depict music educators attempting to work with diverse musics representing a wide range of cultures without engaging in cultural appropriation.

The term cultural appropriation as it applies to music education is frequently misunderstood due to the complexity of having open discussions addressing culture, race, privilege, and power. It is easy to feel uncertain about whether one is engaging in appropriative pedagogy when presenting diverse musics or attempting to celebrate cultures. The purpose of this article is to offer a clear definition of cultural appropriation in order to recognize it, understand it, prevent further misunderstanding of it, and develop strategies that instead work toward cultural appreciation in music education.

To better understand pedagogical practices that do not engage in cultural appropriation, it is helpful to have a clear

definition of both culture and appropriate. Two working definitions of culture as it relates to music education are

- the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.
- the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends on the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. [1]

The term appropriate as an adjective means “suitable or proper in the circumstances,” [2] with synonyms such as fitting, apt, or right. When we change appropriate to a verb, it means “to take (something) for one’s own use, typically without the owner’s permission,” [3] and has synonyms such as seize, commandeer, annex, or hijack. When the two terms are put together, cultural appropriation is defined as

- taking intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artifacts from someone else’s culture without permission.
- harmful when the source community is a minority group that has been oppressed or exploited in other ways or when the object of appropriation is particularly sensitive. [4]

Unpacking cultural appropriation is not a matter of telling music teachers what music to listen to, program, perform, or represent. It is a matter of helping music teachers consider that we do not teach and learn music in a vacuum and that there are many social and historical implications to teaching and learning music from marginalized cultures. Cultural appropriation can be taken personally by those whose culture and history are trivialized or overlooked. This can cause harm to members of a community, and it can model oppressive behavior and a lack of respect. Disrespect can lead to social bias that includes

- Prejudice—an attitude about another person or group of people based on stereotypes;
- Discrimination—an action or behavior based on prejudice;
- Racism—the systemic conditions that provide some people more consistent and easier access to opportunities based on race or ethnicity. [5]

In terms of music education, cultural appropriation usually refers to the taking of non-Western and nonwhite genres and performance practices and carries connotations of

dominance and exploitation. In the United States, cultural appropriation most often happens across racial lines. For music educators, this typically features white teachers using elements of a marginalized culture without demonstrating an understanding of the historically and emotionally significant elements of the music culture.

N. Bruce Duthu, a member of the United Houma Nation of Louisiana and the chair of the Native American Studies Program at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, described the harm caused by culturally appropriating from historically marginalized Native American culture “as if it’s part of the public domain, as if one can simply go into this reservoir of stereotypical images and draw from it without any kind of limitation or concern. When lands have been lost and cultures have been decimated, one of the last things left to be appropriated from Native cultures is their very dignity. It reflects our historical amnesia.” [6]

To dismantle cultural appropriation, we first need to recognize it. Students in music class as early as elementary school are able to grapple with the complexity surrounding appropriation. [7] They are able and eager to engage in meaningful and at times difficult conversations regarding particular music genres. A 2018 study described a class of fifth-grade students and their teacher exploring the complicated status of Puerto Rico while learning about plena music. [8] After singing a song that seemed on the surface to be simply about a flag, they engaged in discussion about the importance of the song and the fact that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens but with different rights than the students’ parents enjoyed, such as not being allowed to vote in presidential elections. They learned of the history and the people for whom the song was created. The students came to know the deep symbolism of the song rather than only engaging with the sonic features.

Sometimes, the situation is more complex, such as the choir director looking for meaningful ways to engage in discussion about spirituals. The sensitivity surrounding the teaching of a spiritual differs depending on the race of the music teacher. This may sound provocative, but it is an unavoidable reality. An African American music teacher whose ancestors were enslaved has a different connection to spirituals than that of white music teachers. This racial dynamic causes tension, but that should not deter us from engaging in difficult conversations with our fellow educators and students. This tension is a call to action requiring that we as music teachers grow our understanding and respect for the people and histories of the music we share.

Viewing the performance of a spiritual as a form of flattery or solely as homage to a great musical art form is based on the misconception that race relations exist on a level playing field. There cannot be an equal and free flow of practices as long as the group in power in music education (white people) maintains power and privilege over another group. It is imperative that in a field consisting of approximately 90

percent white teachers [9] that a better understanding is developed of the roles that cultural appropriation and social bias play in music education.

Creating learning environments that examine sensitive topics like appropriation might reveal what at first appears to be blatant discriminatory practices between culture groups. Through facilitated discussions, it may be possible to discover a complex socio-musical process involving competent recreation of musical practices and a global musical cultural flow between cultures. Teachers and students can piece together questions of ownership, the realities of wandering tunes, “borrowed” songs, and music that has indeed been appropriated. Bringing forward the sociocultural and sociohistorical meanings of the music creates fertile ground for provocative discussion of just such musical traffic between different cultures. [10]

Engendering Cultural Appreciation

One of the many responsibilities of a music teacher is to navigate cultural traditions without crossing a line into an experience that can be viewed as exploitative or unaware of the source culture. Intentionally designed teaching and learning experiences coupled with reflective practice for the teacher and students can help illuminate a path through this complicated territory. Music educators can engage students with performance and a knowing of the people behind the music, what the music means, and how it functions.[11] Students can demonstrate a multicultural sensitivity toward others in response to thoughts and emotions that are provoked through their musical experiences. Multicultural sensitivity is defined as the “desire or motivation to understand, appreciate, and accept the differences between diverse cultures.”[11] Students may also express discomfort over the power that some groups hold over others whether through music, education, or politics.

There is no one-size-fits-all for working ethically with music from cultures that have experienced marginalization and oppression. Each music culture has its own history and performance practices. To work toward cultural appreciation, the checklist in Sidebar 1 is offered as a starting point for teachers keen on creating learning experiences that engage diverse musics and cultures in a respectful manner.

Sidebar 1: Checklist for Repertoire Selection

- What is the plan for teaching/performing music from this particular culture? If it is selected because it fills certain objectives related to notation literacy or the feel of it fits a programming need, it is beneficial to take the time to study the background of the piece, the composer, and the culture. Finding the story can be a process of discovery with the students.

- Is there an opportunity to work with/speak to an expert in particular cultural traditions who can advise and work with both the teacher and students? This may be a person from the culture in question or a community artist-educator that has expertise in the artistic traditions of the area. They might visit in person or via a video call.
- Does the music teacher model for the students that the culture of origin is understood and respected? By modeling curiosity about cultures, it demonstrates that these traditions are worthy of space and time in the curriculum.
- Can students demonstrate what they understand about the culture of origin and the process of musical traditions moving in and out of a culture? Are students allowed a chance to express what they have learned, perhaps including what they used to think and what they now understand after engaging with the music?
- How might someone from the culture feel about the representation of and pedagogical approach to the music?

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Footnotes

1. "Culture," defined in the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture>.
2. "Appropriate" (adjective), defined in Merriam-Webster Online, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/appropriate>.

3. "Appropriate" (verb), defined in Merriam-Webster Online, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/appropriate>.
4. Susan Scafidi, *Who Owns Culture? Appropriation and Authenticity in American Law* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).
5. Johann LeRoux, "Social Dynamics of the Multicultural Classroom," *Intercultural Education* 12, no. 3 (2001): 273–88.
6. <http://flavorwire.com/344807/what-a-native-american-expert-thinks-about-that-controversial-no-doubt-music-video>
7. Karen Howard, "The Emergence of Children's Multicultural Sensitivity: An Elementary School Music Culture Project," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 66, no. 3 (2018): 261–77; Félix Neto, Maria da Conceição Pinto, and Etienne Mullet, "Can Music Reduce Anti-Dark-Skin Prejudice? A Test of a Cross-Cultural Musical Education Programme," *Psychology of Music* 44, no. 3 (2015): 388–98.
8. Howard, "Emergence of Children's Multicultural Sensitivity."
9. National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2017* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2017), <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2017144>
10. Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, "Introduction: On Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music," *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, ed. G. Born and D. Hesmondhalgh (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 1–58.
11. Howard, "Emergence of Children's Multicultural Sensitivity."



RECORDING STRATEGIES FOR AUDITIONS

Tips for Quality Recordings

Dr. Tomás Cotik Associate Professor of Violin, School of Music & Theater, Portland State University

This is an expanded version of an article that first appeared in the April 2021 issue of [Teaching Music](#).

In the current period of the COVID-19 pandemic, students and their teachers have been forced to pivot their lessons, ensembles, school groups, studio recitals, festivals, and auditions to an online medium. While learning the new skill set involved in this transition came more easily to some than others, even the most tech-savvy among us have had to learn and adapt to a digital way of life. When it comes to recording auditions in particular, becoming knowledgeable about the recording process and the technology involved makes a big difference in achieving results such as winning a coveted spot in an All-State Orchestra or an honors ensemble or advancing in ensemble placement. For some, it eventually becomes the vehicle to an acceptance and scholarship for college, and later, a professional orchestra spot or an album release. Regardless of how it is ultimately used, recording helps musicians of all levels grow as they reflect on their own playing.

Following the Instructions

For recorded auditions, students can benefit from some practical advice for the actual recording process and the technical aspects involved in the submission of the excerpts. Following the audition instructions closely and carefully cannot be overstated. For example, some auditions ask students to submit each track as a separate audio file and to not electronically enhance the recording in any way.

Recording the Practice Sessions

It is critical for students to regularly record themselves when they practice so that they are used to recording, aware of what needs work, and are realistic about their playing. Students should keep in mind that a close recording mic reacts differently than the ear in a large hall. It also feels different to record the excerpt as a solo versus with an orchestra.

Choosing the Space

Really good sound quality in these recordings is vital. Committees want to hear an accurate representation of an auditionee's playing. In finding a room with good acoustics, students should try to avoid acoustics that are too dry or too wet. Ideally, students should record in an uncluttered room and avoid tight spaces with too many hard surfaces and right angles. A room that produces a live, warm sound with a small amount of reverb is best. It is worth exploring the possibility of obtaining access to a larger hall at school, a club, or at a

house of worship. It is essential to choose a quiet time and to be aware of background noise (e.g., traffic, ceiling fans, etc.). Students should also watch out for any noise coming from squeaking floors or lights/electronics and set their phones on airplane mode.

Preparing Logistics and a Game Plan

Scheduling the recording well ahead of time and planning in advance of the due date to ensure all requirements are followed is essential. Students should play their recordings for several people before submitting them. They should also consider having someone in a coaching position present in the recording room. It is a good idea to plan on recording five to seven takes and then choosing the best one (with ample lead time, students can always do one more session if they are not satisfied). During the recording session, I recommend listening back once after doing the first take. This will provide students with a lot of information on what to improve in the next takes. It is not easy to play the same excerpt over and over again. Students should take breaks. It can be helpful and motivational for them to imagine that they are playing for an audience and to remember their love for music. Mistakes are human, and juries overlook mistakes when they see talent, musicality, and potential.

Acquiring Entry-Level Recording Equipment

Especially if students are not working with a sound engineer, they should record with the best possible equipment. It is a good idea to invest in a quality digital audio recorder, for example Zoom or Tascam, which cost around \$120. These devices can be connected to smartphones to capture enhanced audio. Likewise, connecting an external stereo mic like the Rode i-XY (\$200) to a smartphone can bring the quality of the audio up to a very high definition (24-bit/96k). Alternatively, students can purchase a good USB mic to plug in to their computer, which allows them to record sound directly to their hard drive.



Tascam and Zoom recorders

Positioning and Setting Up Mics

Once the room and the microphones are decided upon, students need to find the optimal microphone placement. They should try different placements for their stereo microphone, starting with the microphone placed six feet from their instrument and recording a few tests while moving the mic farther away. The height and direction of the microphone placement also affect the resulting sound. It is crucial to check the volume level of the recording input. This is the level at which the recording device is receiving the sound. The key here is to avoid having this level be too high or too low. Students can balance the frame they want to use for the image and independently set the distance they need to have the best audio with their mic by either zooming in on the camera or by connecting the mic with a longer cable.

Filming

Students should not only strive to present the best audio possible, but to also capture a high-resolution video recording to match. The video quality of newer smartphones is remarkable, especially that of iPhones. Regardless of the device used to capture the video, choosing a nice frame for the composition and ensuring that the lighting looks good makes an impact on the final product. Students can buy a couple of dimmable video lights for as low as \$40, but even some indirect light, like a desk lamp pointed at a wall in front



Photo: So-Min Kang Photography



PreSonus Audio Box USB 96 & Behringer C-2 Mics

of them, can provide nice lighting. Finally, I would recommend students present their best selves by being well-dressed, poised, friendly, respectful, and confident.

Streaming

If students are using a computer to record or to stream an audition live, it is worth using a USB mic such as the Blue Yeti Microphone (\$150) or purchasing an audio interface such as the PreSonus AudioBox USB 2x2 (\$100) and a pair of pencil mics such as the *Behringer C-2* (\$70). For those who are serious about investing in their recording setup, acquiring a matched pair of Rode NT5 (\$430) or exploring ribbon mics, which can capture a warm and natural sound, can also improve the sound quality. With higher end options, a mic stand and XLR cables will likely be needed. In terms of streaming video, a 1080 HS webcam will significantly enhance the image. The audio interface and webcam can be chosen as inputs for Zoom, streaming and recording programs such as Open Broadcaster Software (OBS), as well as social media platforms.

Selecting a Take

I recommend taking a few days before reviewing the recordings and deciding on the final take. Having some distance helps students be objective and not overly critical. An idea for choosing the best interpretation is to assign a "score" while listening to each take. It is helpful to start with a general impression of how the take went. After a general impression is established, students can focus more on crucial areas such as rhythm, bow stroke, articulations, dynamics, intonation, vibrato, style, and phrasing to help them refine and choose which to submit. In a way, the assessment process here circles back to the work in the practice room when students were learning the excerpts. Once they have decided upon the winning take, they can trim the endings with any editing software such as Audacity or QuickTime player. It is also easy to trim videos on the video app of a smartphone.



Blue Yeti USB Microphone

Growing as Musicians

Recording is a fantastic tool that can be used to help untangle some of the most crucial challenges for musicians! One of these challenges is the paradox of needing to simultaneously imagine the sound (pre-hearing), execute the sound, and also continually assess the sound that is created while adjusting the execution accordingly. Using a recording simplifies this feedback loop and allows students to better analyze their playing. Similarly, recording allows students to gain an accurate sense of how they sound

from a distance. Listening back to a recording exposes the differences between a student's perception of their sound and reality.

It can be fun for students to learn the rudiments of recording video and audio and improve the product they present. The investment of time and money will pay back! Even outside of a pandemic, learning these skills helps students prepare their college auditions, share what they do on social media, and capture the ephemeral nature of music and live performances as they create their own artistic projects. While outsourcing some of these tasks can also be a good option for students both at this stage and in the future when they become successful musicians, the resulting free time should always be used for more practice!

Additional Resources

To help students and teachers in the preparation of All-State violin auditions, I recently wrote a series of articles. Each of the articles includes various resources to help players learn the violin excerpts that are standard for many student and professional orchestral auditions. The articles include parts with fingerings and bowings as well as full orchestral scores, brief introductions to each piece, links to my solo and orchestra recordings, and advice on solving the typical problems that I have seen students confront in terms of rhythm, bow stroke, articulation, dynamics, vibrato, intonation, and phrasing.

Read parts [one](#), [two](#), [three](#), [four](#), [five](#), and [six](#) of the "Resources for Learning Violin Audition Excerpts" supplemental articles.

Tomás Cotik would like to thank Anwyn Willette and Patricia Jancova for their help in editing this article.

About the author

Hailed by Michael Tilson Thomas as "an excellent violinist," Dr. Tomás Cotik was a first-prize winner at the National Broadcast Music Competition in his native Argentina in 1997, and the winner of the Government of Canada Award for 2003-2005. An avid recording artist, Dr. Cotik has recorded fifteen CDs for Naxos and Centaur Records, which have received enthusiastic reviews from publications such as *Gramophone*, *Fanfare*, *American Record Guide*, *Downbeat*, and *MusicWeb International*. Dr. Cotik was a rotating concertmaster with the New World Symphony and has performed hundreds of recitals and chamber music concerts across the globe. Committed to passing on his passion for music, Dr. Cotik was promoted to Associate Professor of Violin at [Portland State University](#) in 2021. He previously taught at West Texas A&M University, Florida International University, and at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music. His articles about pedagogy have been published in renowned international publications such as *The Strad*, the *American String Teacher Journal*, and the *American Music Teacher Journal*.

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REVIVE AND REVITALIZE YOUR ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

Dr. Michael Dalton Board President, Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival Association

Rebooting and Reviving After a Year of Chaos

For many years, high school music programs throughout the state, especially orchestra programs, have fallen victim to budget cuts. Recent COVID-19 restrictions and closures have made this situation worse. Over the past year, some students have abandoned their instrument and/or may not have re-enrolled in orchestra class for another year.

The Festival board's activities are changing this sad state of affairs. In response to this lack of support for high school orchestra programs, the bedlam of the past year, and students not returning to their orchestra class, the Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival provides a set of unique opportunities to help revitalize high school orchestras. One of the primary purposes of the Festival's events is to bring students together to play music without putting any kind of financial barriers or obstacles in their way. Schools participate completely free of charge.

Each year three (3) events are presented: 1) a four-day April Festival for high school orchestras, 2) a Chamber Music Concert Series where high school students and professional musicians play side-by-side, and 3) a Composers' Symposium for high school students.

"I believe that this Festival was a really amazing opportunity and experience – it brought us together as an orchestra, it inspired me to practice more and increase my skills and the whole time myself and others were having fun!!! Thank you for such a wonderful Festival!!!"

- Sophie, student violinist

The future of symphonic music rests in the hands of our young generation. We can only secure its future by finding creative and engaging ways to enable young people to fall in love with symphonic music and to form friendships that will endure for a lifetime.

Through these three activities, the Festival board has established and is building a high school orchestra community based in Newport, centered on young musicians, artistic exploration and collaborative performance that lead to recognition of the power of music throughout one's life. While there are regional and state orchestra competitions, the Festival's non-competitive activities for high school orchestras, small ensembles, and emerging high school composers is unique. The annual April Festival is a unique, 4-day for six high school orchestras. Professional conductors are the instructors. Schools with a high percentage of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch are given priority admission.

The Chamber Music Concert Series features high school quartets and professional quartets playing side-by-side. It provides an opportunity for talented individuals and small ensembles to perform in front of a live audience – outside their home town.

The Composers' Symposium is produced in collaboration with the Oregon Music Educators Association (OMEA) and with faculty in the music department at Oregon State University (OSU). The Symposium is a unique opportunity for high school students to submit an original composition (i.e., score), receive instruction from professional composers, and have it performed. Dr. Dana Reason, founder and director of popular music studies at Oregon State University is the Symposium's clinician. She says,

"In this challenging time, coming together with the students from the Composers' Symposium to exchange musical ideas, stylistic practices, and original compositions has been incredibly rewarding and inspiring. My hope is that more young people in the state of Oregon have the opportunity to not only create but to share with and learn from their peers, communities, and audiences."

4-Day April Orchestra Festival

The Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival is an annual four-day event in April for six (6) high school orchestras. Schools with a high percentage of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch are given priority admission. They join together for the 4-day Festival to learn in small innovative group workshops, play music together, bond with peers in their own and other orchestras, and perform as their school orchestra and also together as the Festival Orchestra for a free public concert as part of the Festival's finale. The Festival also includes a performance by a university orchestra or small ensemble. Professional music directors and conductors are the instructors. One of the primary purposes of the Festival is to bring students together to play music without putting any kind of financial barriers or obstacles in their way. Schools participate completely free of charge.

The 4-day April Festival begins on Thursday evening when the schools arrive for a pizza dinner and then assemble to create the Festival orchestra and rehearse the two pieces they will perform as part of the public concert as the Festival's finale.

Friday, the students break into the various workshops and clinics which last approximately 90 minutes. Workshops continue in the afternoon with three of the high school orchestras performing Friday evening along with a university orchestra.

Saturday, there are additional workshops and the second rehearsal of the combined Festival orchestra. Saturday evening

three high school orchestras perform and the combined Festival orchestra performs as the Festival's finale. All Festival events and concerts are free and open to the public with a donation requested at the door.

Sunday morning, the students receive free admission to the Oregon Coast Aquarium. In exchange for the free student admission, small ensembles from the high school orchestras perform short programs throughout the Aquarium grounds.

As part of evaluation of the Festival, students complete an online survey. The evaluation survey asks the students to rate a number of aspects of the Festival (e.g., overall rating of the Festival, food, facilities, motels, listening to other orchestras, working with clinicians, etc.) and rate each of these aspects on a 1 (low) – 4 (high) scale. Highlights of the student responses are:

1 (low)	2	3	4 (high)
0%	2%	25%	73%

Attending the Festival has encouraged me to continue to play my instrument and be a member of my school's orchestra:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
0%	6%	43%	51%

Chamber Music Concerts

The Chamber Music concerts focus on talented individuals and string quartets. The Chamber Music Concerts are a series of four events featuring high school string quartets performing alongside professional quartets. This Concert Series provides an opportunity for talented high school students to perform in front of a live audience in a real concert hall – outside their home town. This experience is a marvelous learning and growth opportunity, a wonderful addition to the student's resume, brings recognition to the students in their local community, and strengthens and sustains these important high school string orchestra programs.

Prior to the performances by the high school students and the professional musicians, the professional musicians conduct a 3-hour "master class" for the high school quartets. Motel rooms and meals are provided for the students, their teacher, and the professional musicians. The Festival also makes a small donation to the high school's music "booster club" and the professional musicians are given a small stipend.

While there are many excellent classical music performances available along the Oregon central coast, attendance at these concerts requires the purchase of a ticket. This limits access to cultural experiences for many. The Festival provides the free

Chamber Music Concert Series to improve coastal communities' access to cultural experiences.

Composers' Symposium for High School Students

The Composers' Symposium, initiated in September 2019, is one of the activities of the Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival. The Festival's Composers' Symposium is conducted in collaboration with the Oregon Music Educators Association (OMEA). The Symposium is a unique opportunity for high school students to submit an original composition, refine his/her work, receive instruction from professional composers and have the work performed.

"I wanted to thank you for providing this opportunity for us young composers to showcase our work; this symposium has been a great way for me to see other people's music and to hear their stories. This was a valuable experience that I will never forget. Thank you so much!"

- Ryan, student composer

The aim of the Composers' Symposium is to provide education opportunities for talented music students by serving as a resource for networking, professional development, and collaboration. There is no similar opportunity in Oregon and only a handful of opportunities for instruction in music composition in Oregon high schools. Composition submissions emphasize themes associated with Newport and the Oregon coastal environment.

Small group and individual instructional seminars are held once a month. Each session students examine areas of process, craft, orchestration (midi/acoustic) and analysis to augment their understanding and continue their development as an emerging composer. More specifically, the goals of the sessions are to:

- Introduce students to a variety of compositional styles, and frameworks to advance their stylistic approach and skill level.
- Develop analytical skills to improve ability to understand and reconstruct building blocks of particular genres and styles.
- Apply and practice music creation skills in order to expand and develop original music. This includes harmony, melody, rhythmic balance, form and function in music (from a range of styles as applicable to each student).

Clinicians and Endorsements

The Festival's music director and lead clinician is Adam Flatt. He is Music Director of the Newport Symphony Orchestra, the Colorado Ballet, and the University of Alabama – Tuscaloosa Symphony. Mr. Flatt also has a notable career in making music with some of our country's most talented young musicians. He has served on the summer faculties of both the Rocky Ridge

Music Center and the Curtis Institute of Music's Summerfest, and recently conducted the springtime residency of the Landes-Jugend-Sinfonie-Orchester Saar.

"What a gift for young orchestra musicians to have some days away from home to devote entirely to music and to each other," Maestro Flatt says. "The high school programs receive a great boost from this intense work, making strides in both music-making and in team-building, and bring home treasured memories of a musical weekend at the coast."

Recent guest clinicians include: Dr. Dan Allcott, Tennessee Technical University and Music Director of both the Oak Ridge Symphony and the Bryan Symphony orchestras in Tennessee; Dr. Blake Richardson, University of Alabama also serving as Music Director of the Alabama Symphony Youth Orchestra; Helen Cha-Pyo, Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts and is the Artistic Director of the Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts and the Principal Conductor of the New Jersey Youth Symphony. Guest clinicians for the April 2022 Festival are: Dr. Mark Laycock, Professor of Music at Wichita State University, where he holds the Ann Walenta Faculty of Distinction Endowed Professorship, and Cynthia Woods, New England Conservatory of Music and Music Director of the Cambridge Symphony Orchestra.

The Festival is endorsed by the Oregon Symphony, Eugene Symphony, Rogue Valley Symphony, East Oregon Symphony, OSU-Corvallis Symphony, Central Oregon Symphony, and Newport Symphony.

Reboot and Revitalize Your Orchestra Program

The Festival is addressing a need (supporting and enriching in-school high school orchestra programs) unmet and not addressed by any other organization in Oregon. One of the primary purposes of the Festival is to bring students together to play music without putting any kind of financial barriers or obstacles in their way. Making it completely free of charge to the schools and students is one way to remove the barrier of cost. The opportunities that the Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival affords its participants – the chance to perform for and meet with like-minded and passionate young musicians – are invaluable. In many cases, these kinds of festivals loom as highlights in the musical and social development of people throughout their lives. The Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival encourages them to take it beyond high school to college and into their adulthood. In many cases, these kinds of festivals loom as highlights in the musical and social development of people throughout their lives. Classical music programs must be actively cultivating the next generation of symphonic musicians and audiences otherwise we cannot expect to have symphonies in the future. The incredible experience provided by the Festival activities in Newport will no doubt shape the lives of countless participants and help cultivate the next generation of orchestral musicians.

Join us and let us help you reboot your program and reinvigorate your students interests in classical music, in performing and in composing.





OMEA JAZZ COLUMN

Dan Davey OMEA Jazz Chair, Director of Jazz Studies, Mt. Hood Community College

Welcome back to a new year that is already filled with more optimism and enthusiasm than previous years. There is a palpable hunger to create and express in the midst of the recent past and current challenges. This is an exciting time for us as music educators to help our students channel their expressions into art!

Oregon State Jazz Championships

The Oregon State Championships has not been held since 2019 due to the obvious ramifications of the pandemic. This year, we hope and plan to hold the fourth annual festival on May 20-21, 2022 at Mt. Hood Community College.

If you are hosting or participating in a jazz festival, you will notice that the Oregon Jazz Rubrics have been updated to include two changes. First, a sliding scale for the Soloists category has been added. The scale corresponds to OSAA classifications in the same way as the ensemble categories. The weight of the Rhythm Section category has increased to reflect the importance of the rhythm section in the jazz ensemble. This category also has the same sliding scale as the other ensemble categories. These changes should help ensembles receive a more accurate reading on their performance.

The updated files can be found on both the OMEA and OBDA websites. If you are hosting a festival that is a State Qualifier, you will also find an instructional video to send to your adjudicators to help them use the rubrics effectively at your festival. These videos can also be accessed on the OMEA and OBDA websites. Please feel free to email Daniel.Davey@mhcc.edu with any questions or clarifications.

All State Jazz Band

This year, the All State Jazz Band will be conducted by Scott Brown, Director of Bands at Roosevelt High School (WA). Scott Brown joined the Roosevelt music program in 1984, after graduating from the University of Washington with a degree in Music Education. He directs the Roosevelt High Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, Marching Band, Jazz Band, and Percussion class, and spends many evenings and weekends rehearsing, performing, meeting, or traveling with Roosevelt's many musical groups.

A versatile and active trombonist and member of the Seattle Repertory Jazz Orchestra and Latin Expression, Salsa!, Mr. Brown was the first ever winner of the John Stanford Award for Excellence in Art Education in 2000. In 2001, he was awarded the Christa McAuliffe Washington State Award for Excellence

in Education. He has also won the Nordstrom Award for Promoting Cultural Diversity, and the Alliance for Education A+ Award. Mr. Brown works wonders with students in class, during performances, and on the marching field. He brings enthusiasm, a passion for teaching, and the expectation for excellence to the Roosevelt music program and its students.

We are very excited to have Scott working with our students this year!

A Simple Improvisation Approach – Target Tone Improvisation

Oftentimes, teaching improvisation can take a deep-dive into music theory that is above the comprehension of students at various points in their development. The Target Tone Improvisational Technique does not require the student to have a degree in Music Theory in order to create original melodic and rhythmic ideas through any given chord progression.

This technique identifies single target notes for each chord rather than an entire scale or all four notes of a seventh chord. These notes become landing points for each chord and make up a foundational framework for an improvised melody. This is particularly useful when the harmonic rhythm occurs quickly or when several harmonic changes exist within one measure.

When selecting which note to identify as the target, some of the most obvious choices might be the Guide Tones. The Guide Tones are the 3rd and 7th of any harmonic structure. These two notes give us the most amount of information on any particular chord and best *guide* our ears towards the harmonic quality. The 3rd of the chord tells us if a chord is major or minor. The 7th of the chord tells us if it is a major 7th or dominant 7th. The root and 5th of the chord fail to give us this information alone.

► **Cmaj7 vs. C7 - difference is the 7th**



► **C7 vs. Cm7 - difference is the 3rd**



If we apply this to a simple blues progression and select one Guide Tones for each chord, we come up with the example below:



Notice that I opted to start on the 7th of the Bb7 chord, Ab. I could very well have selected D as my starting note, which would be the 3rd of the Bb7 chord and proceeded from there. Either choice is correct.

Obviously, the quality of my improvised melody is weakened if I choose to play whole notes primarily. These notes should be embellished rhythmically and melodically by the student, but the foundational sound of the progression is set in motion by these target tones.

Embellishing rhythmically can occur by observing basic principles of melodic composition and embellishment. Altering the rhythm can include a variety of techniques, include:

- Rhythmic Displacement – Place the note or rhythm on a different beat within the measure. This could include
 - A **delayed attack**, which places the start of the note at least an 8th note later, or an
 - **Anticipation**, which place the start of the note at least an 8th note earlier
- Augmentation – Increase the rhythmic value of the note or notes
- Diminution – Decrease the rhythmic value of the note or notes

An example of these techniques applied to the same target tones of the blues could look like this:



You can also embellish the target tones melodically by:

- Adding other chord tones from the chord
- Connecting larger interval gaps using notes from the key you are in.
- Connecting larger interval gaps using chromaticism.
- Approaching any of the target tones from a half-step above OR below.
- Approaching any of the target tones from a half-step above AND below, known as enclosures.

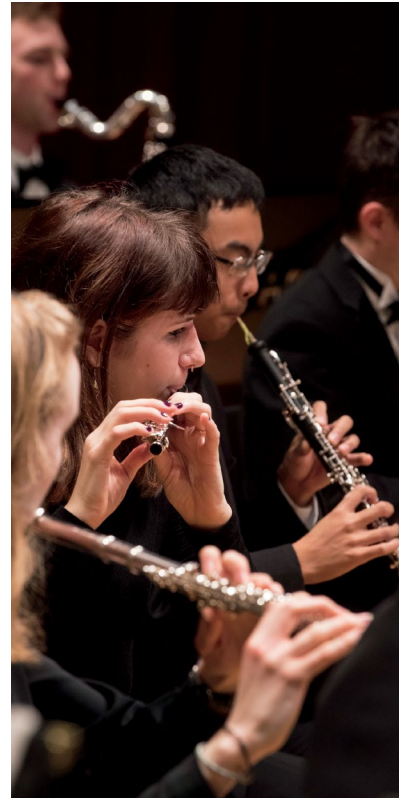
An example of these techniques applied to the same target tones of the blues could look like this:



The simple target notes we began with quickly develop into a comprehensive melody that reflects the harmonic structure, contains chromatic twists, rhythmic variety, and melodic contour. All of this is achieved without discussion of scales and deep harmonic theory and can be achieved by students of all levels in your program. Novice improvisers can create original ideas around the framework without feeling overwhelmed. Advanced students can embellish at deeper levels that reflect their knowledge base and skill set. This is a great way to avoid entire improvisations based on the blues scale and better connect your students' melodies with the chord structures.

Since there are a variety of outcomes possible from one set of target chords, implementing this into your program can be simple. One example of target tones can be prepared, either by the director or collectively in rehearsal by all of the students. After teaching the embellishment options, each student can create their own improvisation to any tune you are studying in rehearsal.

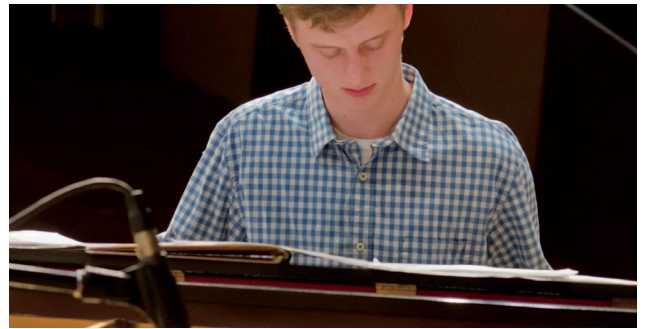
I wish each of you much success in your teaching this year as well as health of mind and body. I look forward to seeing you in-person at concerts, conferences, and events!




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DON'T TRY TO WHISTLE A SYMPHONY

Krista DeBolt OMEA Orchestra Chair, Grants Pass High School Orchestra Director

As I start thinking about coming back to school and all that will entail this year it is almost overwhelming to wonder where to start. I think the answer is to meet kids where they are – whatever that might involve. I also believe strongly that we need a team of people to teach and care for our kids. It is important to reach out to those around us in our communities, in our schools, families, and colleagues to help our kids as they find their way out of a historic pandemic and the political turmoil we have been faced with and continue to be surrounded by.

"No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it."

- H.E. Luccock

The orchestra community is such a great place to be – we come from all over, from many different walks of life, jobs, and family situations -- and we make music together. I can't think of a better way to spend time: listening or performing. I have gotten to know the Elsewhere Ensemble in Eugene over the last couple years. They have come to perform for our classes and have done workshops for my students. One of my students asked how they got the name Elsewhere Ensemble, and they explained where they were all from and the fact that they are based in Eugene but all came from "elsewhere". I love that. One of our main jobs as teachers is to expose kids to what is around us and celebrate the diversity of where we all come from. I think we often make the mistake of being too focused on the technique and challenge of playing string instruments and forget to open our student's eyes to what lies in front of us and beyond. There are a lot of ways to involve others in our classrooms and we should be constantly looking for and incorporating those ways.

Performance groups in your area and around the state are often willing to come into classes. Community Concert Associations, the Chamber Music Associations, Symphonies, theatre companies, local quartets and ensembles are often willing to sponsor educational programs and workshops with our music students. I have found that most kids love these opportunities; to see professional and local performers and get the chance to talk with the musicians. The Rogue Valley Symphony has sponsored a grant for many years that supports symphony musicians coming into classes to work with sectionals and small ensembles. This was invaluable this year with online learning as I could put my basses in a breakout room with a bassist that can play and work on bass music while others were with violinists, cellists, and violists. The symphony also offers free student/adult tickets to their

symphony performances which exposes many families to concerts that they could never afford on their own. Britt Festival Orchestra and Eugene Symphony Orchestra have reached out with fantastic instructional videos and musician workshops as well. It is worth reaching out to the community around and see what is out there and available.

Check in with music stores, instrument repair people, and private teachers in your area – they are a great resource for young music students. We have been lucky to have luthiers willing to come in and show kids what they do and how to check instruments to make sure they are in top condition. This often fascinates the kids as to how instruments are put together and how they work. Private teachers willing to come in, get exposure with kids and the kids then are more willing to think about private lessons and watching performances if they can see a friendly face. The local music stores have hired students to help in their store and also support us with supplies.

One of my favorite things has been to watch the workshops at the OMEA conference the last couple years with the young composers paired with a school group. What a great idea both Andy Strietelmeier and Dijana Ihas have developed. Watching the students work with the composer and the relationship that was fostered and encouraged got me thinking about how I could involve my kids in something like that. I reached out to a composer in our area about his interest in writing something for my school groups. Mark Jacobs was very excited and composed a piece for us that we were just diving into when Covid hit. We are very excited to get back to that collaboration this year when we can be back together. Asking supportive community members to sponsor projects or looking at getting a grant are great ways to start. College students are great resources; We had the privilege of interacting with a U of O graduate quartet this year that played an arrangement written by a student – my kids were very excited about that. The U of O quartet agreed to share the arrangement with us so my kids were able to play it as well as hear it performed.

Finding music newly written and reaching out to the composer is so much fun for all of us. Composers are often excited to interact with students who are playing and performing their music. I was looking in our music library a couple years ago and found an Andante written by Henry Kolar. What an amazing piece! We fell in love with it. I was researching the piece and found out the composer is still living and had a senior cellist that found his contact information and emailed the family. He is in his 90's, still plays the violin and was so happy we were playing his music. He sent us several other pieces of his and we shared our concert performance with him. It was very touching and memorable.

I love making connections with kids and working with them to create performances that are truly ours. We are the only ones that will play a certain piece exactly that way. It becomes wholly ours and truly unique to us. Part of that is interacting with the community around us as that is what makes us who we are. We need to celebrate that and embrace it. Our community and who surrounds us is special to us and this time. That cannot be replicated or replaced. We are in danger of missing what is special about now; wishing that things were different. I think we focus on celebrating what is and what has been. We are living history – Be still and enjoy, don't let life pass you by.

My principal sent this to our staff in the middle of last year posted from another principal from Ballard Washington:

“Surrender the artificial constructs that measure achievement and greet the children where they are, not where we think they “should be.” Greet them with art supplies and writing materials, and music and dance and so many other avenues to help them express what has happened to them in their lives during this horrific year. Greet them with stories and books that will help them make sense of an upside-down world. They missed you. They did not miss the test prep. They did not miss the worksheets. They did not miss the reading groups. They did not miss the homework. They missed you.

Resist the pressure from whatever ‘powers that be’ who are in a hurry to “fix” kids and make up for the “lost” time. The time was not lost, it was invested in surviving an historic period of time in their lives—in our lives. The children do not need to be fixed. They are not broken. They need to be heard.”

- Principal in Ballard, Washington

For those of you that have seen our recovery system, here are a couple reminders about movements you can do in class. Caring for each other in the small ways does transfer to the big ways. “Easy”, “gentle”, and “be kind to you” has crept steadily into my teaching. We are driven and perfectionistic – we have to be as string players – but we can be those things, while taking care of each other and celebrating each other.

Here are a couple reminders when learning to move and recover:

- Don't move to pain. 0 – 10 scale. Operate at a 3.
- No holding of breath, or clenching of jaw. Don't program stress ever.
- Move Slow and Gentle. *An easy floating quality in your motion.*
- Be nice inside your head when you move, as it affects the quality of your motion
- Recovery is more important than perfection – any movement is more than you had

As a review of Recovery movements, Slump and Arch is where we start. Get the torso moving. We lock it down to play and support our instruments – take the time to open it back up.

Slump and Arch: Slump like a teenager and arch like a Gorilla

- Start movement and roll at the hips
- Feet stay on the floor
- Arch – stick belly out, shoulders and head glide
- Slump – start movement in lower back and hips – rest of body follows
- Torso should move in space as you slump and arch

Box breathing:

- Deep breath in – hold for 5 seconds
- Release/exhale – hold for 5 seconds
- Repeat 3-4 times

Shoulder boxes: (make a box with the shoulders)

- Both shoulders raise up towards ears
- Move shoulders back
- Drop shoulders
- Release and repeat

Shoulder Glides:

- Hand and arm extended in front of body
- Soft elbows and wrists – relaxed
- Glide shoulder forward and back
 - Gentle and easy
 - Move at the back of the shoulder (don't drive with the elbow)
 - Try to keep shoulder down (not raised up by the ear as you move)

We need to focus on our community, what is truly special about us, and share that. Where we are and what we are is totally ok and deserves to be celebrated. “Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable.” - David Augsburg. Open up to the community around and let them hear you and your students. Music is a very personal and public reflection of everything around us, what has happened before and what is happening now. Don't try to whistle a symphony, involve your orchestra and play it! Celebrate, share and cherish what is now.



CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES, CONVERSATIONS, AND REPERTOIRE

Kendra Kay Friar OMEA Elementary Chair

Many elementary teachers approached the start of the 2021-22 school year with a combination of renewed enthusiasm for in-person learning and a realistic outlook for the challenges of teaching in a post-COVID environment. In a recent post on the Oregon Elementary Music Teachers Facebook Group page, Teresa Williamson of Scappoose posted, "Personally, I'm excited to get started! Can't wait! Last year I was completely virtual the whole year, and this year I actually get to work with children in person. Woo-hoo! Yes, we have to wear masks and they are not optimal, but holy moly, we get to be in person."

As teachers return to the classroom and to the routine of planning weekly, in-person lessons, many are also taking stock of the activities and repertoire upon which they built their pedagogy. More than one Oregon teacher has shared a desire to shake up their routines of years past after time away from the classroom led to new conclusions about "what matters" in music education. I have heard and read that music teachers intend to incorporate more SEL lessons, more community-building activities, and more culturally diverse repertoire into their teaching practices. In fact, K-12 music teachers in every discipline are examining the repertoire presented in class to find new options for increasing the representation of historically marginalized musical voices.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

I experienced firsthand the impact of culturally responsive teaching while I was a student teacher at Robeson Elementary School in Champaign, Illinois, a school ranked in the top 10% of Illinois' most diverse school communities. Noticing that my cooperating teacher's music instruction was based mostly on English language songs, I asked for permission to use my teaching time to present lessons on non-Western musical forms, beginning with Indian classical music. Upon reading my lesson plans, my teacher told me she was skeptical that students would find the material engaging. After she observed my teaching, however, she told me it had not previously occurred to her that she had plenty of students of Indian descent who probably experienced this music at home. She observed their participation and their modelling for others the need to understand and value this form of musical expression. She encouraged me to bring more repertoire into the classroom that reflected the children sitting together on our classroom carpet each day. I benefited from working with an experienced teacher willing to change classroom norms when it better served the students.

Unlike sources available when I was a student teacher, present-day music education literature promotes culturally responsive

teaching – pedagogy that is responsive to and reflective of individual children's cultural experiences, songs, stories, traditions, and values. Jennifer Walter acknowledged that an active pedagogical change was taking place by titling her 2017 *General Music Today* article, "Global Perspectives: Making the Shift from Multiculturalism to Culturally Responsive Teaching." Walter wrote,

Of course, the question most frequently asked by a music teacher is "Does culturally responsive teaching change what I do?" And the answer is "Yes, of course!" Culturally responsive teaching goes beyond teaching ethnically based music literature or content to students. ...culturally responsive teaching is a comprehensive approach to demonstrating understanding of who students are (and who we are, as teachers), how, and why they operate in the world, and then making decisions about what will be learned based on this information. For music teachers, this approach is much more student-driven and culturally relevant to students than the more curricular-driven idea of multicultural music education (p. 25).

Providing samples of music from around the world places children in contact with new voices. Culturally responsive pedagogy, however, introduces students to more than just the timbres, rhythms, and formal elements of diverse music. Connie McKoy, professor of music education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, "...makes a point to talk with teachers about *looking at their students* as people who have musical information and *getting to know their students musically* so they can take this information and use it in their own teaching" (Ferber, 2019). Culturally responsive teachers engage in dialogue with their students to discover the students' self-determined goals for acquiring musicianship. For example, students may wish to gain skills to allow them to participate more fully in community-based performance opportunities such as pow-wows, religious observances, and other celebrations of cultural significance they enjoy with their families.

Culturally Responsive Conversations

Once a teacher determines the repertoire to incorporate into lessons, the in-class presentation should include a discussion of the ties between the music and the culture it represents. Encourage students to discover relationships in one specific genre that exist in musical traditions in their own lives and all over the world. For example, learning a call-and-response song such as "Pizza, Pizza, Daddy-o" encourages the development

of ensemble singing AND passes down the tradition of group affirmation of an individual – a high value, community-building activity practiced around the globe. Additionally, long before modern psychology acknowledged individual differences in emotional processing, blues musicians crafted a musical genre that valued individual sharing of personal experiences and their emotional impact. The original blues “conversations” took place between a singer and a guitar (ex., “I Been Down in the Circle Before” at loc.gov/item/afc1939007_afs02477a).

Other forms of music deserve to be shared both for their musical content as well as their connections to cultures both close to and beyond students’ experiences. Do you have student experts in these forms of music sitting in your class? Do you have community members that could serve as culture bearers for these or any other musical forms? Including well-rounded discussions of music plus culture may affirm some students’ at-home musical development while enhancing the growth of all students’ musical identities. Consider these repertoire options for your classroom:

- 1. Gullah-Geechee music:** A distinct blending of musical influences from West Africa and America developed by enslaved persons and their descendants living in the geographically isolated Georgia Sea Islands. Performance practice communicates a love of community, allows for personal reflection, and respect for elders and kinship bonds. Bessie Jones and the Georgia Sea Island Singers are famously associated with this form of music. Visit these sites for audio samples and educational guides: gullahgeecheecorridor.org and knowitall.org/series/gullah-music.
- 2. Mariachi music:** One of Mexico’s seven entries on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Mariachi is a form of ensemble playing and singing that is handed down through the generations. Performers see themselves as servants of the community; they apply their musical training and leadership to craft a participatory experience where community joys are celebrated. Performers wear costumes inspired by the *vaquero*, or the Mexican cowboy, a symbol of national pride which predates the American cowboy. Oregon mariachi bands include Portland’s Mariachi Viva Mexico, Salem’s Mariachi Guadalajara, and Hillsboro School District’s Mariachi Band Una Voz. Visit these sites for audio samples and educational guides: youtube.com/watch?v=kyQbLrbzS78 and ich.unesco.org/en/RL/mariachi-string-music-song-and-trumpet-00575.

- 3. Carnatic music:** This centuries-old art form is rooted in the traditions of South India, a region as large as Western Europe. Unlike Western art music, practitioners value an individual’s demonstration of improvised, stylistic mastery over the reproduction of pre-existing, composed works by named composers. Carnatic music requires years of study with a master (*guru*). Until the 20th century, Carnatic music students traditionally lived as members of their teachers’ households to allow them to receive daily music instruction. Carnatic music performances showcase musicians’ knowledge of the repertoire; it is not uncommon for experienced performers to take audience requests mid-concert. Read about the fundamental elements of Carnatic music at carnaticstudent.org/resources/a-brief-introduction-to-carnatic-music. Access a wide variety of performances made available by the India Performing Arts Society of Central Ohio at dhvaniohio.org/category/recordings.

Cultural Responsiveness and Change

As Walter (2017) stated, shifting to culturally responsive teaching practices may require changes in lesson planning, time allocation, and repertoire choices. HOW we discuss music in the 21st century is as important as WHAT we present. Time spent away from the classroom has led many teachers to seek new ways to connect with and to affirm students’ self-directed musical development. Teachers engaged in culturally responsive practices can achieve these goals while modeling artistic curiosity, a value for diverse voices, and a collaborative, student-centered learning environment that showcases and supports students’ musical knowledge.

Citations

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- Walter, J. S. (2018). Global perspectives: Making the shift from multiculturalism to culturally responsive teaching. *General Music Today*, 31(2), 24–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371317720262>

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A HELPING HAND

Steve Phillips OMEA General Music Chair

When I started in Salem-Keizer School District, I felt a wide mix of emotions; excitement, joy, awe, and fear. Despite feeling capable, I kept feeling scared about how I could make music education authentic to five hundred and sixty students. As I was setting up my classroom, I walked our 4th grade Orchestra teacher. A wise veteran, with over twenty years' experience, he offered his assistance and we struck up a meaningful conversation. From that initial conversation, through the rest of the school year, we met once a week, after his 4th grade Orchestra class was completed. We discussed many educational topics; classroom setup, classroom management, program organization, lesson plans and creating an authentic music education program. The tone of our conversations was light hearted and professional. The mutual respect between us was very high. It felt wonderful to share ideas and concepts with someone, who had a real perspective of how these ideas could successfully, or not, come to fruition. How exciting it was to have a mentor looking out, and overseeing an anxious, and wide-eyed mentee. The strongest advice he gave me, during that year, was that teaching was a lot like tailoring and mending a suit. It takes time, and mending, to find that suit that fits just right.

I have never forgotten the lessons of that first educational mentor. He shaped the foundations of my educational career in many ways. As the years have passed, I have maintained a good relationship with him and am grateful for all of his help. As I have continued on in my career, I have tried to be a good mentor for many other young music educators, early in their careers. Being a voice, and ear, for young music educators can greatly mold them as they try to find that coat that "fits." The benefits of an effective mentoring relationship provides benefits to all involved and lays a framework for strengthening music education for the future.

In our educational world, schedules are always tight, and standards and expectations are high, so in the fast paced day of a music educator, finding time for meaningful discussion with a mentor is challenging. Recent Department of Education data reports that total K-12 student enrollment has grown by twenty percent, in the last five years. According to a 2018 Education Week article, forty four percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years. Yet being a voice in the darkness for young educators makes a vital difference. In that same Education Week article, ninety two percent of first year teachers will return for a second year, if they have been mentored in the previous year. The importance of the mentoring relationship has been deemed so vital that in 2015, the National Association for Music Education launched the "Embracing the New Music Educators Mentoring Program."

This program allows both mentors and mentees the opportunity to create effective mentoring principles that can greatly enhance the growth of young music educators. By examining effective mentoring relationships, several key components emerge.

One of the important facets an effective mentor may provide is a good historical perspective of the physical and educational community of the school. Mentors should have a keen awareness of the demographics of the mentoring school. If a young teacher wishes to do a unit on musical cultures, the mentor can provide detailed knowledge of the different cultures within the school, and provide some ideas for reaching those cultures. When I started my career, I had very little knowledge of the Hispanic culture, within my school. Yet my mentor gave me resources on the specific attributes of this culture, within my school, and made sure that I was learning both the language and the societal norms of that culture. Many times, a young teacher may come out of their educational program with knowledge in classroom management. However, when they are in front of a class with a reputation for being hard to manage, a difficult and turbulent road may lie ahead. Mentors can tell what has worked in the past and suggest a classroom management strategy that will ease the frustration and lay a framework for consistent classroom boundaries. Before I came to my school, there were seven music teachers, who left for various reasons, after only one year. What I learned in my educational program, regarding classroom management, definitely needed adjustment to provide a musical program where strong boundaries and clear expectations led to a growing musical program. Discussion and debrief, with my mentor, allowed me to produce such a musical program.

Another amazing aspect of a positive mentoring connection, is the knowledge of the importance of the social-emotional health of the young teacher. Many times, a young teacher needs an encouraging word, or a listening ear, as they tread through those first tenuous years. One of the joys of the Oregon Elementary Music Teacher Facebook page, is our monthly zoom meets, where we meet virtually to provide support to all music teachers. When we begin these meets, our first topic is checking in with our teachers' social- emotional frame of mind. These check- ins are so vital, because many young teachers feel isolated and do not have an outlet to release their frustrations, or joys, to others. Enabling a mentor, who is a caring and sympathetic role model, allows young teachers to share their ideas with someone who is also in the same profession and can provide emotional support and encouragement. A music teacher cannot grow, unless they are strong in their own skin. Mentors can provide those layers of

emotional strength, and help a young teacher to feel that they are growing and are enough for their students.

Finally, a wonderful attribute for a positive mentoring relationship is the vast amount of professional development that both teachers can share. One of my favorite quotes, from my mentor, was “Keep it real.” The meaning of this phrase was to encourage me to keep my lessons real and authentic to students. You can use this concept in all of your teaching of musical concepts. One of my favorite units to teach is musical instrument families. With his foresight, I developed a “Create Your Own Percussion Instrument” unit. This unit allows students to apply their knowledge of the different properties of percussion instruments into the development of their own instrument. My fifth graders have greatly enjoyed this unit and many of them have kept their percussion instruments for many years after. While my mentor’s vision for me was to “keep it real,” my favorite phrase to throw back to him was “keep it new.” The power of a fresh set of eyes can greatly help

and support mentors as they seek to keep their lessons fresh and exciting for students. When learning happens between all members of the mentoring relationship, the impact is amazing. It was my extreme pleasure to watch my mentor teach and provide feedback to keep his lessons fresh and exciting with high student engagement.

So, take a risk and experience the joy of mentoring young music educators as they find that coat that “fits.” Each nugget of knowledge and care that you show may create pockets in that “coat” which will allow it to fit just right. When I became a mentor, I developed a philosophy for young first year teachers which I still hold as true. That light hearted philosophy is that the professional goal of a first year music teacher should be to wake up in June with a pulse. Effective mentoring relationships create a legacy of professional respect and care that will impact music education for many years to come. Be the “light” for our young music professionals today!



AN OPEN CONVERSATION ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF MUSIC TEACHERS

Nathan Irby Band director at Judson Middle School and State Solo Contest Chair

Over the summer, we saw two of the greatest athletes of our era, Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka, take a stand for their own mental health. Knowing full well the scrutiny that they would face, both women stood up for themselves by stepping back, recharging, and refocusing.

While there are differing opinions about whether Biles should have withdrawn from the Olympics or if Osaka should be able to abstain from press events, it is important to make one thing unequivocally clear: the only opinions that matter here are those of the women who made the decision to put themselves first.

Throughout my relatively short 8-year career, I have often felt the need to step back, recharge, and refocus, but I have not always been sure whether it was professionally acceptable—or even allowed. Let us face it: being a music teacher is demanding in ways unique to the profession. Not only are the hours grueling, but so much of our self-worth and confidence can be entangled with how well we perform at our jobs.

I have suffered from what some medical professionals call “high functioning depression and anxiety” since my childhood. In short, I have the feelings and experiences of someone who is suffering from these mental health disorders, but I am (mostly) able to hide the symptoms and go about my day seemingly fine.

My condition took a turn for the worse during my first year of teaching. Being the “new guy” at a school with a well-established program and following a fantastic director who had just retired, a tidal wave of self-doubt washed over me and pulled me under. I had gone to school and had trained hard for my first job. I felt as pedagogically prepared as I could be for a first-year teacher. Unfortunately, the state of my mental health during that first year of teaching made me question whether I even deserved to be a music teacher. My “imposter syndrome” bled over into my personal life and consumed my entire self-view.

As the years have progressed and my confidence has grown, those doubts have faded some, but they are most definitely still there. I recently began to put a lot of thought into whether other directors and especially first-year teachers had experienced similar waves of doubt and depression. When speaking about the job with my peers and confidants, it became evident that I was not alone. However, it seems that within our profession, the conversation around music teachers’ mental wellness and self-worth are not taking place in the open.

I am not a mental health expert and cannot and should not speak as if I were. However, there are a few things from my personal experience that I believe are worth sharing:

1. **Open conversation and listening:** If another director lets you know that they are struggling with the weight of the job, do your best to engage in a productive conversation. The most important components of this conversation are active listening and genuine caring. There have been times where I have mentioned my mental state with other directors, whether at conferences or social gatherings, and the response has been doubt about my condition or a rapid-fire change of topic. "You can't be struggling; you teach at such a fantastic school!" Try to be the best colleague, peer, and mentor you can be by listening with the intent to understand. Resist the urge to explain away how others are feeling, offer quick fix solutions, or diminish the issue by simply stating that it "gets better." Yes, things can get better, but explaining how it got better for you is far more helpful and validating. For me, things started to get better just by being able to talk about what I was feeling with other teachers. Commiserate and shape solutions together.
2. **Know your own limits:** When engaging in these conversations, be cognizant of how much weight you can bear for others. If you do not feel like you can handle anything new on your emotional plate at that moment, explain to your colleague that you are not in the right headspace for an in-depth conversation, and suggest an alternative time for your conversation—or recommend another colleague with whom they could speak.
3. **Leave work at work:** As musicians, our work lives and personal lives are often interwoven in an inseparable way. However, there are some things like answering parent emails, trip planning, grading, inventory, etc., that are strictly work-related. Try to end these types of tasks by the time your contract hours end or attempt to set a hard deadline at the end of the day. If there is anything that being a teacher during the pandemic has taught me, it is that there is always more work to do, but it is usually work that can be done later.
4. **Be open with your administrator about your workload:** I have had the pleasure of working for two principals that I know genuinely care about me. When the job gets to be too much and feels like things are piling up, let your principal know. I am not suggesting that you go and vent and whine to your principal (although I am definitely guilty of that!), but let them problem solve with you how to restructure your workload, flex your time, and get you extra help when available.
5. **Avoid forming your identity as a director around competition:** I get it: winning things is fun. When my band earns first place at a jazz festival or earns a superior rating

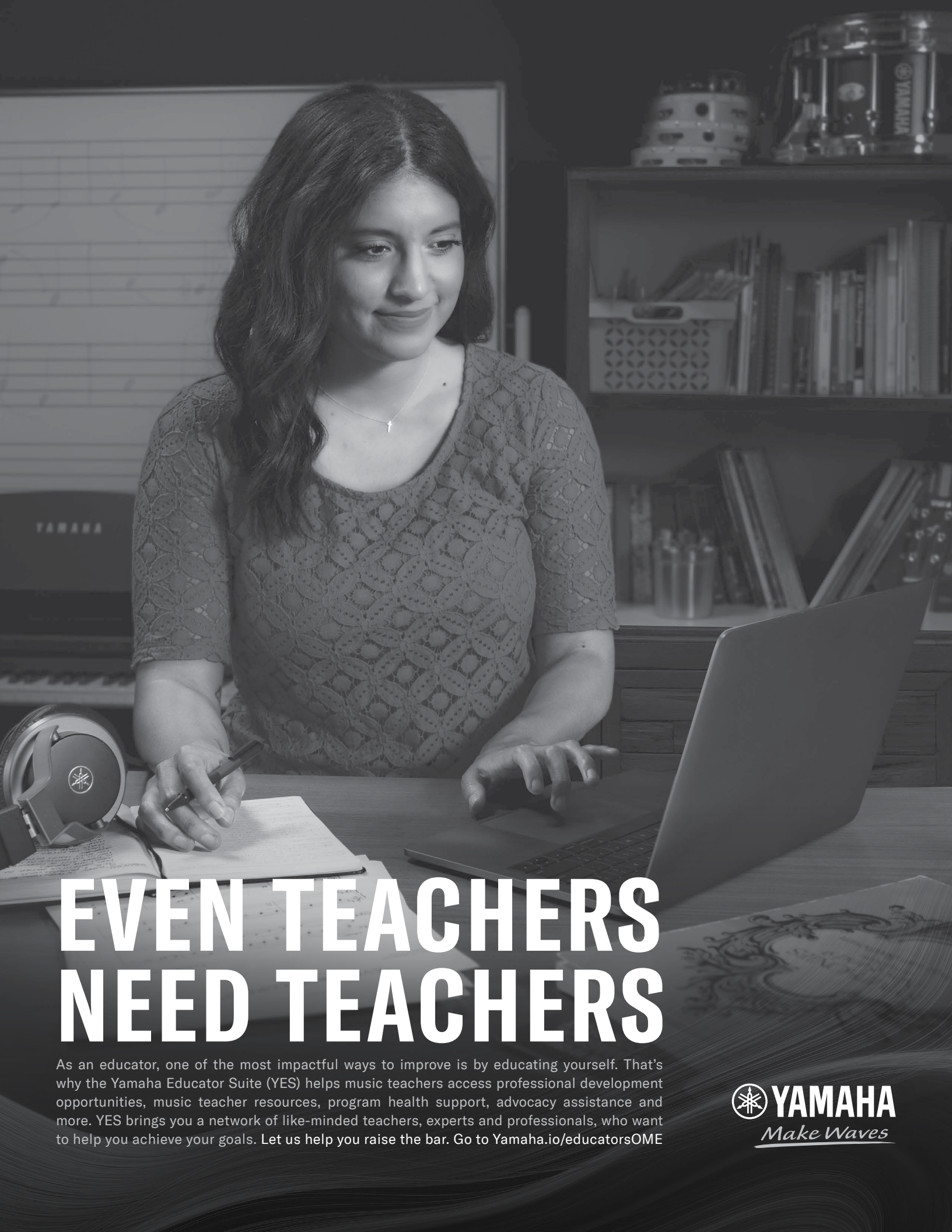
at a concert band festival, I am ecstatic. My hard work and sacrifice feel validated. At the beginning of my career, when my bands did not win or earn a superior rating at a festival, it would absolutely crush my spirit. "Why am I doing this?" "How could those adjudicators think my band didn't deserve a 1?" I am striving—and struggling—to change my mindset around competition. If I am working hard every day, encouraging and loving my students, and focusing on growth, am I not doing what I should be as a director? Again—I get it: winning things is fun. But we are not coaches, we are educators. Only you know where your students started and how much progress they have made; do not base your professional identity on a twenty-minute performance and three adjudication sheets. (Also, never gamble on fifty 7th graders being focused and ready to go all at the same time on any given day. You may be a great teacher, but you are not stronger than a 13-year-old's hormones).

6. **Step away:** I hate taking days off, and I think that most of you probably feel the same way. Taking time away from work when you are sick or taking a personal day to do something that lets you recharge is only going to help you as a teacher and person. A bonus of being away from work on occasion is that it allows your students a chance to take ownership of their music program. If your students are not going to be performance-ready if you miss one day of school, you have over-programmed anyway.
7. **Let your students know, within reason, how you are feeling:** If I am having a bad day, I let my students know at the beginning of class, and if it is appropriate to give details, I do. This has benefitted my band program by allowing students to feel comfortable discussing their own wellbeing in my classroom. When I am feeling off, I still do my best to provide the best rehearsal experience possible, which models emotional awareness and management for my students.

Admitting fault and weakness can be tough in a profession that is often built around posturing, but it is possible and necessary. Trust that other teachers have your best interests in mind and that they want to help you however they can. As we all rebuild our programs post-pandemic, let us focus on building a culture of collegiality, openness, and understanding.

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