Looking Forward, Looking Back:

Pandemic Reflections

Creativity, Expression, Relationships, Community

Getting Back to “Normal” in the Chorus Room

Making Ourselves Make Time for Music

Three Things: Instrumental Reflections

Emo Rap and Journaling

What Will Stay After the Pandemic Is Over?

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Time to reflect, recharge, rebuild, recruit, as well as reach out…and share resources!

By Cecil Adderley, President, MMEA

It has been a pleasure to serve as the President of MMEA for the past two years. Even with the challenges of COVID-19, many deep discussions, numerous changing regulations, expectations, and environments, it has been an honor to serve each member of our organization. Representing the organization within the Commonwealth, alongside other state representatives of NAfME, as well collaborating with the leaders affiliated with Arts for All (hosted by Arts Learning), has enabled the arts within our borders to stand united on the need for continued arts education throughout Massachusetts, even during the pandemic. As I pass the baton to our next President Heather Côte, I believe that she will take the necessary steps to move us in a direction with additional collaboration and growth. We were listening to you with the goal of representing you in the manner you deserve and expect.

Each meeting has offered opportunities for us to begin conversations, discussions, and reflections on our past experiences as an organization. We have reflected on what we have traditionally offered to the students of our members, as well as looked closely at what would help us to better understand how we may engage those who have not traditionally participated. The monthly virtual professional development opportunities have provided us a glimpse of what we need to offer, and how we may explore new opportunities to reach every music educator and learner. We still have work to do. We need more of our members to assist us to keep all informed of changes, concerns, and success. Through collaboration we can address the issues that will make us more receptive, nimble, and effective. All contributions help as we work together as learners, arts educators, and administrators representing all of the Commonwealth. Our collective efforts are rich and provide context as to how local communities function, and what makes each unique.

During times like these, where we continue to strive for excellence, we must also practice empathy. Each of us is a learner/educator, and what we do, believe it or not, is hard work. Our communities believe the work we do as teachers is honorable and deserves respect. However, we collectively have to remind ourselves to listen to each other, to actually hear what our colleagues and community members say, feel, and think in relation to the instructional processes provided in their home communities. Real empathy helps us to rebuild and recruit, which reinforces our strengths. This helps us to revise, reshape, and reorganize after reflecting and identifying the obstacles that impeded our progress and growth. The conversations are necessary, but with deep thought and discussion we begin to establish measurable goals helping us to grow.

Moving forward, it is my hope that as an organization we will make even more of an impact on arts education throughout the Commonwealth, where music changes the lives of those in our classes and for those who passively consume our art. Each of us through these experiences learns something about music, but hopefully more about ourselves. Through the arts, many of our communities may not see the rewards we do as this has been our career, and they may only see themselves as “passing through” for a specific moment in time. As part of our need to reach out, we must continue to advocate for why what we do matters. We must seek to communicate the lifelong impact it has not only on those we teach, but the entire community in which we teach.

As we plan to open our classroom in the coming school term, please remember it will take all of us to move the arts forward. For our music classrooms to thrive, advocacy will not be enough. We must share our ideas, resources, and techniques with others. Each of us must pledge to embrace future educators and new teachers in our organization. We must all provide these educators with support to succeed, offer our assistance and encouragement, and remember that at one time, we were at the same place in our careers as they are today. If we continue to work together and build an even better organization, we will be able to be the influential voice for all music educators across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. •

—Cecil Adderley, MMEA President
Looking Back, Looking Forward

By Susan Gedutis Lindsay, MMEA Managing Editor

Well… again, we have a themed issue without even meaning to! This issue is packed with pandemic reflections, the product of a community of educators who are looking back on the last year to make sense of what was, in order to decide on what is and what will be.

If this issue’s authors are a fair cross section of our statewide membership—and I’d venture a guess that they are—we all seem to be looking back at this unprecedented year and deciding what to keep and what to throw away. It seems that every one of us learned new skills this year that we never thought we’d need, but they turned out to be pretty handy in many cases. Many of those new approaches will remain.

Here’s a big one, though: As much invigoration (or torture) that we experienced in learning new skills, I think we are all in agreement that you can’t beat live music and the thrill of ensemble, and you can’t replace one-on-one, in-person instruction, because what we do is really about playing together, feeling the music, and experiencing coordinated rhythm, melody, unison, and harmony. I know that, for me, as restrictions loosened and I began to have kids back together playing in pairs and trios, harmony felt like one of the most beautiful sounds on the planet—even when it was that special brand of fifth-grade intonation. (Say no more!) Rarely in the past would I describe the harmony of three second-year saxophone players as “a rich bath of sound”—but truly, it was. As the 1, 3, and 5 swept over me in every lesson, I found myself closing my eyes and feeling it in my whole soul. Um… wow? Absence makes the heart grow very, very fond.

Playing together. Singing together. Being together. As musicians, singers, and artists, that’s what we’re about, and thankfully, we’re almost back! It looks like we can look forward to things getting closer to normal next fall. In the meantime, this issue gives us some thoughts to mull over as we close the chapter on this year and plan ahead for next.

Enjoy the rest of summer. May it give you the space and freedom from chaos that you need to rest, reflect, find meaning, and… when you’re ready … plan ahead to begin anew.

—Susan Gedutis Lindsay, Managing Editor

P. S. Please do consider submitting an article. No topic is out of bounds. We welcome your authentic voice. Write to me directly at editor@massmea.org, and I’ll connect you with the appropriate subject-area editor.
MMEA Conference 2022 Update
Noreen Diamond Burdett, Conference Coordinator

The 2022 MMEA All-State Conference will not be in the usual three-day, in-person format that we had for so many years before the pandemic. The conference format will be whatever works best as the restrictions ease—maybe that will be a combination of virtual workshops throughout the year and a one day in-person event at a college or conference site, or maybe it will be some other option that will arise when life gets back to somewhat normal.

Regardless of the format, the 2022 MMEA Conference Committee is committed to providing meaningful PD for music educators and will continue to work on a plan that meets the expectations and needs of our members.

Whether the sessions next year be virtual or in-person, we are now seeking proposals for workshops. Proposals can be made on the MMEA website—the link is on the conference page.

- What we don’t know for sure is: when and where, virtual or in-person, length of sessions, etc.
- What we do know is: clinicians need to indicate whether or not their session could be virtual, so that the committee members are aware of that when choosing sessions.

It would be utterly fantastic to have a magic wand to predict exactly what this is going to look like, but that’s not the case! So we have wait a tad to see what is safe, comfortable, and affordable. It is important for you to check the website and MMEA e-blasts for updates.

Music Education and Social Emotional Learning

This brochure includes key talking points for music education advocates to use as they communicate with decision-makers about the place of music education in any school setting.

Download your brochure at bit.ly/MusicEduSEL

Questions? Email advocacy@nafme.org
Emo Rap and Journaling: A New Foundation for Social-Emotional Learning

By Meaghan O’Connor-Vince, Barnstable High School

At this point, it is an overstated but perhaps not quite well enough understood truism that every teacher across the country has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Perhaps this is none more true than for music teachers. We’ve changed what we teach and how we teach to engage our students in an unknown virtual world. The pandemic has isolated students from each other, and there have been several published studies stating that depression and anxiety among K–12 students has skyrocketed since last March. As one such study states:

To assess mental health, substance use, and suicidal ideation during the pandemic, representative panel surveys were conducted among adults aged ≥18 years across the United States during June 24–30, 2020. Overall, 40.9% of respondents reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health condition, including symptoms of anxiety disorder or depressive disorder (30.9%), symptoms of a trauma- and stressor-related disorder (TSRD) related to the pandemic† (26.3%), and having started or increased substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19 (13.3%).

(Czeisler, Lane, Petrosky)

With the power of music, we have the ability to address these debilitating conditions with students, teach them how to reflect on their social-emotional state, and use music as an outlet and a powerful vehicle towards healing.

I was fortunate enough this year to maintain a somewhat regular class schedule. Currently I teach three levels of music technology: 8th grade (semester-based course), Music Technology 1 (open to grades 9–12, full year), and Music Technology 2 (open to grades 10–12, full year). Previously I’ve taught Symphonic Band, History of Rock, and History of Hip-Hop. I am also the jazz band director, but this program meets after school and has unfortunately fallen to the back burner this year due to the pandemic.

This year, I had the opportunity to develop a new course, Music Technology 2. This course provides students with the opportunity to expand upon their songwriting skills and work towards using music as an outlet for expression. This course also provides students with a deeper understanding of music analysis and promotes classwide discussions. In Music Technology 1, students are provided with a listening worksheet that identifies tempo, genre, dynamics, etc. to dissect a particular genre on a weekly basis. Music Technology 2 students take those listening skills to the next level through journaling. Students are asked to complete a weekly journal assignment in which they select a song of their choosing and reflect on their emotional experience while listening to it. Students are asked questions such as:

• “How are you feeling today?”
• “How did this song make you feel?”
• “Is there an overall dominant genre or artist that you’ve been listening to on repeat? If so, what is it?”
• “Please describe the music’s ‘vibe’ or overall feeling in a few words . . .”
• “What level of listening intent are you experiencing?”

With these questions, students can begin to understand and reflect upon their listening selections. Ultimately, they begin to label feelings and identify their listening choices based on emotional state. This provides a check-in of sorts, allowing the student the opportunity to state how they’re feeling that day. This frames their listening as a healing tool and validates their individual musical tastes. Being able to read and understand their personal process for selecting a particular song gives me great insight. I use this information to guide my curriculum, discuss music current events, and learn more about my students.

Helping students identify the overall emotive effect of a song by reflecting and journaling has also helped other class-based activities. As an active practice, I allow my students to share music for class discussion and analysis. I call this segment “Hip-Hop Honor with O’Connor.” Students submit a song of their choice to me monthly via Google Classroom, and I select one song a week to take a deep analytical dive.

I research the song on websites such as Genius (a lyric analysis website) and search for interviews of the artist. Traditionally on a Friday, I present my research to my students, providing them an opportunity to talk about their experience with the song and reflect on the artist’s development. We also analyze the production (especially sampling) and compositional elements of the song. This practice builds a relationship of trust between myself and my students.

Students know that I take this process very seriously and it offers them the opportunity to reflect on the analysis of the song and offer their input. One particular class discussion really changed my outlook on some of today’s current music: emo rap.

Emo rap by definition, according to a Genius News video, “takes influences from the trap beats of Metro Boomin and the lyrical raw teenage angst of bands like Taking Back Sunday to create what people are calling ‘emo rap.’” (Genius)
particular video spotlights artists such as Lil Uzi Vert, XXXTentacion, and Lil Peep. At first, I was skeptical of emo rap. I am very passionate about conscious hip-hop and usually try to steer my students towards artists such as Kendrick Lamar, J.Cole, and Rapsody. After having a “Hip-Hop Honor with O’Connor” session on Lil Uzi Vert’s “XO Tour Llif3,” our class analysis and discussion was mostly around emo rap and the concept of catharsis. I realized that students need to be reflective of their feelings and what they’re listening to for different purposes. Once I explained the idea of catharsis, my students instantly agreed that emo rap was a way for them to release feelings of sadness, loss, and angst. Catharsis is a familiar concept in all music, in myriad genres such as folk, blues, post-rock, punk, heavy metal, and even nineteenth-century impressionism. One student suggested that I watch the Netflix documentary on Lil Peep, Everybody’s Everything. That Friday night, I watched the documentary and the following week had an incredibly enlightening conversation with my students about emo rap and Lil Peep’s legacy.

Students were able to recognize and sympathize with the late artist, his struggle with boundaries, and his rise to fame, which ultimately led him to his untimely death. I was very impressed by my students’ dialogue and their self-awareness. They recognized every aspect of the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) wheel: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Lil Peep struggled with anxiety and depression throughout his life and ultimately that became the main message in his music. Using music as a cathartic outlet was a display of self-awareness and self-management. My students have also voiced that listening to emo rap, and Lil Peep specifically, provides opportunities for self-reflection and cathartic experience. When Lil Peep became successful, he felt obligated to support friends who stood by him throughout his journey. Unfortunately, the word “friend” became a loose term for him, as they all excessively indulged in drugs and alcohol. Students were able to recognize that Lil Peep made the wrong decision in keeping those particular people close to him, touching on all five aspects of the CASEL wheel in one scenario. Creating an environment where students have a voice in the repertoire discussed in class can open endless possibilities for social-emotional growth. Undoubtedly, our students can often be our best teachers.

Continuing these open class discussions around social-emotional learning is crucial during this uncertain time. According to the National Educators Association, teachers and students alike often suffer from the idea of “toxic positivity,” or the idea of censoring other emotions to please others. “Just like anything done in excess, when positivity is used to cover up or silence the human experience, it becomes toxic. By disallowing the existence of certain feelings, we fall into a state of denial and repressed emotions.” (Álvarez) We often observe the concept of “toxic positivity,” with sayings like “we’re all in this together” or “positive vibes only.” However, does this practice actually validate our feelings? I would argue about sadness and the fact that we all need validation of our feelings. I would argue that during these trying times, we need to validate and acknowledge what students are truly feeling. We all need to know that it’s ok to be sad sometimes and that there is space in life for that, just as there is with joy. One does not exist without the other, and it’s important to recognize that. This student response tells me it’s time to expand upon the music we cover in contemporary music classes, in genre and in purpose.

CITATIONS

Meaghan O’Connor-Vince teaches eighth-grade music technology, Music Technology 1 & 2, History of Rock and Roll, History of Hip-Hop, and Jazz Band at Barnstable High School in Hyannis, MA. She holds a bachelor of music in music education from the University of Rhode Island, where her principal instrument was saxophone. Meaghan also holds a masters in music education from Teachers College, Columbia University. You can find her full curriculum and contact information at: www.musicoconnor.com.

This QR Code is linked to a class podcast series, where many students mention topics discussed in this article. Feel free to listen and check out other student work, linked on my teacher SoundCloud account.
A Credo of Artistic Intent

By Malcolm W. Rowell, Jr., Professor Emeritus, University of Massachusetts

ART defines our humanity while teaching us what it means to be human—to think, to imagine, to feel, and respond with understanding, sensitivity, humility, and gratitude. ART is Soul Education!

With or without public school music education, we seem to have cultivated a society that views art and entertainment as synonymous.

“What distinguishes entertainment is that it happens within what we already know,” says Eric Booth.1 “Whatever your response to the entertainment presentation […] it says, ‘Yes, the world is the way you think it is.’ It feels great to have your worldview confirmed in the many dynamic, imaginative, exciting ways our entertainment industries provide. Art, on the other hand, happens outside of what you already know. Inherent in the artistic experience is the capacity to expand your sense of the way the world is or might be.”

“Art is not a thing,” says author Elbert Hubbard, “Art is a way.”2

Art must pass through the vein of one’s imaginative mind, to inform our instincts and intuition.

The art lives in an individual’s capacity and capability to engage in the fundamental act of creativity, expanding the sense of what is possible.

The arts are a powerful tool for exploring one’s inner self, bringing into focus all that needs expression.

ART as a spiritual journey implies that to know something is to have a relationship with it, thus ownership. The conductor

Robert Lawson Shaw expresses it this way: “Great art illuminates and enlightens our humanity.”

Creativity is an attitude toward life. More importantly, it is about freedom and the joy of discovery while revealing who we are and sometimes what we know or don’t know.

Creativity invites us to color outside the lines and think freely while eliminating the fear of right or wrong.

Creative interplay, says author Ken Robinson, is a process of exchange and dialogue that can open doors, allowing our imaginations to discover, explore, and realize new ideas and possibilities.

Our classes, lessons, and rehearsals must create “feelingful” experiences that leave us with the sense that we have lived through something of significance—experiences that move us, transform, enrich, inspire, and deepen us as people, while also giving us the understanding, skills, and ownership necessary to embrace the essence of the arsful experience.

Philosopher Susanne Langer, in her book A Philosophy in a New Key, refers to this moment as “The Power of Utterance.”

The creative spirit is inherent to our nature, defining what it means to be human.

The purpose of music education, therefore, should be to stimulate and enhance the creative spirit of our students—qualities that have been a part of our very being long before students entered our rehearsal spaces, classrooms, and performance halls.

“How can the arts be thought of as an ornament or a luxury when they are always used to celebrate, mourn, and unite on occasions of society’s most significant observances?” asks the great soprano Phyllis Curtin.

The ARTS reveal themselves to the contemplative mind! •

FOR FURTHER READING:

The Music Teaching Artist's Bible: Becoming a Virtuoso Educator, Eric Booth (Oxford University Press, 2009)

The Art Spirit, Robert Henri (Basic Books, 2007)

Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative, Ken Robinson (Capstone, 2011)

Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art, Susanne Langer (Harvard University Press, 1996)

Malcolm W. Rowell, Jr. is professor emeritus at UMass/Amherst, after having served as director of bands from 1980–2003. He is past president of the New England College Band Association and CBDNA Eastern Division and served on the national board of directors. He is an elected member of the American Bandmaster’s Association and founded and served as music director of the Massachusetts Wind Orchestra from 1991–2007, bringing this ensemble into national prominence and receiving broadcast performances on National Public Radio. Rowell is a strong proponent of new music and music education and has given freely of himself to improve the condition of the modern wind band and its leaders, a heritage that lives on in the work of his students and colleagues.

1 The Music Teaching Artist’s Bible (Oxford University Press, 2009)
2 All italicized emphasis is from Mr. Rowell, not from the original source.
Getting Back to “Normal” in the Chorus Room: Rehearsal Ideas after the Pandemic
By Carol Forward, MSEd, CAGS, Doctoral Candidate, Univ. Southern Mississippi

As a Massachusetts public school choral and general music director for twenty-five years, I have never had a semester without chorus in my schedule. I truly miss choral singing and conducting my high school students. I miss the tuneful singing, the rhythmic precision, and the quality of my student’s voices, and I also miss the energy and the chatter in the classroom. I miss the outbreak of song in the middle of conversation. I miss the laughter and the comradery that my students had. Hopefully when we return to the classroom in August, 2021, my students can return to chorus in my classroom for the first time since the pandemic began. As I ponder this transition back to in-person choral rehearsals, I can’t help but think that the students will need much more than just traditional methodology. It may take years to rebuild what has been lost after a year without singing.

What will we do as educators to support our students as they re-enter our choral classrooms? How can we help them to not only rebuild their instrument, but feel safe, cared for, and help them to get back to the beautiful music making that they can create together as an ensemble? I think it will take more than just my “usual” beginning of the year activities to move us forward in the new season.

As a Kodály trained educator, my goal is to find where my students are and take them from what they know to what they don’t know in a fun manner where students are learning but aren’t necessarily conscious of this fact. I love to let them think that they are only “having fun,” and then transitioning to the “aha” moment where we present the crucial element. Much of the first few weeks of school will include ice-breakers, canons, rounds, games, and activities that will give me the opportunity to assess their skills and decide what will be needed to help them not only with vocal remediation, blend, and intonation, but also with social remediation from the isolation that many of our students have suffered over the past year. Here are some of the examples of activities I will be incorporating into my choral rehearsals.

**Chorus Get-to-Know-You Grid**

There are so many ways to get the students connecting again. I’ve created a “Chorus Get-to-Know-You Grid” for our first day in the fall. (Please see example on next page.) The object is to get the students moving and give them the opportunity to communicate with each other. If you are still in a scenario where you are unable to allow your students to move in the fall, feel free to modify this so that each student has an opportunity to pick one square in which their name could be placed and share that with the class. Not only will this give your students an opportunity to find a connection, but it will help you as the teacher to identify items where YOU can connect with your students.

**Allow for “Talk Time”**

To allow for more time to get to know each other on a personal level, I am building a short opportunity during warmup time to reflect on a thought/question of the day with a think/pair/share activity. Students will need to rotate who they work with daily until they have interacted with the whole class and will be given a checklist to ensure that they do so. These can be musical ideas, questions, poem interpretations, inspirational quotes, thoughts of the day, etc. Students will be given the question, have one minute to think of a response, then have one minute each to share it with a partner. This will give students time to build deeper social relationships with other members of choir.

**Pass the Beat Around the Room**

This is one of my FAVORITE GEMS to help the students work together and keep the beat! This can be done with many grade levels (I used to use this with second grade without the stamp) but my high-schoolers have always loved it. Standing in a circle, each student says one beat from the phrase “Pass the beat around the room (rest)” in steady beat. If they happen to be the rest at the end of the phrase, students sit down, but continue playing the game in their head (so those words end up being silent.) Once students are comfortable with the game, the word “beat” is replaced by a stamp.

**A - My Name Is . . .**

Students sing the three phrases on a specific interval given by the teacher using the first letter of their name. They could use Do-Re, Do-Mi, Mi-So, etc., in order to work on tuning.

Example: “A my name is Ally, I come from Alabama, and I like Apples.”
Hand Sign Canon Partnerships

I will be reinforcing partner hand-sign groups to help work on intonation as well as help less-experienced members of my choir practice hand signs. Students will break into pairs and sing the pitch from their partner’s hand, showing hand signs with each other to make an interval. As the students take turns, the interval will change and the students have to listen to each other to find the accurate tone. They can not only work on this with different partners, but also with a section leader in front of the group to help work on pitch accuracy.

Notation Work in a Fun Way

During the pandemic, SmartMusic online software became a way for me to assess sight reading skills and have the data required to grade the students. Now that we will be back in person I have vowed to my students that they won’t see SmartMusic at all this year! So how will I assess sight reading skills? With fun activities!

Competition

Friendly competition can be a fun way to teach students to support each other. If you have a smartboard, students can use musictheory.net as a game. Students can make two lines (teams), and compete to determine which line or space the notes are on. The one who answers accurately gets a point for their team. This can also be done for clef exercises as well as key signatures.

Popsicle Sticks and Other Manipulatives

Even high schoolers love popsicle sticks! Students can write rhythms on the ground and then add ostinatos and other rhythmic elements as they read what they created. Students can be required to incorporate rhythmic elements that are in their octavos, therefore helping them to read the items before they even see it in their scores. Pipe cleaners also work well for this purpose.

Whiteboards

I have purchased enough whiteboards from a dollar store for each student to have one. I will be using these during class to help students who are still hesitant to share their answers in a larger group. I can have them quickly create dictations and even use them for basic polls and informal assessments in class.

I hope that this transition will take less time than I plan for, but I will be prepared with an overabundance of social activities and opportunities to build our students back up. If we set them up for success and provide clear expectations for our students, they will be able to overcome this trying year. Scaffolding and embedding opportunities for social interaction within my curriculum will help move students from a year of stress to a year of success! •

Carol Forward, MSEd, CAGS, is the choral and general music educator for East Longmeadow (MA) High School and has taught all levels from pre-school to graduate level throughout her career. She is also the co-director of the Kodály Music Institute in Boston. Carol has served on the MMEA board in several capacities, and is currently the National Secretary of the Organization of American Kodály Educators. Mrs. Forward is also a graduate student at the University of Southern Mississippi earning her doctorate in educational administration.
Universal Design for Pandemic Learning in Higher Education

By Rhoda Bernard, Ed.D., Managing Director, Berklee Institute for Arts Education and Special Needs, Berklee College of Music

As many of us have returned to on-campus teaching, it is a good time to look back at the ways that the pandemic has affected our teaching. Personally, I find Universal Design for Learning to be a particularly helpful framework for thinking about how the pandemic has forced us in higher education to think differently, work differently, and teach differently.

Universal Design for Learning is a set of principles that are rooted in the concept of Universal Design in architecture. According to Universal Design in architecture, all physical spaces must be accessible for all people. In practical terms, this means that there must be ramps and/or elevators in addition to stairs, wide doorways that can accommodate wheelchairs, and accessible bathroom stalls, for just a few examples.

Universal Design for Learning was developed by David Rose in the 1980s, as a direct application of the concept of Universal Design to education. The principles of Universal Design for Learning, which are grounded in extensive research, have been created to ensure the accessibility of all educational activities and materials for all students. Put slightly differently, according to Universal Design for Learning, all educational experiences must be accessible for all learners.

A few key ideas undergird Universal Design for Learning. First, learner variability is not the exception; rather, it is the rule. Universal Design for Learning is based in the understanding that we all learn differently—all of us, whether or not there has been a diagnosis of any kind. Second, the differences in the ways that we all learn are to be celebrated and nurtured. For Universal Design for Learning, effective education has to do with reaching a wide range of learners. It is not about a teacher trying to change how a student learns; rather, it is about a teacher understanding how the student learns and designing curriculum, materials, activities, and experiences so that the student can learn effectively. Third, Universal Design for Learning seeks to minimize barriers between students and the materials, experiences, and processes of education. A big part of employing Universal Design for Learning has to do with the teacher anticipating the barriers that students may face, and designing ways to help the students to break through those barriers.

The pandemic has certainly introduced barriers for all of us in higher education. Suddenly we were not able to be in the same physical spaces as our students. We were conducting our teaching over various forms of technology, all of which have limitations—such as latency affecting musical performances, challenges with audio and video, internet bandwidth and access issues, and much more. Our students who were to be student teaching in the field were suddenly confronted with the barrier of not being able to go to their schools in person. Instead, they assisted their cooperating teachers and taught their mini lessons over video conference. Simply put, they engaged in their practicum placements in entirely new ways that did not look or feel anything like what they had learned in their music education coursework.

The three principles of Universal Design for Learning have shed some light on ways that I have been able to work through the barriers of the pandemic. The first principle, Multiple Means of Engagement, refers to educators providing a wide range of ways to get students interested and involved in the materials and activities of our classes. For me, the use of various forms of media has been extremely helpful in engaging my undergraduate students. Some examples of media that I have provided include TED talks, podcast episodes, radio broadcasts, infographics, and PowerPoint presentations. I have noticed that my students have been extremely involved and engaged in our work together this year, and I believe that this is due, at least in part, to the fact that they have been able to interact with multiple forms of media.

Multiple Means of Representation is the second principle of Universal Design for Learning, and this principle has to do with educators providing information using a wide range of symbol systems and formats. In my experience, being required to think about the asynchronous and synchronous realms of teaching has brought this principle to the fore during the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, all of my teaching took place synchronously in seminars. Suddenly, I was forced to create asynchronous representations of information and materials, including handouts, short videos, slide shows, and more. In addition, I determined which aspects of my teaching would be most effective provided asynchronously and which would be most effective executed synchronously. Adding the asynchronous dimension to my teaching this year has meant that representation has taken on an entirely new life for me. It has caused me to rethink my pre-pandemic practices and consider more asynchronous possibilities for the future.

The third and final principle of Universal Design for Learning is Multiple Means of Action and Expression. Multiple Means of Action and Expression means that educa-
Many music educators may assume they are facilitating creativity and expression in their classes. This is especially true in general music settings, where standards relating to creating, responding, and connecting can usually be more balanced with standards relating to performance than in ensemble settings (Massachusetts DESE, 2019). Advocates proclaim music education to offer expressive and creative outlets that students cannot access elsewhere in school. But unless educators specifically aim to facilitate expression and creativity without ulterior aesthetic goals, such experiences may be shallow and inconsequential. This results in music lessons that are content-centered rather than person-centered; ultimately, a mis-education that separates students from their natural musical inclinations and inhibits their abilities to make music for self-care and self-expression.

Intermodal arts processes can empower students towards individual expression and creativity. Therapists have used such expressive and creative practices to help patients access memories, deep feelings, and connections in order to release, reinterpret, and begin to heal from trauma (Appalachian Expressive Arts Collective, 2003; Carey, 2009; Darley & Heath, 2008; Rogers, 1993). While educators are not tasked with nor qualified to undertake such responsibilities, this can be important to consider in schooling contexts where there are high rates of childhood trauma. And now, in a time when everybody has been living through a pandemic for over a year, this is important for all educators to consider. What might be possible if we provide our students with tools to access and express deep, complex thoughts? How might our educational environments benefit from collective access, release, and transformation?

Deeply held and complex thoughts or emotions can be accessed when musicking is situated amongst movement or dance, dramatic action, and journaling mechanisms such as art, mark making, poetry, or creative writing. What may initially seem insignificant can be realized to be precious and substantial when translated from musicking to another form of art making, or vice versa. Traversing through various modalities of art making can reveal entire worlds we may not have been attuned to before, because each art form requires a different method of delivering thoughts into tangible works that exist in the physical world. Our conscious and subconscious thinking is revealed through embodied, artistic actions, and our understanding is deepened as we analyze or translate works of art into other art forms. This is when personal, individual learning and growth takes place. This is when students can learn about each other by listening to and watching each other’s performances, viewing each other’s art, and so on. The implications for social-emotional learning connections are infinite, which is exactly what is needed as we experience educational and life shifts caused by the pandemic.

**Fitting into a lesson**

How can intermodal arts processes take place in general music? Most teachers use familiar routines or lesson flows to help students stay engaged and know what is expected throughout the lesson. Intermodal arts processes can fit into most traditional lesson formats, which—very simply put—include an opening, a practice or working time, and a closing. Experiences can vary, whether to be short and include only two different art forms or be long and include many. Each mode of art making can last for as short
or long as you and your students need it to. For example, having many modes, each lasting only a few minutes, might be most developmentally appropriate for kindergarteners. For older students, there might be fewer modes, but with longer periods of time spent in each. And as experience with intermodal processes is gained with their teacher, the experience for older students can become more independent and self-directed.

While providing a meaningful approach for individual expression and creativity, intermodal processes can also make interesting and varied group experiences. A fun concept to consider in lesson planning is how groups or stations can co-construct performances or experiences that incorporate multiple artistic modes at once. For example, perhaps there can be a station of drummers providing music for dance and movement, while at another station, the dance is being visually expressed through painting, all simultaneously. Groups and individuals can also benefit from varied leadership through echoing and/or mirroring a student rather than the educator. This provides a platform for individual expression, creativity, and performance, while also giving new ideas to the whole class, or an opportunity to participate as a group member, rather than creating as an individual or serving as a leader. Students should have time to practice in all such roles.

The role(s) of music
The role of music in intermodal arts processes can vary depending on the goals of the lesson. Being music educators, many of us will naturally accentuate how music is used in the process, in comparison to an art teacher, for example. Music may be included in various ways (i.e., periods of critical listening and composition) while other art forms are singularly used in the process (i.e., one instance of visual mark making). Movement is naturally a part of music and can serve as an integrated form of art making or performance. The placement of musicking within the intermodal process can also impact the learning experience, and to witness the transformation of musicking can be powerful. An example would be starting an experience with vocal improvisation and movement, transitioning to body percussion improvisation, then to art making, then to dramatic action, and then returning to the vocal improvisation in closing. Another way to deepen a musical experience throughout the process is to combine music with multiple art forms, such as first moving to a musical selection and then writing reflective poetry in response to the movement while listening to the same music.

Beyond error detection and correction
Most important about intermodal arts processes is that they inhibit the aesthetic, content-centered instinct of educators to refine musical creations and performances, in favor of honoring authentic student expression and creativity. There is inherent value in aesthetics, critical thinking, and polishing work. But what does it communicate to our students when all their teachers do is find fault, replace, or otherwise edit what they have made? There is also inherent value in raw creativity, the flow of an artistic process, and what students have to say. Translation to other art forms—rather than mere refinement of work—deepens the understanding of what students have made and can lead individuals to develop self-awareness and self-teaching skills.

Translation and meaning
The benefits and fun of intermodal arts processes come from connections and translations. Designing a lesson flow with multiple art-making periods requires more than a mere assortment of artistic modes randomly strung together. The role of the educator in facilitating intermodal processes is to help students find or articulate meaning in what they have made or what they have done, and then to guide them in deepening their understanding and discovery through related but varied artistic methods. Each lesson should have goals and intentions, and musical learning can still be facilitated or assessed through intermodal processes. But how lessons unfold through intermodal processes should logically flow from one experience to the next, constructing around what students have previously made, done, performed, or exhibited. Some questions that can guide students in imaginatively traversing artistic experiences may include:

- This character I’m performing, how would they dance?
- What would it sound like if my movement extended through my voice?
- What direction is my voice singing in? What would it look like visually?
- What words do I associate with what I’ve just drummed?

These questions are meant to give some ideas for artistic connections—the modalities each question addressed could easily be replaced as needed.

Towards person-centered music education
My intention with this article was to provide a rationale for intermodal arts processes in general music settings, along with some ideas for how educators may start to use them in lessons. (For many more ideas, please see the reference list included below.) While expressive and creative arts practices have primarily served therapeutic purposes, they have the potential to radically transform music education. How students engage and connect with
music, how students develop musical and non-musical skills and knowledge, and why schools include music in curricula can be expanded and recentered from content to people through such methods. Perhaps with person-centered approaches that honor authenticity, expressivity, and creativity, more students will find connections to and through music that will lead to lifelong music making, music for self-care, and music for self-expression.

For more from Nicholas Quigley on this topic, please see his MMEA presentation on video:

Intermodal Arts Practices for Expression and Creativity in General Music

REFERENCES


Nicholas Patrick Quigley (he/him) teaches elementary music in Fall River, Massachusetts. His pedagogy promotes expressivity and creativity, while highlighting the intersecting issues of social injustice and climate change. This is enacted through praxial curricula integrating music within multimodal arts processes, centering creators from marginalized groups, and negotiating the balance of anthropocentric and eco-centric philosophies. More online at nicholaspquigley.com.

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Three Things…
Instrumental Reflections on 2020–2021

By Adam Gruschow, Scituate Public Schools

We are all taking a sigh of relief that a year like no other has finally come to an end. While this year has been something we never wish to experience again, hopefully it has allowed us time to notice those things we took for granted and those that have been hiding beneath the surface of “normal.” Many of us are in the midst of a critical moment for our bands and orchestras: a liminal space between what was once normal, what the pandemic changed, and how we shape the future. To collectively reflect on this moment, educators from across the state were asked about three of the most impactful things they learned this year—about their students, about themselves as teachers, and about our profession and music itself.

Suzanne Dasilva
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC/BAND TEACHER 4–8, SCITUATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

What is the most impactful thing you learned…
…about your students? I was most surprised to learn how completely open to new ideas they are. I was surprised at how willing they were to try new things and at their ability to be able to “go with the flow” when things were not going as planned. As for the younger grades, I was surprised at their level of emotional sophistication, and by that I mean (among other things) their constant display of humor, patience, and ability to persevere.

…about yourself as a teacher? I learned that there are many ways to do what I love—and that this is truly a labor of love. I have always known, but now more than ever I realize the importance of connection and relationships. I have learned to simplify, and in doing so, feel that I have become a better teacher. I have learned to prioritize and appreciate the process much more than the “product.” I’ve learned that looking at the big picture will always be more important to me than the details of any given moment.

…about our profession/music? I’ve learned that as “specialists” we are often taken for granted, but that in times of need, the arts will find a way to thrive because they are necessary. I have enjoyed witnessing the creativity of artists as well as the creativity of people who do not consider themselves to be “artists.” Music is not on the periphery of life, as many might assume—it is a central part of what makes us human. I feel proud of myself and others in my profession for recognizing this and in choosing to make it our life’s work. I realize that I have taken the power of music for granted because it has always been such a major part of my life. When I reflect back, I feel very lucky to be able to do what I do every day.

Andrew Shaw
BAND DIRECTOR, PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

What is the most impactful thing you learned…
…about your students? This year I realized very quickly that as much as the students appreciate the art of learning and making music, it’s the social aspect of the concert band program that provides one of the biggest returns for the students. Music is important and relationships are too.

…about yourself as a teacher? This year I have learned that although we have spent thousands of dollars on education, nothing could have prepared educators for what this year would look like. Although my time and experience as a music educator is important, it is my ability to connect with the students that makes me successful.

…about our profession/music? Music education is critical in providing students a break from the state of the world. Aside from theory and composers, we had thoughtful conversations about the pandemic, the election, and what the next few years will look like for us. Students feel empowered and comfortable in our learning spaces. That empowerment goes beyond singing and playing; it extends to their concerns, their hopes, and their views of the world.
Emily Plunkett
ELEMENTARY STRING ENSEMBLE DIRECTOR
MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

What is the most impactful thing you learned...

...about your students? I’ve learned how important it is to build in some down time/team building/check-ins into lessons. Especially for after-school lessons/rehearsals, not many children want to log onto Google Meet after a long day of remote school!

...about yourself as a teacher? I’ve learned my limits, and self-care also includes knowing your limits.

...about our profession/music? Music will always find a way!

Paul Tomashefsky
GRADE 5 BAND / JAZZ BAND
WESTBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

What is the most impactful thing you learned...

...about your students? I learned that students are and can be resilient when confronted with a HUGE challenge.

...about yourself as a teacher? Creativity and thoughtful, caring planning wins every time!

...about our profession/music? Music will always find a way!

Matt Harden
DIRECTOR OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC/HIGH SCHOOL, HANOVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

What is the most impactful thing you learned...

...about your students? Throughout the course of this often challenging year, the most profound lessons learned from my students is that they crave the community that our music family provides. We learned together that community takes many forms, and through a tremendous effort we faced adversity together and emerged stronger. I am in awe of the resilience and dedication of our music students, whether participating in daily rehearsals or challenging themselves in virtual ensembles and festivals.

...about yourself as a teacher? I have learned to lean into the awkward and unknown, especially where technology is involved. I have truly enjoyed finding new ways to create music with my students and discovering otherwise hidden talents they possess. On a more personal level, I have learned to give myself grace and balance work with embracing life. It has never been more important to recharge our emotional, intellectual, and physical batteries.

...about our profession/music? I believe the community of music educators is unlike any other—we give selflessly to each other and our students and when we face our darkest moments, we are there for each other. I can think of many occasions where, throughout the course of the pandemic, I was inspired by colleagues over a Zoom call or through a kind e-mail or social media post. In so many ways, the music family has grown closer as a result of our distance. We have made exposing our students to the wonderful composers and performers in our field more possible than ever before. Most importantly, music has been the glue that has held many of us together. Learning new instruments, educating myself on music of underrepresented cultures and peoples, or simply listening with my heart and mind open has made all the difference to me. I simply wouldn’t have survived without the healing power of music.

Allison Lacasse
BAND DIRECTOR, BELMONT HIGH SCHOOL
BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

What is the most impactful thing you learned...

...about your students? My students are passionate, resilient, and motivated to create together more than they ever were before. They thrive when they are making music together. They are artists living for the moment and are consciously not taking anything of what we do for granted. This was a reset that will impact our band culture immediately and for the life of the program.

...about yourself as a teacher? I learned that I don’t need concerts to mark big moments throughout the year. The prize is the process, NOT the product. This year, I took tons of extra time to listen to great music with my students, taught them to conduct, encouraged them to take on secondary instruments, and connected with students through silly daily attendance questions. Those moments are the ones that matter the most and it’s worth investing time in it, even when rehearsals already feel short.

...about our profession/music? The arts and arts education prevailed throughout this grand pause. Music students are the ones to look to in the absence of typical cultural events; their drive and passion is there, and it is absolutely our job as directors to pave many paths for them to create in even the most nontraditional of ways. Applause is wonderful, but the most important audience we will ever have is the group facing the podium every day.
Silent No More: Vietnamese American Adoptee Speaks

By Dr. Kính Tiên Vũ, Boston University

Dr. Kính Tiên Vũ’s general music contribution is in a different format from most MMEJ articles. In this script, Kính presents an emotionally evocative and intellectually stimulating short play that connects personal stories, research, and musical excerpts to illustrate examples of racism that Asian Americans face in society at large, in school, and in music education. For me, reading this play was an embodied experience engaging my mind, heart, and soul. I visualized the scenes and imagined the characters’ emotive performances. Like an engrossing novel, the characters, stories, and Kính’s call to resist racism and adopt critical and anti-racist stances in our classrooms have stayed with me long after finishing the article. —Allyn Phelps, General Music Editor

Characters

SAM: Main character in Amputees, a play by Quentin Nguyễn-Duy (2019).

Kính: A teacher educator employed at Boston University. Kính is a Vietnamese American who was airlifted from Vietnam and adopted in Pennsylvania. When Kính speaks, he is talking aloud.

NARRATOR: This voice is sometimes Kính’s inner voice, a sort of interlocutor between his words and thoughts. Sometimes, the narrator speaks directly to the audience as if Kính were absent.

Setting

An empty stage. The only source of light is a bank of white spotlights.

ACT I

Scene 1: Boston University School of Theatre “Fringe Festival,” 2019

Lights up.

Sam’s living room.

SAM

I got taught my ancestral roots in fifth grade by a class seminar on how to use chopsticks. We made sounds like bing-bong and ching-chong, holding them between our gums like walruses (Nguyễn-Duy, 2019, p. 3).

Lights cut.

Scene 2: Somewhere Pennsylvania Elementary School, 1984

Lights up.

A noisy playground.

Kính

I got taught my ancestral roots in fourth grade when a mean boy placed his fingers alongside his eyes, raised the corners into slants, and called me a chink.

Lights cut.

Scene 3: Downtown Minneapolis, 2011

Lights up.

A street called Nicollete Mall.

Kính

I got taught my ancestral roots in graduate school when four Vikings fans in downtown Minneapolis called out various racial slurs in a faux-Chinese accent.

Lights cut.

Scene 4: Boston University, 2021

Lights up.

An empty stage.

Kính

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me: Wrong. Seriously wrong. Bing-bong, ching-chong, gook, chink, Jap, and Chinaman are easy to say. These words drip softly off the tongue but fall hard on their victims.

Lights flicker out.

Silence.
ACT II

Scene 1: A rehearsal
Lights up.

KÍNH
I am silent too often. I don’t speak up when I see injustice. I bury my head in the score and hope that Kelly will be okay: Just play your trumpet, kid. It’ll be fine.

NARRATOR
Say something, damn it! Just say something meaningful. You’re supposed to be the responsible adult.

KÍNH
Hey there. It was an F-sharp in 1942 and it’s an F-sharp today. It is not the place of a 15-year-old to question the composer. Second finger!

NARRATOR
No, don’t say that. You know that Kelly has been really down lately, for months actually, bullied most likely. Didn’t you want to say something more kind: “How are you feeling today?” or “Are you okay today?” But you don’t actually care. That’s why you continuously look down at the music. You’re afraid to show emotions. Just teach music. It’s about the music.

Lights cut.

Scene 2: Kính’s office
Lights up.

NARRATOR
Why are you silent when you should speak and why do you speak when silence would be more powerful than words?

KÍNH
I’m afraid. Afraid that my students will see through me. I feign caring sometimes.

NARRATOR
They see you whether you speak up or whether you remain silent.

KÍNH
Yes. I know. Don’t remind me.

NARRATOR
Just come clean and tell them that losing your parents, losing your country, losing your name, losing your Việt voice, and losing your Asian-ness sucks.

KÍNH
They won’t understand, and music class isn’t the place for that garbage.

NARRATOR
Garbage? Oh, now your life story is garbage. Wallowing in self-pity is weak. Okay, not weak, wallow a little if it helps. But you never know who will be affected by your story or who you will encourage to tell their story unless you share your own. Students look up to you more than you know. Yes, the little ones, the high school ones, the college ones, and the adult ones. All those students look at you as a mentor and maybe even a friend.

KÍNH
Not my job. Music teaching is my job.

NARRATOR
Survey says?

Gameshow buzzer sounds.

Lights cut.

Scene 3: Graduate seminar
Lights at half.

Students and professor gathered in a circle.

KÍNH
This short dramatization is inspired by Boston University School of Theatre alumnus Quentin Nguyễn-Duy, whose play Amputees is a semifiictionalized account of his experience growing up with a Vietnamese refugee father and a white mother in Ohio. Sam, the main character and son of said refugee father, is trying to answer a prompt on his college grant application that asked about “background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful I believe my application would be incomplete without it” (Nguyễn-Duy, 2021, p. 83).

My play is under construction much like my life. I waited a long time to share pieces of my story with students, because I was afraid of appearing weak in the context of music education (especially marching band). Abandonment and a subsequent adoption added layers of complexity to my teaching life because I figured that people would abandon me if they really knew what was going on inside me. I had an idea that I was not really Asian, just a white guy with a white guy name and privilege to go with it (see Westerman, 2021). If students realized my confidence was just a façade (and some did), I imagined that my music teaching, a very expensive education, and all my friends would become null and void.

Lights to full.

KÍNH
I wonder, however, if my insecurities which have partially caused the silence are actually strengths. Aren’t our stories gifts that we can share with others.
as part of a process of becoming more real, more human alongside our music students?

**NARRATOR**

Would you have felt empowered as a young musician if your teachers had been more forthcoming with their stories?

**KÍNH**

I don’t know if that would have helped back then. I wasn’t ready to question my identity; I wanted to be a band director. Today, however, I do see a connection between identity and career. My college students have begun to share self-stories after I tell some of my tales with them in the context of course syllabi or outside class.

**NARRATOR**

Will that make them better music teachers?

**KÍNH**

Anything that deepens their experiences of life will inform their music-making and music teaching. As I argue in my recent book called *My Body Was Left on the Street: Music Education and Displacement* (Vũ & de Quadros, 2020), music-making is not baggage-free. We can bring our bags full of joy and sadness into the room so they can inform our artistry. I vividly remember a wind ensemble rehearsal of H. Robert Reynolds’s (2003) transcription of *O Magnum Mysterium* (Lauridsen, 1995) conducted by my graduate school professor who had just returned from his father’s funeral. There wasn’t a dry eye among the musicians at the song’s final cadence; this is among the most powerful musical moments of my life. I’m so glad that my professor brought his “bags”—his whole self—into the room. During that rehearsal, he showed the band what it means to be human, to love one another fully.

**NARRATOR**

So, what you are saying is that stories are powerful, right?

**KÍNH**

Yes. Stories and songs both. Maybe they’re the same thing. Whether told in words, or songs, or songs without words, we educators can break the silence, and in turn, model how our lived and living experiences are needed aspects within the context of music teaching and learning activities. I think of these lyrics by Billy Joel (1990) often: “But if my silence made you leave, then that would be my worst mistake.” My silence has been centered around (a) who I am as a Vietnamese American adoptee and (b) how my stories and songs might matter to my students.

**NARRATOR**

You remind me of an interview with PopAsia host Andy Trieu. He said, “For many Asian-born Australians, Vietnamese Australians included, the feeling of estrangement and a need to shed their otherness to fit-in is a common story. Learning to embrace one’s heritage is a personal journey, and for some, music can act as their guiding compass” (Truong, Tran, & Ford, 2021).

**KÍNH**

Andy is definitely onto something important where Asian identity is concerned. If music teachers can help people tell parts of their stories, then let us break the silence and make more music. Our music-making would be incomplete without our stories, without the stuff that makes us human. Lights cut.

**Epilogue: Boston University, 2021**

Lights up.

A place filled with purpose, energy, joy, and love.

**KÍNH**

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me: Still wrong. Still seriously wrong. Bing-bong, ching-chong, gook, chink, Jap, and Chinaman are still easy to say. But I will not play the part of victim any longer.

Lights grow brighter.

Silent no more.

**REFERENCES**


Kính T. Vũ is an assistant professor of music at Boston University. His main research area is about displacement, with a focus on issues that affect Asians and Asian Americans who are somehow dislocated (e.g., adoption), but experience “home” in their music-making communities on US soil. Kính can be contacted by visiting https://www.KÍNHvu.com. (photo credit: Jacob Chang-Rascle, 2020)
Growing Music in MASS is here and ready to help teachers and schools struggling with pandemic-related issues for the 2021–2022 school year. Recently, we have received several inquiries about the range and scope of our block grant programs, and we look forward to receiving those applications and more later this spring.

For this school year, a Future Symphony Hall Scholars grant was given to a Greater Boston community instrumental program to develop and fund online lessons at the high school and middle school levels. In the absence in many schools of in-person instruction or the use of hybrid instructional models, it is vital that the valuable work of musical teaching and learning goes on. Growing Music in MASS funded a Classroom Innovations proposal in Western Massachusetts, allowing the school to purchase classroom instruments that could be kept at home for online learning. This teacher is exploring and refining methods for measuring and evaluating student growth in compliance with the state curriculum frameworks and the school district’s requirements.

While this year will probably not see Symphony Hall Scholarships, that initiative will return in 2022, conditions permitting. On our website, growingmusicinmass.org, you will find information about each of our giving initiatives and block grant programs, the Future Symphony Hall Scholars and Classroom Innovations projects. We encourage teachers to apply, even if you’re not entirely sure about what types of instruction you’ll be able to offer for next year. Further, if member teachers have ideas for grant programs that may not fit exactly into these categories, please write to us and let us know your thoughts. We’re always open to new ideas.

Here again are the block grant descriptions in a nutshell:

**Future Symphony Hall Scholars**, funding grants to schools that are specifically designed for instrumental and vocal/choral performance skill enhancement, and typically fall into these categories:

- Private, semiprivate, or small group lessons and targeted instruction
- Master classes by visiting professional musicians, conductors, or musical mentors
- Sponsoring or attending performances and performance-related events
- Financial support for students participating in advanced college, conservatory, or music school programs
- Instructional and support materials

**Classroom Innovations** grants are designed to allow member teachers to explore a range of strategies and methods of musical instruction and evaluation. Falling into but not limited to these categories, grants will be available at all levels of music education from preschool to college.

- Composition-based or improvisation-based instruction
- New or expanded technology-based programs of instruction
- Student learning centers and individualized instructional programs
- Programs designed for special learners (as distinct from modifications or adaptations of regular lesson planning)
- Developing methods, tools, and strategies that measure student growth and achievement
- Developing online and distance instructional models that provide virtual teaching and learning
- Curriculum integration

Our website provides contact e-mail that teachers may access should they have any questions. The address is gmmchair@gmail.com. The GMM Committee typically accepts applications in the spring and reviews them over the summer.

As always, we welcome member ideas, along with contacts or referrals for possible donors and donations—corporate, charitable, or individual—so please pass our program information on to them, or send their contact information to us so that we can extend an invitation. Lists of donors are updated regularly on the website and in MMEA publications.

—Tom Walters,
GMM Committee Chair
MASSACHUSETTS MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

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Making Ourselves Make Time for Making Music

By Gareth Dylan Smith, Assistant Professor of Music, Music Education, Boston University

The pandemic has been tough on musicians and music teachers in all kinds of ways—emotionally, financially, and existentially. Politicians and the media have tended to focus primarily on Americans’ physical health and the economy; rightly so, since without basic resources to sustain ourselves, nothing in the higher tiers of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs pyramid is attainable. But my social media feeds, alongside conversations with colleagues and friends, reveal that while music is what puts bread on our tables, that's not the main reason we all do it. Making music is what makes us who we are; it’s how we connect with one another and with our students. Below is a short reflection on getting some music back into this flagging musician. I hope it resonates. Thank you for reading.

The loudest part of my current weekly routine is the two-hour band practice I have with Black Light Bastards (new) new wave band on Thursday nights. We formed after one of them contacted me through my website, introducing themselves as middle-aged punk rockers who’d moved out to the 'burbs after twenty-five years of playing in bands in the city. They needed a drummer to realize some new material; would I like to get together and jam? We immediately gelled in the rehearsal room, bonding over a shared desire to rock out. We’re a trio comprising vocals, bass guitar, and drums, with keys and SFX on backing tracks stored in my iPad. My small acoustic drum kit is bolstered by additional massive, layered kick and snare sounds supplied by my sample module, and Yoav’s Music Man Sterling bass guitar growls and barks through a gnarly fuzz pedal. The abrasive-melodic keys on the tracks fill out our sound and Ingrid’s voice floats and weaves and belts by turns. The songs are haunting, moody, raucous, energetic, and driving. I love being the beating heart of it all. If I stop, the moment and the momentum disintegrate. When I keep us going, we soar on a magic carpet up and out of the room to another plane for three or four minutes at a time.

After playing together for nearly four months now, Black Light Bastards can run through our set, top to bottom, with no major hiccups. Sometimes I forget what groove to play at the start of a song, and I still might hesitate ahead of the interlude that comes before “Outrageous,” where I have to trigger space sounds downloaded from NASA and other sound effects to give the band a breather before we take it home. I love the focus I find playing drums in a rock band. It’s there to a lesser extent in other contexts like jazz combos and pit bands, but the physicality, the bigness, and, yes, the loudness of being in a rock band are intensely thrilling; exhilarating. People often say things to me like, “Oh, it must great to take all your frustrations out on the drums!” Alas, it is not. Of the handful of occasions I have played drums angrily in the thirty-three years since I started, all have been roundly unfulfilling, even disappointing. Drumming with my full cognitive, emotional, and physical presence allows me to channel my full being into the now—the immersion is what’s so great about it. Paradoxically, it’s an escape to being fully present.

Perhaps it seems silly or even reeks of detached social privilege to say I “need” to rock out once a week, but I do. I have to...
do it. It's a huge part of what makes me, me, and I feel as de-centered and unhinged when I don't have this sustenance as I do when I'm away from family, deprived of sleep, or don't eat well.

I get so caught up in the demands of work and home life that I don't find much time in my adult life for rocking out. But I yearn for it. When I first arrived in the United States a little over three years ago, my lack of permanent abode kept me out of a regular band, and then the pandemic stripped of me rock and roll for nine more months. But I'm back! When Black Light Bastards knock out the first song in our rehearsal, I feel invigorated and fully alive! That is a feeling everyone should have. It's why music education is important to me—I want everyone to have the chance to experience this transcendence. Musicians know from our own lives, as well as from writers like June Boyce-Tillman, Oliver Sacks, David Orr, Richard Shusterman, and Ellen Dissanayake that the rich, embodied, spiritual, life-giving experience of making art is crucial to our thriving as humans. It is vital we make ourselves make time for making music. •

Gareth Dylan Smith
is Assistant Professor of Music, Music Education at Boston University, a board member of the International Society for Music Education, a founding editor of the Journal of Popular Music Education, and a drummer. Gareth’s research interests include popular music, music learning, drum kit performance, distributed telematic performance, punk pedagogies, and eudaimonia. He is excited to get to work every day with future music teachers in Massachusetts and beyond.

I hope that you are looking forward to the summer and your end of the year performances have just about finished. I trust that you will be getting some vacation time and recharging your battery for next year. I am happy to report that MAJE ran an extremely successful Feedback Festival this year with almost twenty different jazz ensembles. Thank you to our Chief Adjudicator Paul Alberta for getting three quality judges to give feedback to the ensembles. The judges this year were Jeff Holmes, Terry White, and Lee Abe. If you have any feedback on how the festival went, please feel free to reach out to me. I know that it was a great experience for my students and myself. Thank you to Simon Harding, who took care of all of the technical aspects of the festival.

• Congratulations to the two Massachusetts jazz bands who were selected as finalists for the Virtual Essentially Ellington Festival this year: Newton South High School directed by Lisa Linde and Foxboro High School directed by Aaron Bush. It is great to see two groups from Massachusetts selected this year. Congratulations again to the directors and students for all of their hard work. Make sure that you check out the Essentially Ellington Festival on June 4 & 5. Good luck to both groups.

• Some sad news is that Sammy Nestico, trombonist, composer, and arranger has recently passed. Nestico was a true giant in the world of music, and jazz education in particular. A veteran of the Charlie Barnet, Tommy Dorsey, Woody Herman, and Gene Krupa orchestras, Sammy made his most enduring contribution to big band jazz during his seventeen years as an arranger for the Count Basie Orchestra. He was also a first-call arranger for vocalists, working with the likes of Sarah Vaughan, Frank Sinatra, Barbara Streisand, and Toni Tennille. After leaving the military in 1968 Nestico went to Hollywood to write for the Basie Band. The album Basie Straight Ahead, the band’s first recording of Nestico’s arrangements, became a classic and was the first of ten albums together. His influence on jazz education will truly be missed.

• If you have any billing questions please send them to our treasurer, Mr David Kaminski from Marshfield Public Schools. His e-mail is dkaminski@mpsd.org. Please let your purchasing agent know about the change.

Best wishes to everyone for a great year,
—Joseph P. Mulligan, MAJE President

2021–2022 Festival Schedule Announcement:

Information about Junior and Senior District Jazz Festivals, including online registration forms, registration fees, program information, MVP Award information, adjudicator commentary, and performance guidelines can all be found online at: www.MAJAZZED.org. The season will be very similar to this year. We are currently working on finalizing the dates and sites for next year as I write this letter. They will be complete on the website as soon as possible.
In *The Bridge on the Drina*, Ivo Andric, a beloved Yugoslav author and a Nobel Prize laureate, depicts the life of people in a small Bosnian village by the Drina River from the late sixteenth century to the beginning of World War I—an immensely rich historical period that covers the expansion of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. In 1566, a Grand Vizier by the name of Mehmed Pasha Sokollu orders the construction of a bridge at the precise spot of the river where a very young boy he was forcibly taken from his Serbian family and converted to Islam. The bridge, built not only as an expression of the eternal human struggle to connect but also as a means of facilitating conquest, becomes a symbol with dualistic meaning. A lot can be said about dualism, a theory that has haunted Western thinking for ages. Put briefly, dualism can be seen as a consequence of our fear of contradiction. We feel under pressure to choose one side or the other, therefore reducing our immensely complex inner and outer lives to something that is one-dimensional and linear. As we seek to make sense of the current pandemic, we have comfortably resorted to Western thought patterns. Indeed, the virus has exploited deep and fundamental aspects of our common humanity: our desire to touch and hug each other, to befriend each other and spend time in groups (Christakis, 2020). The virus gives rise to feelings of grief and fear, but it also gives rise to feelings of hope, optimism, and love.

**Technology and education**

We can think in similar terms about technology and the role it plays in today's society. As the COVID-19 pandemic took away our opportunities to engage in live, face-to-face interactions with other humans, the intimacy of human communication became subservient to the supremacy of technology. Undoubtedly, the stage for this was set in the pre-pandemic period. Technology “has been heavily structured into societies and has tremendously affected and continues to affect all aspects of peoples’ life” (Adibifar, 2016, p. 61), particularly the way we interact and communicate with one another.

On the surface, technology has greatly benefited human society, especially by revolutionizing the medical field and by playing a major role in all types of scientific research. Digital tools liberate us from constraints and help us to do our work at a faster pace and in a more efficient way. Sociologically, the plethora of smart devices has created new opportunities for frequent communication with others, lowering the likelihood of loneliness and isolation. Little is known, however, about the ways electronic forms of contact, such as cell phones, video calls, and social media, influence our social interactions and affect the way we experience these interactions (Antonucci, Ajrouch & Manalel, 2017).

Research on how technology affects social structure suggests that technology has a number of drawbacks for individuals and for the society as a whole, the most notable one being that of “mass alienation” (Adibifar, 2016). The concept of alienation, originally introduced by Karl Marx, refers to separation, being a stranger to something or someone (Meszaros, 1970). In sociological terms, alienation is the breakdown of the natural interconnection among people and their feeling of isolation, unhappiness, disconnectedness, lack of involvement with work and with others. When we feel alienated, we have less contact, less intimacy, and less trust. Personal connections feel less tangible.

Although the concept of alienation is associated with the work of Marx, other classical sociological theorists, such as Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, have also proposed that alienation leads to loss of self or relation with others (Kalekin-Fishman, 2006). This is relevant to the times we are in. In modern societies, materialistic, money-is-all attitudes decrease social relationships and increase alienation from ourselves and others (Kim, 2015). When people experience less contact, intimacy, trust, and weaker relationships with each other, they attempt to substitute those by pursuing money and material goods (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Pieters, 2013). As we allow corporate interests to invade our lives and compromise our privacy, we can see distances widen and human closeness departing in front of our eyes.

In the grip of a plague, education has undergone rapid changes as well. COVID-19 accelerated digital trends that will probably remain after the pandemic has subsided. Working conditions have changed as a lot of people started working from home. Personal interactions gave way to electronic screens. With respect to K-through-12 education, the hybrid model of remote/in-person schooling has slowly become “the new normal” and will likely continue to be a preferred option for some families in the post-pandemic period. On the plus side, there is “a real opportunity to revitalize a hundred-year-old model of K-through-12 delivery that cries for innovation” (Christakis, 2020, p. 280). How we understand teaching and learning could change drastically.
On the other hand, if we look at some of the costs of this sudden shift to remote teaching and the Internet as the main bridge to the outside world, there are areas of concern. Technological tools are a great facility, but as the Irish poet John O’Donohue puts it, the fact we have this amazing technological capability does not mean that good work will actually be done (O’Donohue, 2018). The digital realm is somewhat like Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave.” Plato’s theory about human perception and the knowledge gained through the senses is ultimately about falsely confusing the world of images with the absolute truth. Not unlike the prisoners in Plato’s cave who could only see the shadows of passers-by walking behind them, it is questionable whether the digital environment could allow one to “see” the complexity and depth of people and to bring real encounter and intimacy to the surface.

Music bridge

On the stage and in the classroom alike, personal interactions are the key to emotional and intellectual connection. In all societies, the primary function of music has always been collective and communal, to bring people together and enable a shared social experience. It has been wonderful to see all the innovative and engaging ways in which performers and educators have been reaching audiences through the use of technology. Over the last year, musicians and educators have also learned that the famous maxim, “know your audience,” rings truer than ever!

Recent research suggests that remote music sessions are better suited to events with a seated audience rather than for ones where the social experience of music is fundamentally about physical engagement with others (Vandenberg, Berghman, & Schaap, 2020). For example, you can certainly have a dance party on Zoom, but its essence would be lost.

I write as someone in two worlds: In one I am a classical pianist and in the other I am an educator and a researcher. Over the course of last year, while working from home, the boundaries of these two worlds have merged. I am equal parts “performer” and “facilitator,” teaching both synchronous and asynchronous lessons with the primary goal of connecting to my students through music and of creating a nurturing online community. This year, the lack of interpersonal communication with my students made it even more important to emphasize relationships over content. As many music educators know, this is a challenging task in the remote environment. Video conferencing platforms, such as Zoom and Google Meet, were not created for singing and doing music together—the primary way musicians connect to one another. Teaching an audience of both in-person and remote learners made it difficult to choose a music repertoire that is equally engaging and of good quality, especially because in-person students were all wearing masks and were not allowed to sing.

Asynchronous instruction, though much of the response to it in 2020 had been negative, allowed for some creative thinking. Namely, recorded lessons do not require all students to be in the same place at the same time. In-person students can watch them outside of school, allowing them to practice singing just as much as their remote peers. Asynchronous lessons may also serve as preparation for synchronous lessons, thus reserving live instruction time for more personal interaction and meaningful discussions that go into greater depth. I would even argue that with remote schooling, synchronous and asynchronous, we may expect a greater sense of shared educational vision as teachers, coaches, online experts, and homeschooling parents work in tandem to assume greater responsibility for children’s learning.

In other words, if we see the current situation as an invitation rather than an obstacle, we may avoid the trap of dualistic thinking and make a shift towards dialectic thinking—that is, viewing issues from multiple perspectives.

Final thoughts

It is difficult to say what the enduring impact of this pandemic will be, with the rapid changes it bestows upon humanity, like a wild river carrying old ideas and old values that clash and merge with the new ones. We are yet to see which will outlive which. Our reliance on technology as a bridge is a reflection of our attempt to adapt to the uncertainties of a new reality in order to survive and thrive. Christakis (2020) wisely notes that the spread of germs is the price we pay for the spread of ideas. But equally, it is through the spread of ideas and knowledge that we are going to beat the spread of germs. It is precisely by building bridges and working together, by sharing information, by recognizing we all have a shared interest in what happens to all of us. •

REFERENCES


Originally from North Macedonia, Tina Nospel received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in piano performance from Boston Conservatory, and music education from Boston University, where she is currently a doctoral candidate. Her work focuses on collaborative practices of music teachers and paraprofessionals. Tina has been teaching Kodaly music at Cambridge Public Schools since 2009.

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MASSACHUSETTS MUSIC EDUCATORS JOURNAL | 25
452 Days: Lesson Learned from the (Almost) Other Side

By Chris Martin, Music Program Leaders chair, Westborough Public Schools

On any other April 28, our high school’s spring jazz concert would’ve been like most other concerts for our district. April 28, 2021 was different, since it marked our first live performance since the pandemic started. As I introduced our performing groups and staff, I also had to pause as I looked out to our limited audience and remind them (and myself) that it had been 452 days since the last performance in our district: January 30, 2020. Our school’s musical would’ve been the last, but opening night had been scheduled for March 13, the day the world shut down.

The evening’s concert went according to plan, and the audience, both live and at home watching via our live stream, were appreciative. They gave a rousing applause both for the students and for the symbolic start of our more “typical” spring routines. 452 days has given me plenty of time to reflect, ponder, and sonder. As I conclude my four years as K–12 administrative representative on the MMEA executive board, I’ve chosen to share some of these reflections with you as we move forward as a united front into the post-COVID era.

Sondering:
Sondering is coming to the realization that everyone you meet or pass by has a life as complex and vivid as your own, filled with ambitions, conflicts, relationships, struggles, routines, etc. Sharing the common experience of a pandemic makes you realize that everyone handles things in a different way, and, on top of all their “normal” life stresses, the pandemic may not be the biggest thing happening for them personally. Realizing the spectrum of reaction to COVID has taught me empathy, flexibility, and compassion for my colleagues, students, friends, and family in a way that I didn’t realize needed to be learned.

A Four-Month Quarantine Wasn’t the Worst Thing In the World:
I may be chastised for saying it, but I hope I am not the only one who thought that the four month quarantine was a forced pause on life that may have been a blessing in disguise. Running on all cylinders, balancing work and personal life, and having a to-do list that never could get completed was starting to wear thin. All of a sudden having all of the time in the world seemed overwhelming, until I started taking care of myself, finishing that book I started three summers ago, video chatting with my niece and nephew almost every day, and finally ensuring that both my loved ones and myself were taking care of ourselves. I also grew closer with staff members during that time period, which is something that would have not occurred had the year progressed as normal.

Fake It ‘Til You Make It:
As an administrator, I have learned the unique skill of balancing any emotion thrown my way. If a staff member was complacent, I was able to instill a sense of urgency. If a parent was panicked, I learned how to assuage fears with a calm demeanor, regardless of my own anxiety. Sometimes it felt like I was conveying mixed emotions...
within the same sentences, but compartmentalizing my own trepidations about a variety of situations helped me speak with clarity and confidence to staff, students, and families. It wasn’t easy, but it seemed to help and will definitely help me pause, take a breath, and “read the room” a bit better as I move forward.

Everyone Is in the Same Boat:

Programs may look different for years to come, but there’s at least some solace knowing that we are all in this together. Every district’s program has felt some impact from this past year, and to say otherwise would be an exercise in denial. Continue accessing MMEA’s professional development resources, expanding your network, advocating for your program, and asking colleagues from across the state (and country) for advice and help. No program is an island and we all benefit when all of our programs and students are thriving. It may take a year or five, but we will get to the finish line together.

Find the Silver Linings:

People who know me are assuredly sick of hearing my catch phrase, “Find the silver linings,” over the last fourteen months, but I emphatically believed it has helped both myself and my department survive, and even thrive, in the most daunting of circumstances. Whether that be learning new technology, discovering new grants available to the profession, finding a voice for advocacy you never knew you had, revamping curriculum that may remain in your courses for years to come, learning more about your students or yourself, or just discovering your own resiliency, I hope that everyone was able to find out something about themselves and their teaching that made the difficult a bit more bearable or the future a little brighter.

To all program leaders, teachers, students, and families: Thank you for your flexibility, your tenacity, your resiliency, and your unwavering passion for music education in our schools. Here is to a more musical future that is just over the horizon. Have a safe and restful summer and we will see you in September! •

Christopher Martin is the K-12 Director of Fine & Performing Arts for the Westborough Public Schools. In addition to his work with MMEA, he also serves on the executive board for the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association as the choral festival co-chair.

“Arts education supports the social and emotional well-being of students, whether through distance learning or in person.”

From “Arts Education Is Essential,” a unified statement from national arts organizations across the United States
Digital Badging in Music Education

By Stephanie M. Riley, MMEJ Technology Editor, Yarmouth Public Schools

Digital badging has been around for a while in a variety of ways. It’s likely that you’re most familiar with the social media, personal development apps, and my beloved Google badges that you get for checking into certain places or a certain amount of times, etc. In a time where technology is making its way into our classrooms at lightning speed, it seems digital badging in the music classroom could be very successful.

What is digital badging?

Digital badging is a system that individuals complete to show competency or achievement in any given area. It could be viewed as a digital portfolio or a digital checklist, but with specific steps to be taken by the student in order to complete various tasks to complete the program.

In our case as music educators, we would be music-based on our badges, and those programs can be completely tailored to your students: their grade level, ensemble, course specific, and school specific, just to name a few.

Programs

This is where you can begin the tailoring for your digital badging programs. Ask yourself a few questions as you begin this process:

1. Do you want this to be a district-wide program?
   a. Benefits to a district-wide program: If a school has multiple elementary schools, this can help the elementary teacher prepare and share progress with the next teacher that a student will have within the district. Instrumental programs, of course, would be an obvious program that benefits, but choral programs and even general music programs can also benefit.
   b. Digital badging can work as though it’s a built-in rubric if designed carefully enough. These can be used district-wide.
   c. Digital badging is a great way to meet students where they’re at. Advanced students have something tangible to work towards, and those who need more time and guidance have clear expectations laid out for them.
   d. Standards: Keeping track of any and all standards addressed and achieved is very easy to accomplish.

2. Do you want to create programs for each ensemble? (Chorus/Band/Orchestra/Guitar Ensemble/etc.)

3. Do you want to create a badging program for your elective music classes such as Rock History, Music Theory, Piano, or Guitar?

4. Do you want to “go big or go home,” or do you prefer to select a few things to try before you really invest in this model? If you’re unsure, I suggest a smaller trial. If you are an elementary music teacher and you are starting to navigate your way in digital badging, I suggest piloting with a single classroom teacher (or a few) who you think would be onboard with this new idea. If they’re onboard, you’re going to find yourself with support and honest encouragement.

5. Do you want this to be a “quick” program? A term? A semester? Or, do you envision this program extending through the year?

Elementary Music

Generally speaking, you’re most likely going to gear digital badging to older elementary music students. Grade 3 is an excellent place to start.

Programs such as Chrome Music Lab are easily “badged.” You can make this a goal for your class, or introduce it as a fun program to complete during Music in Our Schools Month. Depending on your school’s policy of screen time, if you find yourself with indoor recess (especially during the month of March), completing a badging program could be a fun and educational use of time.

In this case, if one-on-one devices are not available during class time due to school policy or other outstanding reasons, an educator could easily work these into class time each time they see their students. In addition to Chrome Music Lab, other fun things to include that are worthwhile and lend themselves to future musical endeavors are websites such as Incredibox, Staff Wars, and then creating music with the Google arts and culture experimental sites, such as Blob Opera.

Middle School

Middle School is already tricky, and we often hear woes of teachers trying to figure out how to reach students and keep them interested in music during this often awkward time of life when singing in class can be frightening for some. If anything, middle school could be the perfect place for digital badging.
Many schools over the past few years and moving ahead now in the wake of the pandemic have been opting for digital programs such as Soundtrap, Garageband, and Bandlab, just to name a few to add to their music curriculum at the middle school level.

A badging program at the middle school general music level could include:

- **Individual skills** that are used in any DAW program. This includes but is certainly not limited to: looping, sequencing, layering, sampling, dynamic contrasts (fade in and fade out), and effects.

- **Larger scale projects** such as podcast creation, use of voice recordings and editing of those recordings, and the production of those larger scale projects.

- **Music Notation Software**: Noteflight, Musescore, or Finale

**Chorus/Band/Orchestra**

Coming from the beginning band and orchestra angle, this could be a great way to track students’ progress for both them and you. Coming from the chorus angle, in programs and schedules that often make it difficult to offer individualized feedback, this could build in an attainable avenue to do that for your students. As more and more programs are becoming digital in their delivery of material such as method books, repertoire, and sight reading, this could be a natural fit. Yes, like all of the other programs, it’s a tiny investment of your time upfront, but then you can tailor and adjust for what works with your program and even each level of your students.

Digital badges that could be included here are:

1. **Accessing a digital classroom** such as Google Classroom, Schoology, or even a class website. While this may seem super fundamental in its own way, for a beginning instrumental student, it helps you know who is able to get in (or not) to the virtual classroom and ensures that they know how to navigate the space.

2. **Accessing a practice log** in a program such as Google Docs or Google Sheets. Google in particular shows you updates and time stamps, so if you were ever interested, you could see when they went in to edit them to record their practice.

3. **Accessing material** when they’re at home or even at school. With COVID, the vast majority of students have personal devices, whether it be a Chromebook, a smart phone, or an iPad, and most have the ability to access digital files practically anywhere. This could certainly solve the classic problems of forgetting of music either at home or at school.

4. **Recording themselves playing/singing an assignment** and then uploading it or sending it to the teacher. When in ideal teaching scenarios (i.e., pre-COVID) giving students one-on-one attention is never an easy task. Even though our intentions are heartfelt for our students, it’s entirely commonplace to be hyper-focused on an upcoming performance and less on individual development. Frequency of these types of assignments, of course, are at the teacher’s discretion, but always allow for authentic feedback to students. And, for that student who is terrified to sing or play in front of others, it gives them the chance to perform individually on their own terms and may even help to bring them out of their shell to sing or play in front of others in the future.

5. **Musicianship development** can easily be badged using websites such as [www.musictheory.net](http://www.musictheory.net) or other software programs. It’s a great way to help students practice the beginning fundamentals such as note naming, etc. and track their practice/proficiency.

Other added benefits to a badging program are that it helps parents understand expectations of their child and also show the highlights of your program and its curriculum. Depending on how you prefer to develop a badging program, it can be completely sequential in nature, and even if the badges are similar in nature, you could do “volumes” or “levels” or even “chapters” of a potential “badge book.”

**Implementation**

The program below is based on a semester long “exploratory” class for eighth graders. In this program the students rotate through four sessions that last five weeks each: Guitar, Piano, Music Tech, and History of Rock and Roll.

In the Google Classroom, each student is given an assignment that is titled “digital badges.” This assignment can be in Google Slides format or in a Google Doc that is assigned to each student and each student receives their own “copy.” As students complete each badge, the color of the badge goes from grayscale to color to mark their completion of the badge.
Before completion                      After completion

Here is an example of what a digital badge “card” could look like. Again, tailor your badge program to your needs and your class’s needs. You can be super detailed, or very basic, as you see here:

### 8th Grade Exploratory Music Digital Badge Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital Classroom Materials</th>
<th>Basic DAW Skills</th>
<th>Personal Recording</th>
<th>Composition using notation software</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❑ Accessing Google Classroom</td>
<td>❑ Demonstrates adding loops</td>
<td>❑ Uploads a recording via an unlisted YouTube link to a Google Classroom assignment</td>
<td>❑ Demonstrates setting up a composition with 12 bars (for a 12-bar blues composition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Completing an assignment in Google Classroom</td>
<td>❑ Demonstrates splitting a region</td>
<td>❑ Uploads a recording using the program Soundtrap with a backing track playing</td>
<td>❑ Demonstrates ability to input basic rhythmic notation within the 12-bar blues parameters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Accessing Digital Worksheets in Google Classroom</td>
<td>❑ Demonstrates layering</td>
<td></td>
<td>❑ Demonstrates ability to differentiate between the bass line and melody when composing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Completing a Google Slides Assignment</td>
<td>❑ Demonstrates fade in and fade out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Team implementation

Depending on your program’s structure, you can easily work on a badging program with your colleagues. Of course this is easily done with fellow music teachers, but opportunity could certainly present itself to partner up with your art, media, and physical education teachers and create a comprehensive arts badging program.

### Evaluation opportunities

Another opportunity that this program opens up is in the realm of annual evaluations and goals. If you find yourself at the beginning of a cycle, or charged by your administrator to branch out of your comfort zone, this could be a great opportunity—not to mention the evidence will literally collect itself.

### Extensions

So, now that you’ve read all of this, you may be thinking to yourself, “This is all great, but it’s just basically the projects and items we do on a normal basis with a ‘reward’ system thrown in.” Not necessarily. Remember that the goal of digital badging is to use technology as the vehicle to help us teach and solidify those musicianship skills and, for many students, offer a different lens from which to look at music, create music, analyze music, perform music, and become musically diverse, among many other great qualities of being a digitally literate student.

### History of Rock and Roll Digital Badge Record

**Google Badge**

*This badge is given when a student successfully completes the following items:

a. Uploads a YouTube video in Google Classroom  
b. Completes a presentation in Google Slides  
c. Completes an assignment in Google Docs

Chrome Music Lab—Melody Maker  
Online Collaborator Badge  
Chrome Music Lab—Producer Badge

---

**Stephanie Riley** is MMEJ’s technology editor. She is an 8–12 choral music educator at the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School where she is responsible for choirs grades 8–12, beginning piano, music technology, and theory classes. She is also an avid lifelong singer of choirs.
Music Education

DISTINCTIVE PROGRAMS OF STUDY

- Bachelor of Music in Music Education
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INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCES

- Kids Jam: A music program for preschool students
- Scholastic Invitational Festival: A middle-school student event featuring large instrumental ensembles
- Songwriting Clinics: Events for elementary school students

INTERESTED IN MAJORING IN MUSIC EDUCATION?

Set up a class visit and meet with faculty and staff from the Music Education Department. To make an appointment, call 617-747-2425 or email bmurphy6@berklee.edu.

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So far this year, I have had six different schedules, seven different teaching spaces, taught on Zoom, taught live in a classroom and outside, learned how to use PPE, taught students to put reeds on instruments without being in the same room—the list goes on and on. I also know I am not the only teacher with a laundry list of changes! I am tired, and yet I am so excited to see my students ALL together again in just a few short days. All of these changes have also reminded me of the importance of reflection. What are some of the activities/lessons that I want to bring forward with me as our classrooms and rehearsals return to a more traditional scene?

These changes this year have also allowed me—or maybe forced me—to look at what I do in my classroom and remember the core of what makes music such a meaningful endeavor. During the summer, I took a class in which we did an activity to “Marie Kondo” our lessons or units. That is, to keep only what is necessary and get rid of the rest. What are the core skills for each unit that must stay? What can be taken away?

One thing that kept coming up for me—outside of technique and playing skills—was the community and social-emotional support that music class provides. It brings people together! Relationships are at the core of my band rehearsal. I need students to trust me to take risks, trust their peers to provide support, and trust themselves to try something new.

I only saw my students when they were in the building, and on their remote week the work was asynchronous. This amount of independence for instrumentalists in grades 4 through 6 seemed daunting for my students and me as a teacher. We were losing 60% of our guided rehearsal time. Initially, I felt so much pressure to make sure that I used every minute of my in-person rehearsal time to make music, teach technique, and provide information to make sure their independent time was productive. I quickly came to find that this was not sustainable and not great for my kids. The community aspect, the relationships, and the foundation of trust were missing. Without a performance scheduled for the year, what was the point of this kind of rehearsal?

Spending in-person class time to build relationships was critical. Asking questions, checking in, and taking the time to allow students to share who they are was essential in creating a safe space early on. This is something that I will bring forward. This “lost time,” as I would have called it in the past, is such a beautiful moment, and I genuinely believe students engaged in independent work differently because they felt seen and heard.

Tools and activities to help to build relationships:

- **FlipGrid Brag Board.** This was a tool that I used with my elementary students. Students could post a song they were working on to share with their peers. These posts took the place of our musical share time at the end of our weekly lessons. Students could like and comment on each other’s work to encourage their classmates.

- **Class Playlist.** Dr. Bryan Powell shared this idea at our ENTME meeting in January. He created a public Spotify playlist, and his students could add directly to the list. My students are a bit younger. To make sure I was sharing age-appropriate versions, I had students complete a Google form, and then I found YouTube videos or links to share the tracks. We would play these songs during pack-up time at the end of rehearsal.

- **Question of the Day.** This can be used during attendance time or a break in class. The sillier the question the better, and creating friendly debate helps students share the ideas in class.

- **Student Voice and Choice.** Asking students what they need or want was also very enlightening. Even my youngest students could share when they needed music (notation) to be shared differently, needed practice tracks, or liked a specific practice style. This helped
to inform me when creating new lessons. This didn't guarantee that I could provide what they needed, but it informed my choices.

- **Practice Videos/Resource Videos**
  Parents shared that they were so thankful for videos that helped them support their students. This helped build support around student musicians (especially the beginners I saw every other week for 30 minutes). Parents could provide additional support on the off week while their musician worked at home.

These are a few of the tools that I plan to use and build upon when hybrid and remote learning move away and we go back to more traditional classroom space. Ice breakers are typically a fall activity to build relationships but they can continue during the year to help create a stronger program and partnership between teachers, students, and the community.

*Catherine Iatesta teaches grades 4–6 beginning and advanced band in the Needham Public Schools. She is also an executive functioning coach and mentors students around the country. She can be reached at catherine_iatesta@needham.k12.ma.us.*

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Yamaha  IBC

David French Music Co.  BC
Dr. Love provides a clear-cut call for all of us in the education space to learn about the cultures of our students. It is a non-negotiable, but many of us can agree that we need some strategies in this area. Our large city school districts in Massachusetts are composed of students from many beautiful cultures. It is up to us to capture these funds of knowledge and embrace them in our curriculum, but you can’t just snap your fingers and magically become a culturally proficient teacher. It takes some work to build this framing in your pedagogy. However, the results are impactful and our students deserve the best education that affirms their values and beliefs. We hope this article will be a starting point for your work in embracing the many cultures of our students in our large municipalities.

The Iceberg

As seen in the iceberg diagram, our call to action is to learn both the surface culture and deep culture of our students. Yes, incorporating a balanced multicultural curriculum can help us in our goals of culturally responsive teaching, but it is the work we can do in uncovering the attributes of our students’ cultures that will make even more immense transformations in their learning (and our teaching)! We can build a sense of respect and empathy in our classrooms that celebrate our differences and similarities while avoiding appropriation, acculturation, cultural collision and code switching.

A word of caution, as stated in this 2016 article from The Advocate:

Remember this: a person’s culture represents the sum of many spheres of influence, including context within history, gender, age, religion, family relationships, group memberships, cultural beliefs and practices, historical context, and level of education. Therefore, to avoid stereotyping, the educator must view each student as possessing a personalized culture instead of a member of a homogenous group. . .

Start with Families

The DESE rubric for teacher evaluation mentions two-way family communication but we are often left to our own devices to figure that piece out. Luckily some newer publications are available to help guide us in this work:

- A Framework for Culturally Responsive Practices
- Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family/School Partnerships
- School, Family, and Community Partnerships

An important realization is that the definition of family can include aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors, etc. Remember this when framing communications home. Some ideas to think about:

- Have students and family members take you on a tour of their community.
- Ask family members to share their favorite music and have the student report back to the classroom or on a platform like FlipGrid.
- Create a listening journal for both students and families to complete.
- Ask for family members to come into your classroom to co-present on the music they identify with.
- Attend a local cultural event that you know your students and families will be attending.

Attend Workshops from Cultural Bearers

You may currently be seeing a transformation in offerings from our traditional professional development providers in the music education space. Conferences are starting to address cultural responsiveness throughout all the traditional strands like band, strings, and general music, but also as a standalone strand. You can see this in action with the upcoming multi-state NAfME conference this summer called “Making Equity Actionable” and even in the NAfME All-Eastern conference a few months ago. We welcome this paradigm shift and are excited about the future of MMEA’s offerings to address this ongoing work.

In the past we may have relied on practitioners to translate the music of a certain culture into our Western European mindset of music education. The authenticity and representation is often manipulated when we do this. It is a tension in music education and ethnomusicology that we need to work on. The answer to this problem is quite simple, bring cultural bearers into your classroom and make sure they are compensated! Additionally, it is now commonplace to have virtual field trips with clinicians video conferencing into your classroom. The reality is that many of the curriculum vendors have not done their due diligence and can misrepresent a culture in texts.

All of our cities in Massachusetts have nonprofit organizations that aim to celebrate both the surface and deep characteristics of a certain culture. In Boston for example, we...
have been able to partner with the African Community Economic Development of New England organization to provide our music teachers with professional development focusing on the Somali culture and children’s songs, Grooversity for Brazilian samba music, and Castle of Our Skins for music from the Caribbean Islands. One easy way to find out what arts cultural organizations are in your area is to check out the Mass Cultural Council by clicking on this website, selecting a municipality in your region, and then clicking “Funding List.”

Research Online and Then Authenticate with a Community Member
There are many online resources for learning the various characteristics of a certain culture or region of the world. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, it is important to not categorize all people of a certain culture with overall characteristics, and so you will want to double-check with some community members on authenticity.

Resources:
- [http://guide.culturecrossing.net/about_this_guide.php](http://guide.culturecrossing.net/about_this_guide.php)
- [https://www.commisceo-global.com/resources/country-guides](https://www.commisceo-global.com/resources/country-guides)

In the end, creating a music education environment that embraces multicultural music does not mean that you are being culturally responsive to your students. To be truly culturally responsive, we must do everything we can to expand our knowledge and appreciation of our students by understanding their cultures and finding ways of making authentic connections in the classroom.

Anthony Beatrice is the Executive Director for the Arts in the Boston Public Schools. He is the Large Municipalities editor for the MMEJ.
District Updates

NORTHEASTERN DISTRICT

Thank you all for participating in our virtual festival workshops in the spring. It was an honor to have Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser and Dr. Matthew Arau work with our students on the power of music and leadership. A big thank-you to Luke Miller, Senior Festival coordinator, and Allison Lacasse, Junior Festival coordinator, for running these workshops and for making the seamless transition from in-person to virtual district events for the year.

A big thank-you to the teachers in the Northeastern District who have volunteered to be on the executive board for the 2021–22 school year. I look forward to working with you all as I move to past-chair in the fall and Jared Cassidy of the Lexington Public Schools takes over as chairperson of the Northeastern District. It has been my privilege to work with all the teachers and students over the last two years as chairperson and I am excited to see what the future brings for our teachers and students!

Please reach out to the executive board if we can help you in your school district. I look forward to a more normal year in 2021–22! Keep your head up and know that you are appreciated!

—Tom Bankert, Northeastern District Chair

WESTERN DISTRICT

Hello Colleagues,

It has been more than a year now of the strangest times of our teaching careers. On an individual level, we have reinvented our teaching over and over again, and as a district we have completely reimagined our auditions and festivals processes. We have grown and changed, helped each other, grieved our losses, and celebrated our accomplishments. As we are now mostly all back in our buildings navigating another unique end of the school year, I’m sure many of you can join me in the wish that next year will see some return to a greater sense of normalcy. As more of our colleagues are vaccinated and shots for students not far behind, there is hope that by this time next year we’ll be celebrating our traditional end-of-year concerts. Together we have faced a period like no other and we have come out stronger. I am thankful to have faced this difficult time with such a phenomenal group of colleagues.

Our Junior and Senior District festivals went off without a hitch. Thanks go out to our amazing Junior Festival clinicians—Chad Nicholson, Brendan Ferrari, Caleb Cutler, and David Picchi—and fabulous group of ensemble managers—Tony Ohannessian, Colleen Grady, Todd Fruth, and Will Choe. Our senior ensembles were led by Alex Shapiro, Moira Smiley, Helen Cha-Pyo, and Brian McCarthy, supported by the excellent group of managers—Chris Moehringer, Todd Fruth, James “JP” Kiernan, and David Kerr. I was privileged to witness some of the rehearsals for each ensemble at both festivals and was taken by the wonderful experience each clinician was providing for our students. The world handed us lemons, and the festivals were some of the sweetest lemonade around! Final festival videos are currently in production. Watch your e-mail for announcements as soon as they are available to share. We can’t wait for you all to see the hard work on screen.

At this time, we are planning for virtual auditions for the 2021–2022 school year and will reevaluate our plan for festivals in the fall. As always, we welcome your input and invite all members to attend any of our monthly meetings and strongly encourage members to attend our general membership meetings in the fall and spring. We will continue with virtual meetings for the foreseeable future and hope that will allow more of our members to attend and contribute to our wonderful district.

Wishing you all a wonderful, restful, well-deserved summer break!

Respectfully yours,

—Amanda Johnson, Western District Chair

CENTRAL DISTRICT

Happy Summer!

I would like to thank Junior High Concert Chairperson Nicholas Marcotte, the Assistant Concert Chairperson JP Lanctot and all of the ensemble managers and assistant managers for putting together a wonderful day of clinics for every junior high auditionee on May 1. Students were given the chance to learn and improve upon techniques and skills in one-hour clinics hosted by area professionals. It’s great that, despite the challenges of these times, senior high and junior high students in Central District had the opportunity to attend some virtual masterclasses/clinics this year.

For those I didn’t see at the general membership meeting, I hope you recharge and refresh this summer and stay safe.

—Todd Shafer, Central District Chair

Thank you all for participating in our virtual festival workshops in the spring. It was an honor to have Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser and Dr. Matthew Arau work with our students on the power of music and leadership. A big thank-you to Luke Miller, Senior Festival coordinator, and Allison Lacasse, Junior Festival coordinator, for running these workshops and for making the seamless transition from in-person to virtual district events for the year.

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Please reach out to the executive board if we can help you in your school district. I look forward to a more normal year in 2021–22! Keep your head up and know that you are appreciated!

—Tom Bankert, Northeastern District Chair
Dear Eastern District Members,

Our Virtual Junior District Festival was a huge success. Accepted students participated in a two-hour masterclass/rehearsal led by our wonderful slate of conductors. A big thank-you to Justin Glodich (Choral Ensemble), Harry Watters (Jazz Band), Elizabeth Reed (String Orchestra), and Terry Reynolds (Wind Ensemble) for the engaging virtual masterclasses and rehearsals that they led. The students truly had a wonderful time.

I would be remiss if I did not also thank our Junior Festival coordinator Sarah Grina for all the hard work she did to put together this virtual festival. It would also not have been possible without the help of the managers and board members—Jonathan Eldridge, Kevin Maier, Guillermo Ortiz, Stephen Pixley, Larry Shea, and Alicia Winslow—who attended and assisted with the Zoom sessions. A special thank-you also goes out to Henry Buck for creating the accompaniment tracks for the vocal students, and Dan Santiago, Matt Calapatia, and Maurice Soque for creating the concert video, which premiered on Friday, May 21 at 7:00 p.m. at the following YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCifqWK46lG0El5qBlsdcEQ. Please look out for an e-mail from Sarah Grina to be shared with students and parents that will detail all the information for the live stream concert.

Thank you to all the Eastern District members who attended our general membership meeting on Monday, March 8. We are excited to have Sommer Forrester (Higher Ed. Chair) and Daniel Rivenburgh (Advocacy and Outreach Chair) returning to their roles on the board. We also welcome Susan Memoli (Secretary) who has been in a temporary position since Howard Worona left, and is now officially our board secretary. While the general membership meeting was not the same as last year, we do appreciate the membership attendance on Zoom and hope to be able to have our dinner meetings again soon.

Just a friendly reminder to please update your e-mail addresses and those of your department when you are logging into Avenir to register students for auditions.

Please know that we are here to support you and your programs, and if we can ever be of any help to you and your students let us know.

—Brianna Creamer, Eastern District Chair

Eastern District Updates

Check the MMEA Eastern District website for 2020/2021 calendar dates.

Information will be forthcoming on the Junior Festival for 2020/2021.

PDPs are available for participation in Eastern District activities. More info can be found on the Professional Development page on our website.

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During this year of unprecedented challenges the Southeastern District has been able to continue activities through completely remote means. At both the senior and junior levels we successfully held auditions that, although altered in their requirements, were meaningful and productive. Incredible work was done by John Collins, our auditions coordinator, and the adjudication chairs. We did experience a drop in the total number of students who auditioned but the quality of auditions did not diminish.

Festivals were also remote and really quite remarkable. Our managers and assistant managers worked tirelessly to provide meaningful musical experiences. The recordings of the virtual ensembles were edited mostly by our membership—no small task as some of the groups were huge! Each ensemble had small- and large-group activities as well as experiences such as conversations with the composer, sectional with member teachers, technology instruction, and ice-breaker activities.

Going forward we will hold auditions remotely again in the fall given the uncertainty of schools being able to travel, concerns about in-person contact, and host possibilities. We are going ahead with securing sites, conductors, and programs for the festivals in hopes that 2022 affords us those opportunities in person. Fortunately if we have to hold virtual festivals again we already have the experience to do it successfully.

**Dates have been set for 2021–2022:**

- November 20: Senior audition materials due
- December 4: Junior audition materials due
- January 7/8: Senior Festival
- March 11/12: Junior Festival

We will be holding elections shortly to fill vacancies on our board, particularly chair elect. Fortunately we have folks willing to run for those positions.

I’m impressed with the resiliency and professionalism of the music educators in the Southeastern District and across the state. I think we are all ready to return to normal, especially since the restrictions for in-person music-making in schools have been so limiting in what we can do. Be assured that great music will return, maybe even better than it was before the pandemic hit!

Respectfully submitted,

—Bill Richter, Southeast District Chair
The Essence of Musical Line
Biking and Music

By David Dworkin, Clarinetist, Conductor, Educator, and Creator of CONDUCTORCISE ®

Being an avid biker, I experience, every time I bike—cold or hot, rain or shine—many different emotions and observations.

Today, as I biked along country roads, my mind went to the performance of music and the ability to bike. Strange bedfellows? Music is a love of my life. It began in my early teens and continues as I approach my eighty-seventh year, and yes, I have biked since I was five years old.

Biking becomes so much more than pedaling, balance, and changing gears. It is the awareness of the wind in your face, the perfumes of springtime, or the dry cold of a wintry day. It is taking in the beauty of a green field, or the starkness of trees, sans leaves. What amazing works of art, as though they were monumental sculptures.

The performance of music is a journey of discipline. Learning the language of music and its grammar. Patience in acquiring a flawless technique. Practicing over and over, year after year, to gain a flawless technique, which then FIRST allows one to approach performance. Symphonic, opera, chamber music, solo repertoire, and, yes, jazz, country—all music.

Music and cycling, in parallel: Now you have gained technique. You know how to pedal, change gears, never falter in your balance. What is next is your performance. You must smell the fragrance of the music. The RUSH of a beautifully structured line. The notes are there; now you have to envision that every note is felt and meaningful. Every note leads to another and tells a story. Never reject the idea that one must feel each note in the depths of one’s body. The brain sends messages to the heart and vice versa, as you ride through the work being performed. (Side note: It has been documented that the heart does send messages to the brain.)

We must all sing inside ourselves as we perform. Seek to know every road traveled. The hills, smooth paved roads, ruts in the musical landscape of travels. In short allow your heart to respond to all the years of practice you have tirelessly put in.

Biking through the rural countryside on any given day, I pass many dirt roads that seem to go nowhere. One cannot explore every one, however I often take the opportunity to turn and travel that unknown road and see where it goes—many times nowhere, other times I am rewarded with sights of beauty I would have never imagined. At the end of my performance career, I chose to take a road never traveled before, exploring music and its healing powers for all levels of health and age. I began with just a thought and lots of energy. I thought, conducting is such a natural way to move. Why not give all a chance to move their bodies and think about conversations and colors in the score? I developed a program of works that were diverse and interesting. I sought a venue that would gather participants and try the program. I found a Senior Center in CT that invited me to present a program I called, “Conductorcise®.” I put a chopstick in everyone’s hand, and we were off. It was a great success. I was on my way. I began reading books on exercise and the brain, neuroplasticity, effects of music on the brain, and so much more. I reached out to physicians focused on all levels of health, mind, and body. I contacted specialists in the field of aging. I was now accepting engagements to present “Conductorcise®, A SOUND Workout for mind, Body and Soul.” I became a member of the International Council of Active Aging, IDEA Fitness, American Society on Aging, American Senior Fitness Association, and a member of the President’s Council on Fitness.
Music is a language. At eighty-seven, I am continuing to learn a new language of how music affects the body and the brain in such a positive way. I have presented the program for independent living through memory care at retirement communities throughout the country. I have worked with people with Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, diabetes, cancer, autism, and many other diseases. It is a form of sharing and giving. That is what you music educators all do so well.

Friends, musicians and music educators: Never forget that you are the conduit through which the composer has written his or her contributions to the universe. Know the composer, the time, the culture.

Mahatma Gandhi said “Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” You will never run out of things to learn if you were to live forever.

Teaching is a noble profession, honored through the centuries in so many cultures. Learning as we all do while teaching, we have the opportunity of exploring new roads as our tenure in the classroom ends. It is not an end; it is a beginning. Positivity, joy, engagement and love of what you are doing makes an exceptional life.

Never stop learning. Never stop seeking the honesty of music. If I regularly travel the exact same route in my biking experience for that day, I always see, feel something new. A musician will perform the same work, possibly hundreds of times. Each time it is rebirth. As soon as you play that first note, it should be the same wonder as if it were being played for the very first time. That always amazed me. I am so taken with the talent, technique, and musicianship of young musicians, many of whom understand everything I have discussed here.

If you adhere to these thoughts, what you create and who you are can be truly SPECIAL. That extra sound, phrasing, ability to communicate is what separates the “good” from the “great” performer. Feel the music; be the GREAT.

Continue to enjoy, explore life. Music represents life in so many ways.

Have a great ride.

David Dworkin posts Conductorcise® videos and photos of his cycling adventures daily on Facebook. The videos include movement, music appreciation, and history to help his audience hear, feel, and understand the music and the composers. Find David at: https://www.facebook.com/Conductorcise®

Say yes to music and to life!


The Maestro who “sparkles with high-spirited virtuosity” (The New York Times), David Dworkin has led orchestras internationally and performed as clarinetist with ensembles including the American Symphony and Metropolitan Opera orchestras.

He led Kurt Weill’s Three Penny Opera on CBS Television, has served as conductor and artistic consultant of three PBS television documentaries in the series Grow Old With Me, including The Poetry of Aging, featuring Richard Kiley, Julie Harris, and James Earl Jones. An avid chamber musician, he has performed worldwide in every continent including four Carnegie Hall chamber and solo recitals and as a member of Italy’s Musicisti Americani summer festival. In 2002 he created the acclaimed exercise program CONDUCTORCISE®, where “you feel the beat as well as the burn” (Times-Picayune). Conductorcise® has received rave reviews across the globe, and has been featured in publications from the New York Times to Symphony and Town & Country magazines, on television programs including NBC’s Today Show, New Jersey Network TV, and Retirement Living Television, where he appeared on the inaugural Living Live! with Florence Henderson. He has presented the program for all ages, especially healthy seniors. Conductorcise® has also proven effective with residents of assisted living facilities and with Alzheimer’s disease and Parkinson’s patients, and has gained wide recognition with healthcare professionals. Dworkin is a graduate of The Juilliard School and Columbia University Teachers College, is a member American Senior Fitness Association, International Council on Active Aging, has a Certificate of Professional Recognition from IDEA Fitness, and is an advocate on the President’s Physical Fitness Challenge. CONDUCTORCISE® was named one of North America’s six most innovative active aging programs by the International Council on Active Aging.

Say yes to music and to life!

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