

# Oregon

Music Educator

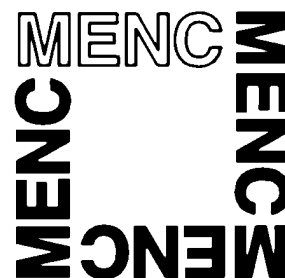


let the music out!

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# North By Northwest

David Weathered  
NWMENC Region President

## Thank You Oregon Music Educators

The Northwest Conference has ended. All music educators have returned home, and I now have the time to reflect. I find that every reflection ends with a thank you.

When the Northwest MENC leadership decides to put on a celebration, it is truly spectacular. The Northwest MENC board (which includes the presidents of the six NW states) came together, with the management team from the Washington Music Educators office, to make sure that this was a conference like none other. We had our struggles and not everything went according to plan. But I can say for certain that many lives were touched as a record number of mu-



sic educators and their students attended the conference. Thanks to all of you who helped design and run this conference.

As always, educators from Oregon were major players in the conference. From the leadership of Christopher Silva, the opening reading sessions with David Becker and Wallace Long, and the multiple Oregon school performances to the excellent clinicians in every area, Oregon music educators added their expertise from the opening to the closing of this event.

So now what! I have one more thank you—but this is “thanks in advance.” As of today, the planning is already underway for the 2011 conference in Bellevue, WA. This planning is in the very capable hands of Northwest President-elect and Oregon educator, Deb-

bie Glaze. I wish to thank you in advance for assisting Debbie and the Northwest Board in their efforts to make this future conference even better still. Debbie will need your creative thoughts, applications for performing groups, workshop ideas, and overall support and attendance at the conference itself to make it a truly special event. It is not too early to start thinking about what you might like to see and to contact Debbie at Portland State University to let her know.

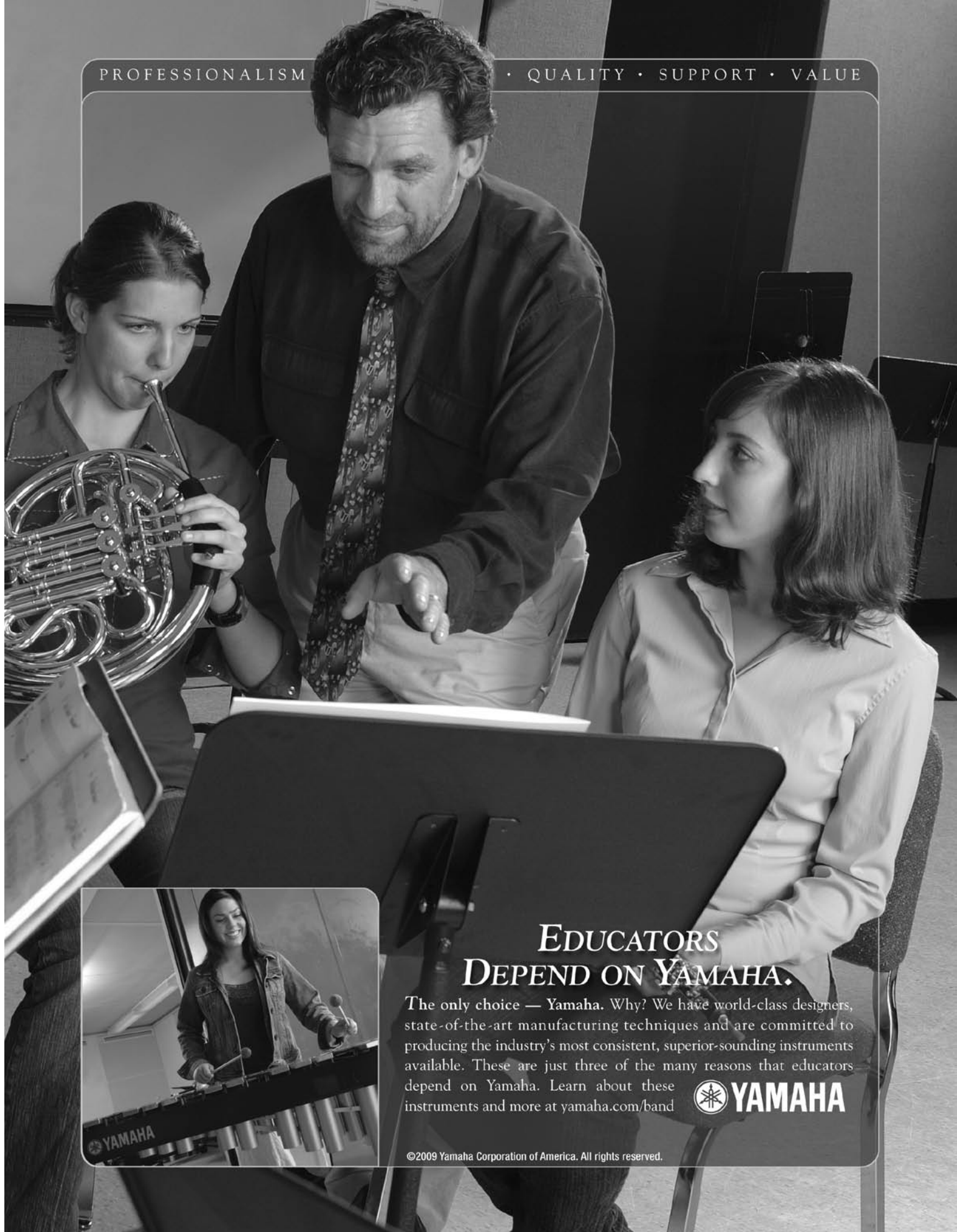
Finally—and most importantly—thank you for the work you do in the classroom every single day. It is all about making a difference in each student’s life. This is the reason that we all are willing to spend many extra hours to create conferences and learn from each other.

THANK YOU!

# Univ of Oregon 1/2

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# President's Column

Christopher D. Silva  
OMEA President

This has been a busy spring for OMEA. After a successful 2009 Conference and All-State, many members attended the first All-NW conference organized by Bruce Caldwell, David Weathered, and volunteer members of WMEA. I, for one, found the interest sessions to be of the highest caliber and the All-NW conference, as a whole, to be the best in my memory. Many thanks go out to the Washington folks who made All-NW such a success.



OMEA is now in the process of selecting a new executive director to replace our current executive manager, Mark Jones, who will be leaving OMEA at the end of June.

We hope to find just the right person to help lead our organization forward as we face tough economic times and rapidly changing technologies. Be sure to log onto the website at [www.oregonmusic.org](http://www.oregonmusic.org) in June to be introduced to our new executive director. Serving with me on the selection committee are Steve Zielke, Debbie Glaze, Jeff Simmons, and Pat Vandehey.

A web development committee is working hard on structuring improvements to the OMEA website. In June, you'll be able to see many changes in the website, which will be redesigned to make its use more user friendly.

When you see the revised website, I hope you'll take a moment to let our new executive director know your thoughts on its function and appearance so we can continue to make improvements to better serve you.

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# Treasurer's Column

Tracy Ross  
Treasurer

Your principal asks, "How can you help me pass AYP and what are you doing to raise student achievement in your classroom?"

As high schools proceed into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, "status quo" is not going to continue, and we are in a constant age of reform. School reform, school change, new high school requirements, revision of NCLB, raising student achievement, increasing graduation rates, differential learning, credit by proficiency; These are all buzz words I can think of in 30 seconds. As music educators we tend to hide in our classrooms and hope we can protect our programs another year. Administrations are under a lot of pressure from the federal government, the state government, and their own school boards to raise student achievement. I believe that many administrators are going to start asking the question to elective teachers, "How can you help me pass AYP and what are you doing to raise student achievement in your classroom?" There is a lot of research that supports having students in the arts improves attendance, academic success, and increased involvement. I believe that our traditional responses to administration about music programs will not be enough in the next few years as cuts happen across the state. Many high schools are looking for reading and math intervention, which means another class and one less elective choice for students. Lots of high schools in Oregon are looking for "freshmen success" which includes study skills classes and possible intervention classes that also take away from music and the arts.

In the *Teaching Music Journal* for January and February 2009, two articles grabbed my attention. In February 2009, "California Builds Tools for Arts Education" talks about promoting awareness of the arts. They have actual data to support the fact that students are not given the opportunity to participate in the arts. "The report stated that 89 percent of California's public school children do not receive standards-based instruction in



the visual or performing arts, and some 61 percent of schools do not have a single full-time-equivalent arts specialist. For these reasons, the state's elementary students typically have less substantial arts experience than their peers across the country." (*Teaching Music*, February 2009, Pg. 18) I would be curious as to how our students in Oregon would come out under a similar study. For more information please check out the site [CaliforniaArtsToolkit.com](http://CaliforniaArtsToolkit.com).

Maybe we should start an advocacy page on our website. Anyone want to volunteer?

The other article in the January 2009 issue was "Writing in the Music Classroom." Maybe some of you have received this directive from your principal, "All teachers in our school must have students write in their class." Many of you probably roll your eyes, and think about how you don't have time because of competitions and concerts, but research shows that writing is an effective instructional strategy for teaching and reinforcing reading skills. Why would we not do this? I did writing in my performance classes and many students really liked to write about music. The question in the article really hit home with me. "How do we encourage students to respond to music through writing yet preserve high-quality music learning and performance" (*Teaching Music*, January 2009, Pg. 28)

My main focus in this article is to give you some ideas on writing in your performance class and how to join your staff in working towards increased student achievement. I would suggest that "getting on the bus" with your staff, you will score major points with your administration, and if they saw writing in your music class I guarantee conversations about which programs to cut would be a little different in these difficult times. Music folks being a part of "raising student achievement" and encouraging students to write will help our administrators not have the narrow view they sometimes have around music folks.

One of the activities I did in my performance groups every November was goal-writing. This came out of a workshop I attended in June 2004 at the U of O led by Pat Vandehey. He talked about how we learn as professionals and staying in our comfort zone/control zone is not best for our students. Over that summer, I really thought about how I could step out of my comfort zone. In November, I did about three things differently at the start of my Wind Ensemble season. The first was to have the students memorize a short chorale that we would use throughout the year. The second thing I did was to teach students how to sing this four-part chorale and then made sure I had one piece every year that had the students sing. (My scores in intonation and musicality increased at festivals) The third thing I did was three sessions on writing goals. Goal setting for high schools students is a difficult task. They are only thinking about lunch or afterschool time. We would set 5 goals each season and then write them on butcher paper (big writing) and put them up in front of the classroom. Wow, this really worked! The rehearsals were guided by their goals and they were accountable for their goals as well. After doing this for four years, my students made a huge leap and did not have the number 1 goal be: Qualify for state. I asked why this was not a goal and their response was: "If we do all the other 5 goals we should qualify for state." Student driven goals is awesome, try it and you will see.

There are three types of writing that Language Arts teachers work on in classes: Narrative, Factual, and Persuasive. The article in *Teaching Music*, January 2009, talked about these three types of writing but only gave elementary level ideas. For the narrative writing, this begins with a prompt that invites students to tell a story based on the music. Throughout the year, maybe choose one piece that tells a story and instead of telling them the composer's story, have them write their own story and then compare theirs with the composers. Another idea is to play a piece of classical music and have them write while they listen. They may listen to the same piece of music four or five times to

have enough time to write. This would work for middle or high school students. Factual writing requires students to analyze and describe music. What an opportunity to teach music vocabulary! Students could be a music critic and describe musical elements in this writing composition. Persuasive writing is always the last one that most language arts classes get to and then usually don't have multiple opportunities to do this kind of writing. Students love to convince you that their opinion is correct so why not give them the opportunity to do this in a persuasive writing piece about many different aspects of music. Let them even write about two pieces of their own music and why one set of lyrics is more effective than the other just for an idea.

Don't get too excited, I'm not telling you to write three papers or more. I'm just trying to show you how you can do some writing in a music class. "Writing in the music classroom solicits and reinforces correct musical language and understanding of the art form itself. As we foster music literacy, we must remember that cognitive development (knowing) as well as skill development (doing) leads to musically educated students." (*Teaching Music*, January 2009) We need to join with our staff and build student success. One night I called Jim Howell, a Past President of OMEA, who teaches instrumental music in LaGrande, OR, and I had a question for him. He said, "Hang on, let me put down these papers I'm grading and we can talk."

I said, "What are you grading?"  
 He responded, "My students have to write a paper in jazz band and wind ensemble. I'm grading my jazz band papers."  
 I said, "Really? I want to write an article for the spring OMEA Journal about writing in music performance class. Will you send me your assignments?"  
 He replied, "Sure, I will email them to you" which he did within the hour of us hanging up.


Here is Jim's jazz band assignment that he was happy to share with everyone.  
 Jazz Ensemble '08/09  
 Listening I Transcription Assignments  
 The Purpose

To learn more about the many styles of jazz  
 To learn to hear and play with correct jazz stylings  
 To become familiar with jazz artists through the evolution of the art form  
 To understand better the music you are playing and hearing  
 The Assignment: Due Dates – February 13, March 6, April 3  
 Listen to a MINIMUM of three (3) CDs (That is only 1 per week but a PAIN if you put it all off until the last minute)  
 Listen ACTIVELY — not background to any other activity!  
 Write about what you hear using the following guidelines

**1st year students:**

A straightforward "reaction paper" running commentary on what you are hearing while you are hearing it. It does NOT have to be rich in technical details, but it DOES want to have musical specifics. Metaphors, similes, and emotional responses are VERY OK as long as it is not all that you do. (This track felt like.... Made me feel like...) It is OK to listen to tracks you really liked more than once and to add detail. It is OK to not like selections BUT you must try to articulate why you did not, just as you will articulate why you do like the ones you like. WHY WHY WHY?

continued on page 10...




*"I've grown a lot as a person and a professional—working with my professors and fellow students—in choirs, the orchestra, as a conducting student working with the band and studying composition."*

—JENNIFER HANCOCK

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**Jennifer encourages her students to pass notes.** She's completing her Master of Arts in Teaching, after earning her bachelor's in music education at Pacific. As a high school student, Jennifer participated in Pacific's Music in May program. Visit Pacific to see how you can fine-tune your future.



## 2nd year students:

You should now begin to contrast and compare differing recordings in the same jazz period of style, and recordings from different periods and styles. You should be able to compare artists prominent on the same instruments (ie Maynard Ferguson, Miles Davis, Clifford Brown's styles of soloing on jew's harp? Accordion? Ban sax?)

- You should be finding recordings from sources other than Mr. H's collection (EOU library, each other, Nicholson, Sebestyen, Greg Monahan)
- Some awareness of FORM should be present — Major, minor, blues, AABA or what?
  - At least one diagram of a piece should appear on each assignment (example on back)
- Still discussing 3 CDs in some fashion

## 3rd year (advanced 2rn1 yr. By arovafi students:

- Transcription of an improvised solo by any instrument, minimum of 8 measures depending on difficulty.
- You can use the same transcription more than once by learning to play it in ALL TWELVE keys the next time.
- HINT: The KISS Principle cries out to you at first
- Look up "Slowdowner" at for one
- Use the Superscope
- Experiment with Cubase or Media Player or any other audio program which will slow tempos intelligibly
- Still discussing 3 CDs in some fashion




The ironic part of this article is that writing is the least favorite thing for me to be spending

my time doing. I have not written an article for this journal in 9 years. But it's easy to write about something about which you are passionate. Our students may not enjoy writing but if they had the opportunity to write about music that may change their feelings on writing. And by writing about a subject they are passionate they may start to enjoy writing and improve their writing skills.

One last idea, as we sit in troubled times: What if in the fall of next year, you gave your

music classroom this writing prompt, "What does playing and learning music mean to you?" Have the students write a persuasive essay about why every student should have the opportunity to participate in music. Then take all those essays, put them in a three ring binder and give them to your school board around January. As budget committees form and school boards start looking at cuts, just maybe they will get a chance to see, from a student's perspective, why they need music in their educational life.

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## Acquiring Pedagogical Skills During Music Education Studies

Around the country, university students are embarking on their first “real” teaching experience in a classroom setting—student teaching. The mere words strike fear into the hearts of those encountering their first rehearsal without the safety-net of the university professor. Those who already had the opportunity to work with secondary- or elementary-level students prior to this experience may feel less intimidated by the thought of teaching a class. Getting that experience, however, may prove quite difficult. Here are some ways to gain experience teaching while still learning the pedagogical skills necessary for teaching music:

- Ask to rehearse a university ensemble. This may be possible with ensembles



geared toward the undergraduate music education student. The music education choir, band, or orchestra directors may allow students to conduct short rehearsals on a section of the music without disrupting the flow of the overall rehearsal.

- Buy the scores of the pieces you are performing. Following the score during rehearsal helps give insight to the conductor’s approaches for achieving the composer’s musical wishes. Following the rehearsal, approach the conductor with questions that might arise during your observation.
- Rehearse a chamber ensemble. A number of opportunities may be available to music education undergraduate students working with chamber groups. These pieces generally center around one voice or instrument. Therefore, a student can concentrate on achieving pedagogical skills for that one small group rather than think about rehearsing an entire ensemble and the many parts involved therein.

- Run sectionals. Rehearsing fellow students on your chosen instrument or voice can be beneficial. You already know how to make great music on this voice or instrument. Running a sectional allows you the opportunity to listen intently. Diagnosing problems and giving musical prescriptions will be easier than working with instruments with which you may not be familiar.
- Volunteer at local schools. Assisting may include running sectionals, performing with the ensemble, or serving as a soloist. There is always a chance that the director will give you the opportunity to rehearse one of the teacher’s larger groups.

When you first start your student teaching, gain as much experience in front of groups as possible. With practice, the university music education major can improve their pedagogical skill set and immediately contribute to the field. To be considered an accomplished musician requires over 10,000 hours of practice. How many hours of rehearsal practice did you have prior to your first teaching job?

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How important is music education to you? Making music a regular part of the public school curriculum was so important to Lowell Mason that he taught music at Hawes School in Boston, MA, for 1 year without pay (1837–38) in order to prove that music could be taught successfully to all students. The experiment was a success and, in August 1838, the Boston School Committee agreed to hire a vocal music teacher. “By this action music was approved for what may have been the first time in the United States as a subject of the public school curriculum, like English and mathematics, to be supported with school funds” (Mark, 1999, p. 145). The Boston School Committee did not approve a comprehensive music program typical to 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools—rather, it provided vocal music instruction to students in the grammar schools only. Music instruction was added to Boston primary grades in 1864 and to the high school in 1869 (Birge, 1928, p. 57).

Since 1838, music education has become an accepted and expected part of a public school education. From their simple beginning at Hawes School, music programs have grown to include band, orchestra, choir, general music, theory, history, technology, composition, and even Mariachi instruction. This has not been a smooth and untroubled road. Economic downturns and changing national priorities have challenged music education and continue to do so as we face significantly reduced funding for our schools.

As we face these challenging times, we must prepare ourselves to champion the cause of music education in our public schools. The question is: How? When our administrators ask us why our programs should be left intact, how do we answer them? MENC has produced high-quality advocacy materials



that you can access at <http://www.menc.org>. Music Friends, an MENC sponsored group of parents and community members, works to support music in the schools. The [www.musicfriends.org](http://www.musicfriends.org) link will provide information on this group. MENC and NAMM created support tools that are available at “Support Music” at <http://www.support-music.com/>.

Meeting the challenges we face can benefit us. As we articulate our values to others, we clarify them for ourselves. Taking time to examine our philosophies of music education can not only make us

strong advocates for music in the schools, but also can help us become better teachers. Yes, we face challenges today, but music education has faced challenges before and has remained a strong and vital force in American education. I am confident that the excellent music programs in Oregon’s K-12 schools will continue to flourish in 2009 and into the future.

## References

- Birge, E. B. (1928). *History of public school music in the United States*. Washington, DC: Music Educators National Conference.
- Mark, M. L., and Gary, C. L. (1999). *A history of American music education* (2nd ed.). Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference.

## Thank you, teachers.

The Portland Youth Philharmonic recognizes your hard work and commitment to tomorrow’s musicians and music lovers. We want to strengthen our relationship with you through shared communication and collaboration.

Please use this list to contact us with any concerns or questions you might have regarding our outreach programs, low-cost peer mentor music lessons, school visits, orchestra requirements, and schedules. We can connect you with the right person to talk to. Just call our offices at **503.223.5939**. You can also find our Musician’s Handbook and concert schedule available on-line at **[www.portlandyouthphil.org](http://www.portlandyouthphil.org)**.

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# Orff Schulwerk Training

Phyllis Paul  
University of Oregon

## Benefits to Children

Orff Schulwerk is a developmental approach to music education for children. Developed by the German composer, Carl Orff, and his associate, Gunild Keetman, it is based on things children like to do: sing, clap, chant rhymes, dance, and keep a beat on anything near at hand. In much the same way we learn language, these instincts are guided into learning music by first hearing and making music, then reading and writing it. The Orff process invites children to actively make music. By using their voices to speak and sing and their bodies to move and dance, children move from musical imitation to improvisation and literacy. Orff Schulwerk is based on traditional music and folklore and often incorporates unique Orff melody instruments, including xylophones, metallophones, and glockenspiels. These instruments offer children the chance to make "good sounds" immediately. Played together, their use helps children become sensitive listeners and considerate participants.

## Benefits to Teachers

Presently, more than 10,000 teachers in the U.S. use Orff Schulwerk as the way to present the wonder of music to their students. In the Orff approach, music and movement teachers find a comprehensive process for fostering creativity and conveying musical knowledge and skills. Participating in American Orff Schulwerk Association-approved Orff Teacher Training Courses provides teachers with unique opportunities for creative musical growth through their own active participation. Just as Orff Schulwerk centers on the development of the total child, it also invites continual growth of the teacher by offering chances for the constant expansion of musical and pedagogical skills.

Plan to attend Orff Schulwerk Teacher Training Course, Level I, at the University of Oregon—clinicians will be Jim Solomon and Peggy McDonnell. This course is designed to develop understanding of the teaching and learning process using the Orff Schulwerk approach to music and movement. The daily

schedule includes focus on rhythm, melody, Orff instruments, movement, recorder playing, improvisation, musicianship, Orff theory, orchestration, and pedagogy/special topics sessions. Anyone with musical training wishing to acquire basic knowledge and pedagogic foundation in the Orff Schulwerk approach may enroll.

Jim Solomon, who is an author, national clinician, and National Board Certified Teacher, has taught Level I Orff for over 20 years. Jim is an outstanding pedagogue. Because he teaches children on a daily basis, his course participants leave the workshop with a plethora of pertinent ideas and activities, all ready for immediate application in the elementary general music classroom.

Peggy McDonnell has been teaching classroom music rooted in the principles of Orff Schulwerk for 37 years. She is a founding member of the Portland Orff Schulwerk Association and served as president from 1976 to 1978. Peggy is especially interested in exposing children to music and dance from other world cultures and in making the music of the Schulwerk come alive for children.

The Level I Teacher Training Course will be held at the University of Oregon School of Music, June 22 through July 3. Non-credit tuition is \$650. Participants can earn up to six graduate credits for the class and are provided with packets containing all activities included in the workshop. For all other information, including registration forms, required materials, and lodging/meals, please visit the U of O Orff website (<http://music.uoregon.edu/EventsNews/Camps/Orff.htm>) or contact Dr. Phyllis M. Paul ([ppaul@uoregon.edu](mailto:ppaul@uoregon.edu)).

For more information about Orff Schulwerk, visit the America Orff Schulwerk Association homepage at <http://www.aosa.org/>.



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## Refining Percussion Tone Quality

Of all the factors used to assess musicians, the one that most profoundly distinguishes the accomplished professional from the novice is sound quality. While a good sound may be called “full,” “warm,” or “dark,” poor sound is often described as “constricted,” “edgy,” “thin,” or “harsh.” In the case of all percussion instruments, the sound quality is often too pointed and “pounding,” usually as a result of the player playing too aggressively. Although a student’s mental concept of a good sound is important, many times there are physical problems that they must address before they can produce the desired tone.

It is very helpful, perhaps even essential, that a percussion teacher model and demonstrate a proper “warm-sound concept.” A teacher can effectively demonstrate how to adjust such technique problems as excess tension; e.g., too much forearm or elbow in the stroke or a stroke without proper rebound and lift or follow through.

### Keep It Loose

Two of the most common student “sound problems” are limited depth to the tone quality and/or an “abrasive tone.” Limited depth is characterized by a thin and weak sound, while harsh “abrasive tone quality” is characterized by a pounding sound. The latter produces strain on the player’s forearms, a red face, and a tense upper body. In this case, the sound and visual presentation are usually an “angry,” forceful stroke as opposed to a relaxed, fluid stroke. An arm filled with tension significantly hampers the freedom of the stroke and negatively affects the sound. This arm tension can occur when players attempt to compensate for lack of preparation in their stroke or an improper hand position. It can also happen when a student tries to fight or struggle to produce volumes of sound using an instrument that is inferior. Most often, though, lack of proper preparation and fail-

ure to follow through with the stroke are the origin of the sound problems.

To remedy this improper technique, the percussionist needs to limit the use of the forearm and elbow and, instead, create the rotation of the stick or mallet with the wrist and fingers. This will ease tensions in the larger arm muscles and subsequently lighten up the touch on the instrument and should provide optimum tone quality. The key is a relaxed smooth approach, with the wrist producing the strokes and the arm following through.

An athletic analogy to this percussion technique mirrors an effective stroke and the motion one would use in dribbling a basketball. In both, the wrist is primarily used to move the hand back and forth, with the arm performing the follow through. The arm is not restricted or stationary. Instead, the arm follows through in a natural relaxed manner. If you try to dribble a ball with your forearm doing all the work, you will find that the action is very clumsy and heavy and your arm tires quickly. This is essentially what happens if you try to produce a percussion stroke with the forearm instead of with the wrist and fingers. One way to make the student aware of this is to model the correct preparation to a stroke and then demonstrate the negative effects of not adequately preparing the rotation of the stick or mallet. Strive for a smooth, fluid, “legato” approach to the instrument!

Many inexperienced percussion students are simply not aware of the extreme amount of preparation needed to produce the touch associated with quality sound. Students should practice employing wrist strokes with their sticks/mallets to help them get the feeling of a smooth and unrestricted arm and wrist motion. Usually these strokes take the form of the classic legato wrist stroke and should require only small adjustments. It’s important that the student is careful to breathe regularly and remain free of tension, internally, in the chest and upper body. This helps with

relaxation as well as with phrasing. Again, the continuous goal is to get a fluid legato approach to the stroke technique, whether striking a playing surface or just working on the technical approach in the air.

Once students establish the feeling of a good fluid stroke through the sticks or mallets, they can apply this approach to the instrument. In this case, the goal is to produce as little strain or resistance as possible without being “floppy.” The percussionist should begin to play and strive to create as strong and full a sound as possible without tension. I encourage students to use a full-legato style approach to the instrument, which means to play with full preparation and to rebound with a continuous, connected motion with no “hitch” in the stroke. The objective is to not allow strain to enter the wrists or arms.

### Hand Position and Equipment

Another factor impacting tone quality is an improper hand position, which may cause arm and wrist tension and constriction. This is because the player is not correctly using the arm and wrist muscles to focus the energy for effective control of the stroke, thereby creating tension in the arm. A clear sign of tension is a closed, tight, “white knuckle” grip on the stick.

At this point, it’s important to re-teach all the basics, applying the concept of full “air” strokes toward the instrument. The strokes should get smaller as the tempo increases or with a softer dynamic. A larger preparation to the stroke is required to achieve a louder dynamic and slower tempo. It’s important to demonstrate these differentiations to the student and model the correct approach and sound quality.

While trying to reinforce musicality through dynamic control, I frequently have the students practice a crescendo/diminuendo drill on the drum. To carry out this exercise, have the novice percussionist start with a soft dynamic and build to a loud dynamic by lifting

*continued on page 18...*



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the sticks with the wrists and noticing how the arms and wrists play a part in the relaxed, full strokes that should take place. In this instance, the student experiences a relaxed and controlled approach to the instrument at all dynamic levels. The goal is a smooth, uninterrupted sound from the softest to the loudest, which the student works to achieve by constantly trying to eliminate excess pressure. The stroke is working properly when the student is producing it without strain.

Once the student can replicate this continuity and smoothness, they can then apply it to any instrument in the percussion family. It's useful to have the student also perform this exercise in front of a mirror to see the physical dynamics, either positive or negative.

I am also a proponent of videotaping a student's performance. It's important that the player sees and hears how the sound and the physical motions correlate with the sound quality they produce. I think videotaping a performance is more effective than a practice session, as videotaping is more pressure filled and tends to magnify the negatives in a player's technique. A visual and aural analysis of the videotaped performance by both the student and the teacher can clearly identify the positives and negatives in the technique.

In a jury or performance, most players are not focused on technique but rather on the mental approach, memory of notes, and overall control of the situation. At this stage, technique is secondary and almost reflexive. With too much focus on technique in a performance, the notes, rhythms, and dynamics, as well as focus, tend to break down. Stress does interesting things to us physiologically. In my opinion, those who can stay relaxed and focused by maintaining composure and letting their technique "take over" are very likely to achieve success.

Sometimes inferior equipment may contribute to a poor tone. Let's face it—no matter how great the technical approach, it is very difficult to make beautiful sounds on inferior

equipment. Therefore, it's important that students experience and hear what good tone quality is on a good instrument and then try to emulate that sound, regardless of the quality of the equipment they are playing on. However, no matter what the quality of their instrument, a player who lacks the playing basics will produce inferior sound integrity.

Let's face it—no matter how great the technical approach, it is very difficult to make beautiful sounds on inferior equipment.

### Thicken Up the Sound!

Thin, shallow sound is another typical problem. Signs of this on a timpano include lack of a strong fundamental pitch, lack of depth and richness, and lack of volume. Causes may include playing in an improper beating spot, constricting the stick or mallet, playing without proper physical support, and suffering from technique problems with the sticks or instrument.

Singing in the correct stylistic manner is useful in constructing a full, round sound. It is also a great way to teach articulations and note lengths. Often the composer doesn't indicate note lengths in percussion as clearly as with other instruments. We have to use our ear to determine with whom we are playing and how long that sound should be. The objective is to sing the way the instrument should sound. Sometimes, a heavy "German" type sound is called for; other times, the desired sound is a little lighter "French" approach or "something in between."

Sound problems can occur also when a student does not have the proper "sound concept" for the note being produced. For example, using a tight, nasal-sounding "concept approach" to playing a legato note will

produce an inferior tone. This mirrors wind players when they "speak" a syllable before they play a note, using a long sound like "TA" for a broad attack and a shorter sound such as "TTT" or "TUT" for a staccato attack.

I ask students to pronounce syllables that correlate to the sound they want while they make strokes to perfect their hand position. I then ask whether the tone just produced is pleasing and achieves the desired sound concept that they sang. Usually "syllables" indicate long articulations with a broad tenuto-type feel; the shortest notes will use a short "syllable" for a staccato articulation.

When the hand position and arc of the stroke are at the proper level, the sound will usually "open up" and become resonant. I have students adjust their hand levels until the student is aware of the resulting differences in sound. I encourage students to play with the hand and wrists as low as possible for each stroke, especially on mallet instruments, as that strategy increases the chances for accuracy of pitch. Another approach is to have students play different dynamics, making sure they lift their preparatory stroke as volume increases. Usually, the height of preparation indicates the dynamic level of the sound.

Another cause of thin, shallow sound is a constricted fulcrum. When holding the stick, the use of the fulcrum in the percussionists fingers (which is the combination balancing point of the thumb and index finger) greatly affects the pressure of the stroke and the quality of sound. The fulcrum is often set tighter than necessary. A good remedy is to see if you can pull the stick from the student's hand. If you can't, the fulcrum may be too tight. The fulcrum shouldn't be so loose that the stick easily falls away, but there should be some firmness and resistance without the hands being tight or clenched. Have the student loosen the grip while maintaining control of the stick. Then have the student apply this approach to the instrument--have the player execute some stroke notes to

continued...

# Guest Column

a controlled level. Repeat this on various notes or strokes as you move up the dynamic range. Many students are surprised by how much relaxation it takes to avoid a clenched fulcrum and how relaxation adds much more mass to the tone.

A thin sound can't be remedied without the proper stroke preparation. No matter how relaxed the fulcrum, the sound won't improve unless the student produces full strokes. Sometimes the stroke needs to be isolated and modeled for the students to grasp this concept--it's important that the teacher properly demonstrate this concept.

A thin sound may be attributable also to inadequate instruments and implements

(sticks, mallets). Narrow or light sticks generally make it hard to produce a good, full-balanced, classical sound. Small drums with thin heads may cause the same problem. I try to keep an eye on the player's equipment.

To summarize, the relationship between the size of the stroke and the amount of pressure applied to the fulcrum is fundamental. An over-pressurized fulcrum moving through a constricted stroke usually produces bad results. I ask students with this problem to play in front of a mirror. This gives the student visual feedback about their stroke and sound. We don't go on until balance and clarity are achieved. For this mirror exercise, I instruct students to work up and down the dynamic range of the instrument, manipulating the fulcrum, and

perfecting the preparation stroke and touch until the desired results are achieved.

## Summary

In closing, it's important to remember that students who are well grounded in what their instrument should sound like may never encounter many of the problems covered here. I recommend that the teacher "model" the students' lessons, and encourage the students to listen to recordings and live performances. If the mind and ear can "hear" a sound, it's more likely that the body will be able to produce it.

Preparation, relaxation, and proper control of the stick go hand-in-hand to enhancing tone quality and creating a warm, rich sound.

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# Report from NAMM

Mike Klinger

## What's New In Music Technology 2009

It's that time of year again to present you with my findings at the annual January NAMM convention held in beautiful (and warm) Anaheim. In these hard economic times, I have chosen to report on some very useful, low-cost solutions for you that I find to be extremely useful in the music classroom.

### Recording

Low-cost mics of all varieties were the hot thing at NAMM. Samson® introduced the new Q2U-USB/XLR® handheld dynamic mic @\$69. This mic looks like a Shure® SM58®, has both XLR and USB connections, and has a 3.5-mm stereo headphone jack for no-latency monitoring. Use it for live performances or hook it up to your computer via USB, and record with it using your favorite recording software. Comes with USB and XLR cables, mic clip, and Cakewalk Music Creator™ software.

Blue Microphones® (www.bluemic.com) introduced lots of incredible and affordable products. Mikey® @\$79 is a portable iPOD® condenser microphone that plugs right into your iPOD for stereo recording. It is compatible with the iPOD Nano 2G/3G/4G, iPOD classic, the iPOD 4G/5G, and most cases. It requires no software installation and has a built-in speaker for playback. If you or your students have iPODs, this is all you need for assessment purposes. Snowflake® @\$69 is a portable USB mic with 44.1-khz/16-bit quality. Use it to record into Garage Band®, pod casting, iChat®, lecture recording, narration for Microsoft® PowerPoint®—the sky is the limit. If you already own a microphone and wish to use it to record into your computer, then Icicle® @\$59 is for you. The Icicle® is Blue's new stylish USB converter and mic preamp combo that allows you to connect any XLR microphone directly into your computer via USB! The Icicle features a studio-quality microphone preamp, 48V phantom power, a fully balanced low-noise front end, analog gain control, and driverless operation.



New handheld recorders were also a hot thing at NAMM. Samson introduced the new ZOOM H4n® @\$349. Much more rugged than the original H4, this recorder includes built-in X/Y stereo mics, four-channel simultaneous recording, 24-bit/96-khz PCM recording, a built-in speaker, a USB 2.0 for faster transfer, XLR mic inputs with phantom power and Hi-Z inputs for recording bass/guitar/keyboards. Includes a 1-GB SD card, windscreens, mic clip adapter, USB cable, protective case, and Cubase LE software.

Alesis (www.alesis.com) introduced the Alesis USB Recording Kit @\$259. This is a complete

computer recording bundle that includes: an iOL2 digital audio interface, a matched pair of AM2 condenser microphones, two MIActive 320 USB-powered speakers, and Cubase LE 4 recording software. No extra sound cards, connectors, or software drivers are needed, and it works on a PC or Mac®. For those of you on a tight budget, this one is for you.

For those of you who want to convert all of your old cassette tapes to CD, there is the new Alesis TapeLink USB @\$199. This is a dual cassette dubbing and playback deck with digital audio 16-bit/44.1-kHz output via USB. It includes BIAS SoundSoap™ (for cleaning up tape hiss, rumble, hum, and pops), Audacity® recording software, and EZ Tape Converter® software.

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For more information and registration please go to [www.midiworkshop.com](http://www.midiworkshop.com) or call (800) 248-9699.

continued...

# Report from NAMM

Pro Tools® 8 is now available. Pro Tools 8 is the most advanced audio creation and production software, featuring a gorgeous new interface, dozens of new virtual instruments and plug-ins, exciting new scoring and MIDI features, amazing new workflows, better ease of use, deeper controller integration, and much, much more. Personally, I love the fact that Sibelius® editing is now built in and, of course, you can send your creation directly to Sibelius if needed.

## Keyboards

A perfect controller keyboard to go with Pro Tools 8, Cubase, Logic®, or Reason, is the new M-Audio® Axiom® Pro 25, 49, 61 line @\$399, \$479, and \$559, respectively. The M-Audio Axiom Pro keyboard controllers build on the acclaimed Axiom series with premium TruTouch™ action, proprietary HyperControl™ MIDI mapping technology and other cutting-edge enhancements. HyperControl automatically maps the keyboard's controls to commonly accessed parameters in digital audio workstations, including Pro Tools, Cubase, Logic and Reason, as well as software instruments. The constant two-way link with your host DAW means the keyboard's controls are always in sync with your software's active parameters. The intuitive graphic LCD constantly updates the current values, which ensures seamless editing and prevents parameter jumps—even when plug-ins are closed. Axiom Pro puts you in complete control of your entire session.

Yamaha® introduced the new AvantGrand™ Piano @\$15,995. It is basically a 4-ft baby grand piano with no strings in it. Its all digitally sampled sounds are from their 9-ft series grand and it has built-in speakers. The placement of the four-channel, three-way Spatial Acoustic Speaker System™ mimics the points where the original grand piano samples were taken, while two Soundboard Resonators™ create a non-directional sound dispersion directly in front of the player, duplicating the subtle reproduction of the buildup of sound felt by concert pianists. The touch is exactly like a \$35,000 grand piano. The Tactile Response System™ replicates the resonating string vibration of an acoustic piano to the player's hands through specially

placed transducers, while a new mechanical touch pedal system reproduces the finesse of acoustic pedals, duplicating the spring, friction, and inertia. It also has a built-in recorder and the recording can be transferred via USB. Incredible! I was so impressed with this piano that I ordered one for myself.

## Song Creation Software

I have high hopes for a new song creation software designed for songwriters, and I think it will be a marvelous addition to the educational classroom as well. SongFrame™ @\$149 retail price (<http://www.tanageraudioworks.com>) is a song development toolkit designed to provide songwriters and recording musicians with an integrated and comprehensive set of tools for writing and refining songs. In addition to serving as an overall notebook for a songwriter's ideas, SongFrame allows the user to construct songs using drag and drop icons representing song structure elements and then fully develop every aspect of the song within these. Work out chords, progressions, melodies, lyrics, rhythms, and song form using expert tools, and then save your finished work to a form easily imported into your favorite DAW or sequencing application—complete with all your guide tracks and even markers showing every song section and chord change. Stay tuned to my website for pricing of this software for educators.

Sibelius General Music Pack, available in Lab 5 pack @\$912 or site license @\$155 seat, is a wonderful solution for your general music classroom. It contains Sibelius Student, which is an entry-level notation program designed for students in grades 3 through 8. Based on the award-winning Sibelius 5, Sibelius Student has everything a student needs to compose, arrange, and complete exercises in class and includes built-in ideas to help get students started quickly. It also contains the entire Groovy Music Series. Fun to use, Groovy Music teaches the basics of sound, rhythm, pitch, and composition using pictures and animation—progressing to the study of simple notation. Groovy Shapes (ages 5 and up) teaches basic musical concepts using shapes to represent elements of music, such as rhythms, melodies, and

chords. Groovy Jungle (ages 7 and up), explores more complex musical textures and additional instruments allow children to experiment further with their own compositions. Groovy City (ages 9 and up) delves deeper into music notation and provides more complex listening tasks. There is also a Groovy central music library website that is now available for uploads/downloads at <https://secure.groovymusic.com>.

## Fun Stuff

The new CD-VT2 @\$159 is the latest introduction in the portable CD trainer line—a product category literally invented by TASCAM®. With TASCAM'S legendary ease of use, original features such as integrated pitch and key control, vocal canceller with selectable canceling pan point and selectable frequency range, and seamless integration with CD-DA/CD-R/CD-RW disc playback. Users can now discover the performance their favorite artist really played.

Mike Klinger is owner and founder of The Synthesis Midi Workshop ([www.midishop.com](http://www.midishop.com)), which specializes in educational training and sales in music technology.

# District 9 News

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## District 9

We in District 9 are going to miss a great friend for our side of the State. Mark Jones has kept us informed while politely reminding us of due dates and showing a genuine concern for Eastern Oregon. Next year, it would be nice to have a "Mark Jones" day.

With the solo and ensemble contest behind

us, District 9 is looking forward to the large group festival. Our district owes Matt Gilman a deserved thank you for a job well done. As of today, there are 17 instrumental and 14 vocal groups preregistered for the large group festival. The instrumental groups are April 7; the vocal side is April 8.

We are very fortunate to host the festival in the beautiful Four Rivers Cultural Center in Ontario. May 12 is the "Jazz 'n Art Night"

at Ontario High School. This is the year for elections and I plan to "play away." Thank you for your past support.

Thank you, Mark, and all of the wonderful music educators of Oregon.

"Keep Music Alive!!"

Sincerely Skip Bicknese, District 9 Chair



# WHITWORTH

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# Join Us!



Share this application with non-MENC member colleagues and tell them of the benefits of joining MENC.

When your colleagues join MENC: The National Association for Music Education, they automatically become a member of Oregon Music Educators Association. From local activities to national issues, MENC and OMEA offer the combination of services and benefits music educators need!

## MENC Member Benefits and Features \_\_\_\_\_

**Advocacy**—MENC informs legislators of the importance of an education that includes music, supports National Standards for Music Education, and sponsors **Outreach Programs** such as The National Anthem Project and Music In Our Schools Month.  
**Music Educators Journal**—Articles on teaching approaches, current issues, classroom techniques, and products and services.  
**Teaching Music**—Practical teaching ideas for all specialty areas.  
**Discounts on Resources**—25% off all publications, videos, and specialty items.  
**In-Service Conferences and Meetings**—Opportunities to exchange ideas with colleagues; member discounts on registration fees.  
**Leadership Opportunities**—Participation on MENC task forces and committees; sponsorship of collegiate and Tri-M Music Honor Society chapters.  
**Automatic State Association Membership**—All the benefits offered at the state level, including the state journal and access to local meetings, festivals, and more!

## Online Journals for Members Only \_\_\_\_\_

**General Music Today**—Dealing specifically with the concerns of the general music educator.

**Journal of Music Teacher Education**—Focusing on issues of importance to the music teacher educator.

**UPDATE: Applications of Research in Music Education**—Practical applications for music education research findings.

## Optional MENC Periodical \_\_\_\_\_

**Journal of Research in Music Education**—The latest findings in music education research.

**Additional Features**—MENC credit card, professional liability insurance, medical protection program, instrument insurance and more are available to you at discounted rates.

## MENC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- Yes, I want to join MENC and Oregon MEA. I understand that membership extends for one year from the date dues are received. Credit card holders may join by calling 1-800-828-0229, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Eastern Time. Rates expire 5-31-2009.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New or • Renewal</li> </ul>	Name _____	
MENC ID# _____	Home Address _____	
<b>Membership</b>	City/State/Zip _____	
• Active membership dues (national and state) \$ <b>104*</b>	Phone/E-Mail _____	
<b>Options</b>	School Name _____	
• Society for Research in Music Education \$36 \$ _____	School Address _____	
(includes subscription to Journal of Research in Music Education)	City/State/Zip _____	
MENC membership is a prerequisite.	Phone/E-Mail _____	
• Tax deductible contribution to FAME to support \$ _____	Preferred? Address: • Home • Work	
(select one):	E-Mail: • Home • Work	
• Music in Our Schools Month		
• Advocacy		
• Teacher Recruitment and Retention		
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<b>TOTAL AMOUNT DUE</b> \$ _____		
<b>Payment:</b> • Check enclosed, payable to MENC		
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*Includes \$10 each for Music Educators Journal and Teaching Music		

### Professional Areas

- |                             |                    |                                 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Teaching Level              | Teaching Area      |                                 |
| • Preschool                 | • Choral/Voice     | • Teacher Education             |
| • Elementary                | • Band             | • Jazz                          |
| • Junior/Middle School      | • Orchestra        | • Technology/Theory/Composition |
| • Senior High School        | • Show Choir       | • Marching Band                 |
| • College/University        | • Guitar           | • Mariachi                      |
| • Administrator/ Supervisor | • General Music    |                                 |
| • Private/Studio            | • Special Learners |                                 |
|                             | • Research         |                                 |

Please return this form with payment to: MENC . 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191

Please contact MENC Member Services at 1-800-828-0229 for spousal or retired dues.

# Call for Presentation/Session Proposals

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## 2010 OMEA State Conference January 15-17, 2010 • Eugene Hilton & Conference Center

MENC Member submitting proposal: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Office Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Outline the Proposed Session \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Session Topic/Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Brief Description of Content: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Demonstration or Performance Group Required:  Yes  No  
Could the demonstration group be one of the groups invited to perform at the conference?  Yes  No

Suggested Clinicians (include name, address, and school or industry affiliation) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to preside or organize this session?  Yes  No

Note: All music educators appearing on OMEA programs must be members of MENC. No honoraria or expenses are paid to music teachers from within Oregon. Expenses and fees may be paid to non-music educators and music teachers from other states.

Send this form by June 1, 2009 to: Jeff Simmons, Summit High School  
2855 NW Clearwater Dr, Bend, OR 97701

# Call for Tapes

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## 2010 OMEA State Conference January 15-17, 2010 • Eugene Hilton & Conference Center

Person submitting tape: \_\_\_\_\_  
MENC number \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Office Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Group on tape: \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of ensemble \_\_\_\_\_  
Addition information about the ensemble: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to be a demonstration group for a clinician?  Yes  No

If invited to perform, are there any special performance needs that OMEA needs to be made aware of?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Note: All music educators appearing on OMEA programs must be members of MENC. No honoraria or expenses are paid to music teachers from within Oregon. Expenses and fees may be paid to non-music educators and music teachers from other states.

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