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President’s Message

By Heather Cote, President, MMEA

Welcome to the 2022-23 school year!

Recently I came across a Facebook post from 2020. It was of a slide that I used in a presentation for a NAfME webinar that I was asked to lead in May of that year. That 3000 music educators from across the country attended. When I knew nothing. We all tried to remain optimistic. But this is why I saved things like this from 2020. To remember. Remembering what we were scared of. Remembering what we eventually accomplished. When I spoke on this webinar, I had no idea what I was in store for. As we embark on the 22-23 school year, I find myself being very reflective as look at the sentences I wrote on this slide, in 2020. It makes me think about where we were, where we are, and where we are going.

Embrace opportunity, ambiguity and the imperfection that comes when trying something new.

While I have always been one to embrace opportunity, I do NOT do well embracing ambiguity and imperfection. After teaching for many years, it’s easy to continue to do things the same way, because that’s what we’re comfortable with. However, I find myself, more now that ever, REALLY seeking out opportunities—for my program, my students and my own growth and well-being. I have learned that it’s ok to be outside of my comfort zone. I have learned to embrace ambiguity and imperfections more; after all, teaching isn’t liner, and teaching isn’t perfect. And surprisingly I’ve found some amazing moments that have happened in my classroom when I’ve let go of my quest for perfection and let things just happen.

Embrace the uncertainty. Enjoy the beauty of becoming when nothing is certain. Anything is possible.

ANYTHING is possible. I’ve learned that where we end up, may not be where we thought we were going. And that road is full of uncertainty. But we are innovative, thoughtful, creative, and reflective music teachers. I truly believe there is nothing we can’t do and nothing we can’t accomplish. It may not look the way we thought it would. And there can be beauty in that discovery.

This is a challenge that we will overcome, and while weathering the storm will be tough, music education can emerge stronger than ever.

I struggle the most reflecting on this. We did get through this pandemic. And it WAS tough. But we didn’t come through unscathed. I see changes in my own program as a result of the COVID years. I see a couple of years coming up where I will continue to deal with lower numbers, and students who are coming to me with at a different skill level that before. I’m sure many other programs out there are seeing the same thing, and I know some programs were hit hard. But I refuse to let that be a deterrent. I still do think that in many ways our communities have seen how important and valuable music programs are, and I still do think that we are coming back strong.

I started year 26 teaching this week—and year 22 in my current district. We will keep moving forward.

Whether you are entering year 1 or year 30, keep going. You do make a difference.

Best wishes to all of you for a great school year.

—Dr. Heather Cote
(she/her/hers)
MMEA President
New Voices, New Inspirations

By Christy Whittlesey, MMEA Managing Editor

First, I want to thank everyone for the warm welcome as I step into the position of MMEA Publications Editor! I am so honored to have the opportunity to carry on the excellent work of Susan Gedutis Lindsay and the MMEJ Board, and look forward to collaborating with and learning from you!

During my interview with the MMEA Board, I shared that the Publications Editor position combines several of my passions because I am a writer, a supporter of other writers, an advocate for safe, equitable, and inclusive learning environments, and a music educator of 20 years. As a writer, my dissertation research focused on the experiences of transgender and nonbinary youth in schools, and after receiving my Ph.D. I published two books on this topic, *It’s Okay to Say “They”: Tips for Educator Allies of Transgender and Nonbinary Students* and *The Beginner’s Guide to Being a Trans Ally*. I continue to write and present about creating gender-friendly learning environments in addition to serving as the PK-12 Fine and Performing Arts Coordinator in Chelmsford, where I also teach daily music classes and serve on the district’s DEI Committee. I am eager to learn and grow as the MMEA Editor, and I look forward to partnering with you to make the Journal the best it can be!

Fall is the perfect time to reflect on lessons learned in past years and find new inspiration in our practice, and as I reviewed the articles and collaborated with the MMEJ Board on this issue, reflection and inspiration emerged as common themes. These concepts are appropriate as we consider what the MMEJ has meant to us and how we may want it to look as we move ahead.

The MMEJ is whatever we all make of it, and your contributions and ideas will continue to shape the publication. My goal is to support the MMEJ in becoming a living, breathing tool that all members can both reference as a learning platform and use as a space for sharing their own ideas. The Journal is the voice of our membership, and that includes ALL members. Have you found yourself wanting to contribute to MMEJ but unable to commit to writing a long article, challenged by a lack of writing experience, or simply nervous about sharing your thoughts on a public platform? If any of this resonates with you, I hope you will consider reaching out to me at editor@massmea.org so that we can brainstorm together. The MMEJ Board Members are also wonderful resources, and I encourage you to reach out to them with proposals. You can read more about them in the spotlight article, *MMEJ Board: Who are We?* These are all volunteers who are highly dedicated to supporting the membership, and I want to recognize their hard work!

I also want to share that we are exploring various ways to house and format the Journal. While I personally always loved the hard copy of MMEJ that came in the mail, I am aware that printing and shipping costs have greatly increased. In addition, printing and shipping the Journal is not the most environmentally responsible method of communicating to the membership. Considering these points, we are exploring affordable, convenient approaches to publishing the Journal that are effective, interactive, and engaging. More information will be available soon!

In the meantime, I wish you all the best as you embark on a new academic year. I hope that as you reflect and experience sparks of inspiration throughout the year, you will consider using the MMEJ to pass your inspiration to others!

—Christy Whittlesey, Managing Editor
(Pronouns: she/her)

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Dr. Kelly Bylica, moderator.  
10/15 | 10:00 - 11:30 am

Popular Music Pedagogy: Possibilities and Perils
Dr. Gareth Smith & Dr. Ruth Debrot, moderators.  
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Music Speaks: Just Ask the Kids

By Allison Lacasse

What is your “why”?

When I begin to think about this question in mid-August each summer, my mind travels immediately to the late 90’s. I’m suddenly a nervous teenager about to walk into my high school filled with uncertainty, trepidation, and respect for the storied tradition of musical excellence at my school. After a short time, I realized that music in school provided me with a community and a family unique to every other classroom. It was the band room where I thrived and felt at home, where I failed, learned, took risks, experienced heartbreak, accepted responsibility as a student leader, and where I ultimately made the decision to pursue becoming a music educator. I wanted to inspire students to fall in love with the performing arts. The decision to become a music educator was easy; I wanted to give kids what I was given.

Fast forward twenty-four years almost to the day, and here I am in my sixteenth year of teaching music. As I celebrated the end of a successful marching band camp with my high school band students, I looked around and saw myself in the quiet 9th grader who perhaps just made their lifelong best friend. I saw myself in the drum major who stepped onto the podium for the first time. I saw myself in the senior, overwhelmed with emotion while realizing that they just had their first “last” of their senior year, wondering how it all went so fast.

As we begin another year of teaching our students to love music, it is important to not only reflect on our why as educators, but on the why of our students. I asked my Belmont High School students to tell me what music has done for them. These answers will guide me throughout the school year—especially on the days that the to-do list has more checkboxes than I can catch up with, or the time that I need to walk around the track alone to blow off steam and reset.

I share these answers with you as a reminder of how important our music classroom experiences are at all levels. It is my hope that these honest words from teenagers in 2022 will inspire you to connect with the reason(s) you choose to teach music. The challenges of the 21st century teacher are extraordinary. What is even more extraordinary is the passion, heart, and love for the arts that walk into your classroom door on a daily basis.

What does making music or performing do for you?

• It gives me an outlet to express myself; I can be as loud as I want or as emotional as I want without having to muffle my personality.
• It’s given me experiences and friendships that I’ll hold for a lifetime. Making music and performing is why you do it, but it’s just one of many positives.
• It inspires me to be the best version of myself and shows me the reward and enjoyment that comes with collaborating with others.
• It’s a huge team building exercise and forces you to learn to be organized and communicate in order for you to do well.
• It has helped me become more confident and less nervous when I go on stage.

What has being in a performing ensemble taught you about life?

• Being in a performance ensemble taught me a lot about human interactions. There is a lot of practice time that is done at home and a lot of reviewing that time with the ensemble. It gave me a view on group work and how much the work of one person can impact positively as well as negatively different things. However, even with these negative results, there are people that are trusting you to improve and that will help you achieve both personal and group goals.
• It has taught me that a single person can’t accomplish anything great alone. It takes a group of people to work together to create not only great music, but great accomplishments.
• That you need to put in effort not because it’s beneficial to only you but because others are counting on you.
• It has taught me to be patient, and that good things come with time and perseverance.
• That being the only one right makes you wrong, especially in a performance setting.
• Things may not go the way we intend, and that’s ok.
• Name your most impactful memory during your time performing. Why do you think this stood out in your mind?

• Performing at my NEC concert this past May. During the last song there was a moment of perfect connection between the members and it created a feeling of excitement I had never had before.

• When I was in 4th grade, I recorded a CD with my cello teacher and a friend, and then played it for my class. This was the first time that I showed other people art I made.

• My first game day was very special. Playing at night with the field lights on me was something completely new and very extraordinary.

• Performing on stage with the Boston Brass was a night I will not forget. They inspired and motivated me to be a better player.

• My performance at WIBC was impactful because I realized, I am actually kind of good to make it here, sit on this stage, and play with other people who love music as much as I do.

How do you think music will be part of your life after you graduate from high school?

• During my freshman year, we were assigned an end of year research project and I chose to learn more about how music affects the human body. I am interested in going into a healthcare-clinical field and would love to pursue further research on how music affects the body in many positive ways.

• No matter what, I’ll always have a connection to music whether in a professional setting or just in my lifestyle and household.

• I plan to continue to enjoy and play music, and it will forever be something that holds a special place in my heart.

How do you feel when you are performing?

When we were finally able to come back to school and start music activities, I remember the first time I was in a room with everyone warming up at the same time (doing different exercises). Hearing all these sounds felt like a big hug, followed by memories of the times I spent practicing alone and with fellow musicians. It was such a relief that it removed the very little doubts that were in the corner of my mind. Performing for me is an opportunity to release all my emotions, and share my passion with anyone listening.

Sometimes there aren’t always words to describe the feeling of being in a performance.

 Entirely focused and zoned into the moment.

I feel free and light, and like I am where I am supposed to be.

Who are you grateful for along the way in your music/performance journey from the beginning?

• I am grateful for my music teachers and the encouragement they have given me, and their willingness to truly share the life that is music.

• I am really grateful for my cello teacher who encouraged me to pursue making my own music and improvising.

• My parents have always supported and enabled my interest in music and all the associated responsibilities. My teachers, who have coached me through rough areas and pushed me to go above and beyond what I thought was possible. And finally, my fellow musicians for the amazing company, and always being ready to help one another out.

• I’m grateful for my mom. Eight years ago I was at a concert with my mom. There was a tubist in a pink button up shirt and at one point confetti came out of his horn (which mesmerized little me). I asked my mom if we could go and see him after the concert. He told me that he was a music instructor and invited me to try out the euphonium (since the tuba was way too big). My father wasn’t sure that the euphonium was a good idea, but my mother protected my enthusiasm. She brought me to rehearsal, and even with her busy schedule, she comes to my concerts and sings along with my playing when I play her favorite song. She’s kept me going and I’m forever grateful for her support.

Your classroom is a safe haven for the students who can only fully express themselves through making music. Your classroom might just be the one place in the school where a student builds confidence and has the courage to take risks. Your classroom might be the place where a student learns a skill that helps them meaningfully connect with a family member. Your classroom builds lifelong friendships and a community unlike any other space in the school. I hope that these beautiful messages inspire you and give you a renewed sense of purpose. Sometimes words fail to capture the true impact of what music does for all of us as humans. Music speaks - just ask the kids.

Allison Lacasse is a member of the MMEJ Board and the Belmont High School Band Director in Belmont, MA.
Mission
The Growing Music in MASS Fund, formerly known as Symphony Hall Scholars, in association with the MA Music Educators Association, will advance music education, to ensure that students have equitable opportunities for success, and access to high quality, innovative school programs provided by qualified, trained teachers.

Future Symphony Hall Scholars, inspired by the original mission, will specifically help students prepare for future active festival participation and events of growth. Classroom Innovations is designed to help music educators expand their range of instructional strategies and methods, and to better meet the musical needs of all students in all settings and at all levels. Symphony Hall Scholarships will provide qualified young musicians with the financial resources to audition for and participate in the MA All-State Music Festival.

The foundation will provide giving opportunities in these categories, to be awarded on an annual cycle. Please visit our website, growingmusicinmass.org, or on the MMEA website at massmea.org.

Purpose
Growing Music in MASS will provide financial assistance to school programs identified by association members that are chronically underfunded, require start-up funding, or need additional assistance for underserved student populations. In addition, the foundation will provide scholarships to students needing assistance to participate in the MA All State Festival, and to member teachers seeking to build their repertoire of teaching methods and models.

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On a Learning Journey

By Rhoda Bernard, Ed.D.

In the field of music education, we higher education faculty members are true lifelong learners. Many of us are active in the field of K-12 music education while we are teaching at the college level. We share what we learn from our younger students with our college students and colleagues. We discover new ways to keep our higher education work relevant and meaningful. Many of us are active researchers, creating and conducting studies and projects where we learn about and investigate various aspects of music education. Through publications, presentations, and collaborations, we contribute to the ongoing conversation in the field, to scholarship, and to practice.

And, of course, all of us have the opportunity every day to learn from our students and colleagues. Learning is truly a large and very important part of our work as music education faculty at colleges and universities.

Most recently, I have been learning an awful lot about language. Because language is continuously evolving, it seems that the more I learn about language, the less I feel that I know—and, just when I think I have something figured out, I reveal more that I need to learn.

I have engaged with multiple “teachers,” if you will—my colleagues, my students, writings in the field, articles and blog posts on the internet, and more. I am continuing to learn more about language every day, and I expect that I will never reach the end of this learning journey. As a result of what I have learned and continue to learn, my perspective on language has changed—I find myself critically examining the language that I use and that I encounter. In this article, I will highlight two areas of my recent learning about language: gendered language and ableist language.

Gendered Language

My students have helped me to think about gendered language in new ways. I am not referring to pronouns here—though my students continue to teach me about pronouns, and I am still learning when it comes to pronouns. Rather, by gendered language I mean words and phrases in common usage that are gendered and therefore should be avoided, such as (for just a few examples):

- “manpower”
- “manning the table”
- “you guys” [use “y’all” or “team” or “friends” instead]
- “spokesman” or “chairman” [use “spokesperson” or “chairperson” or “chair” instead]
- “man-made”

Previously, I did not realize how much gendered language I used and how much gendered language I consumed. It has surrounded me since I was a child. I used it in my speech all the time. I read it in books, articles, flyers, signs, and other communications on a regular basis. I heard it around me everywhere I went.

My learning journey with gendered language continues today. I am still surrounded by it as I had been in the past, but today I am much more aware of gendered language and the harm that it can cause. I am also much less likely to use gendered language. I work hard to stop myself before using a gendered word or phrase.

Ableist Language

My work in the field of arts education for people with disabilities has connected me to colleagues in disability justice. These individuals and the organizations with whom they collaborate have taught me a great deal about ableist language: lessons that go far beyond the literature in scholarship and practice, lessons that have to do with my everyday life. I had learned about problematic words and phrases like “handicapped,” the “R-word,” and “wheelchair bound,” and I did not use them or other words like them. What I did not understand until more recently is the ways that ableist language is an accepted part of everyday speech and interactions. For some examples:

- “The traffic is insane”
- “My argument falls on deaf ears”
- “My life has been crazy busy lately”
- “People on the highway drive like lunatics”
- “It was like the blind leading the blind”

When I took a step back and looked critically at my everyday language, I found numerous instances of ableist words and phrases like those listed above. I continue to pay attention to these words and phrases so that I can anticipate them and eliminate them from my speech.

One Special Instance

One special instance of eliminating words and phrases is worth mentioning here. Over the last several months, my team and I have been removing one particular phrase from our communications and materials: the phrase “special needs.” There are many suggestions: person power; staffing the table; y’all, team, or friends; spokesperson or chair; and human made.

2 These and other phrases are considered offensive to disabled people.

3 Suggestions: The traffic is intense; I didn’t feel heard; my life has been very busy lately; people on the highway drive erratically; and neither of us knew what we were doing.
reasons that this phrase is problematic and outdated, and many ways that it offends people with disabilities. To mention just a few of these here: first, by saying that someone’s needs are special, it suggests that their needs are different somehow from everyone else’s. Second, “special needs” patronizes people with disabilities by characterizing their needs differently. Third, the phrase offends disabled people because it puts them in a lesser category, serving to “other” them.

Armed with our understanding of the serious issues related to the phrase “special needs,” my team and I are re-naming my Institute at Berklee. As of October 15, we will be known as the Berklee Institute for Accessible Arts Education. Our process is exhaustive, as we are deleting the phrase “special needs” from all of our materials, including re-naming a graduate course in our Music Education Department and changing several course descriptions. We feel strongly that, as Down Syndrome International states in their powerful video, it is not about special needs; rather, it is about human needs.

Always Learning

Gearing up for another school year always involves thinking about teaching – preparing for courses, working on syllabi, planning activities, and so on. Yet let us not forget that the upcoming school year will bring many learning opportunities for us. I know that I will continue my learning journey when it comes to language. As the school year unfolds, I wish you all well on your learning journeys, whatever they may be and wherever they may take you.

Rhoda Bernard is the Higher Education editor of MMEJ.

4 For more information about the problematic nature of the phrase “special needs,” see https://rebecca-cokley.medium.com/why-special-needs-is-1959e2a6b0e.
Our students are going to enter a world where they are going to need to work in a more flexible way than their parents and grandparents. They will need to integrate technological advances into their lives, work in more fluid schedules, and collaborate with others in meaningful ways, both in person and virtually. Helping students adapt to “different rhythms” (as Petersen calls it) is something that we do, and can do more of, in music education.

In addition to the changes we will see in where and how we work, there is also an issue that Petersen and Warzel identify as we disrupt the 9-to-5 office workplace: our social lives. “Work will always be a major part of our lives. What we’re suggesting, however, is that it should cease to be the primary organizing factor within it: our primary source of friendship, or personal worth, or community” (Warzel & Petersen 2021, p. 14). When our workplace becomes the primary organizing factor of our lives, it is no wonder that we devote so much time and energy to it, and in the process often creating an unhealthy work-life balance. But the workplace that Petersen and Warzel imagine for the future decentralizes work as this organizing factor and allows us more space for participation in our communities. Petersen states in her interview with Klein that “work had become the primary source of interaction, of comfort, of friendship, of relationships for so many people” (New York Times, 2022). If we continue down the path to a more flexible way of working, then developing community outside of the workplace will become a societal imperative. We will need to find new sources of interaction, comfort, friendship and relationships and what better way than music to create this sense of community.

All of this got me reflecting on my own teaching and the high school band program that I was honored to lead at Lynnfield High School from 2004–2018. During the last six years of my teaching in Lynnfield we developed a program that focused on contemporary ensembles and integrated informal learning practices into our daily routines. We had a robust student-led rehearsal process that allowed for a great deal of peer mentoring. In addition to developing our performance program in this manner, I was also able to include a skill-building and music theory curriculum through a structure that I ended up calling “Flex Fridays.” As I read the work and listened to the interviews of Warzel and Petersen, I started to make strong connections between the concepts of the flexible “office of the future” and the extra-musical skills that my students were developing through the structure of the band program in Lynnfield.

There are three ways that I have identified how these educational experiences developed skills that would be beneficial to students as they enter “the future of work”:

Taking responsibility for completing synchronous and asynchronous tasks

Learning to manage fluid working schedules and focusing on task completion rather than “time on task”

Developing relationship skills and interests that will allow them to find meaningful interactions outside of the workplace

Synchronous and Asynchronous Tasks

The traditional 9-to-5 office and many other forms of work in our society (such as factory workers) are set up as synchronous work environments where everyone comes to a central location, works roughly the same hours, and receives supervision while doing their work. School has long trained students to function in this type of environment, developing habits of mind and work ethics that fit well with this pattern. This made sense for developing a workforce that would enter these synchronous environments, but as we look to the future of the workplace, these same habits and patterns may not be as useful as they once were. Petersen and Warzel assert that “it’s time to figure out which types of work need to be rigid - synchronous, with others, at a specific time - and which types of work can become flexible to your needs” (Warzel & Petersen 2021, p. 36).

We already make this distinction in music with different terms: rehearsal (synchronous) and practice (asynchronous). From my experience, in many traditional performance based programs, we often use all of our class time in the rehearsal/synchronous space and expect students to complete practice/asynchronous activities as homework or on their own time. This way of approaching school music made sense for developing the skills of working in an office or factory, but in a future where students are going to need to manage their own asynchronous work activities while managing other aspects of their lives, a supervised, teacher-centered rehearsal may not be the best way of developing these skills. To put it more plainly: we need to teach kids how to practice and give them the opportunity to “practice practicing” with the support that a teacher and student mentors can provide. In my experience, this can be chaotic, loud and messy, and there are certainly times where students are not always on task. But the skills and sense of responsibility that they develop, especially with the proper training and support and a culture of mentoring in place, are extremely valuable both in their ensemble playing and in their future endeavors.

Managing Fluid Working Schedules

Informal learning, as outlined by Lucy Green in her book Music, Informal Learning and the School: a New Classroom Pedagogy (2016), includes students making informed choices about the music they perform, working with like-minded people to accomplish collective goals, and assimilating knowledge in personalized ways. Giving students the opportunity to manage their own musical processes including repertoire selection, rehearsal, and performance helps them develop their own work flow. Again, sometimes this process can be messy, but it is truly rewarding when the student-centered classroom results
in independent, thoughtful musicians who can collaborate and take leadership roles in a variety of settings.

In Lynnfield, our “Flex Friday” program also helped develop this sense of responsibility for independent work. Flex Days were three or four times per quarter where students had tiered music theory, scale and rhythm studies that they were required to complete. As students progressed through the sequence, they became familiar with concepts that would be addressed in the first year of an undergraduate music theory course, perform scales in all 12 keys in various modes, and execute rhythmic studies in different time signatures. Each tier, which we called a “musicianship level,” was divided into a sequence that would be completed over the four quarters. Students were required to turn in worksheets and upload performance videos by the end of each term. I did not supervise how they managed their time, just as long as everything was in by the end of the quarter. Did some students wait until the last Flex Friday and try to pack everything in, in addition to doing makeup work in their other classes that they were frantically trying to complete before the end of the quarter? Absolutely! But this was a relatively low stakes situation. I did not supervise how they managed their time differently.

Music educators have a unique and exciting opportunity to help our students develop the skills that Petersen and Warzel believe will be needed in the “future of work.” Although I’m a true believer in informal learning processes, music education in any form can develop the skills of managing time and tasks, distinguishing between synchronous and asynchronous activities, and navigating flexible working schedules. The pandemic has disrupted all of our lives but also created new opportunities to rethink how we learn, teach, and work. In their “Final Note to Bosses,” Warzel and Petersen state, “We believe that work is occupying more and more of our time, burning us out and conferring few of the spoils on workers. We also believe that the pandemic has created a rare pause for reflection and an opportunity to rethink the status quo.” (Warzel & Petersen 2021, p. 236). As we reflect on how to move forward in music education, we can take this opportunity to modify our approaches so that we become an invaluable part of the educational experience and equip our students with a different skill set than the one we acquired in our schooling. I have a great deal of optimism that music education can lead our schools in the direction that prepares young people for “the future of work.”

Developing Relationship Skills and Interests
If we remove the workplace from also being the center of our social lives, as suggested by Warzel and Petersen, there will be a need for these social connections to happen outside of work. I would argue that the perfect vehicle for this relationship building would be collective music making. If we empower students (through informal learning processes) to put together their own ensembles, choose music that they enjoy, and coordinate performance opportunities, then we also empower them to have a future where music can play this important role in their lives.

Music educators have a unique and exciting opportunity to help our students develop the skills that Petersen and Warzel believe will be needed in the “future of work.” Although I’m a true believer in informal learning processes, music education in any form can develop the skills of managing time and tasks, distinguishing between synchronous and asynchronous activities, and navigating flexible working schedules. The pandemic has disrupted all of our lives but also created new opportunities to rethink how we learn, teach, and work. In their “Final Note to Bosses,” Warzel and Petersen state, “We believe that work is occupying more and more of our time, burning us out and conferring few of the spoils on workers. We also believe that the pandemic has created a rare pause for reflection and an opportunity to rethink the status quo.” (Warzel & Petersen 2021, p. 236). As we reflect on how to move forward in music education, we can take this opportunity to modify our approaches so that we become an invaluable part of the educational experience and equip our students with a different skill set than the one we acquired in our schooling. I have a great deal of optimism that music education can lead our schools in the direction that prepares young people for “the future of work.”

REFERENCES


Tom Westmoreland taught Instrumental Music in Massachusetts from 2004 to 2020. He earned his undergraduate degree in Music Education from James Madison University (Cum Laude) and a Master of Music Education from Boston University. He is currently the chair of MMEA’s Innovations Council and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access Committee. He and his husband currently own the Brasswood Inn, a bed and breakfast in Provincetown, where they uplift historically marginalized voices through their front porch concert series.
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Revamping Rehearsal: Strategies I Employed to Create a Successful 4th and 5th Grade String Ensemble

By Leigh Schoepflin

During the 21-22 school year, I had the opportunity to better my teaching and my student musicians by combining my 4th and 5th grade string players into one string ensemble. While I approached this adventure with my usual excitement, gusto, and micromanaging, I had many questions: would I be able to prepare for a three-concert season while still maintaining the curriculum and teaching order of executive skills (posture, positioning, bow hold, finger patterns, etc.)? Would my 5th graders, after their year of learning on Zoom and zero ensemble or concert experience, be able to handle melodic lines? Would they be positive role models for the 4th grade beginners? Could I arrange music effectively? I have no arranging experience and would be working with an instrumentation imbalance. And finally, could I provide equal and appropriate musical opportunities for both ages and skill levels?

So, armed with my Music Learning Theory (MLT) training, Paul Rolland Pedagogy, and personal fortitude, I started my journey.

Structure, Ensemble Techniques, and Role Models

The school year began with the 4th graders learning by rote. We were singing, learning to hold and play our instruments, doing MLT pattern-based activities to train our audiation/musical brains, and learning classroom management cues like “rest position” and “playing position.” I was able to restructure the 4th grade practice packet to better reflect my desired lesson and rehearsal structure, allowing for more rehearsal time spent on music as opposed to routine. The 5th graders needed plenty of review but were excited to be learning in person and ready for the new content challenges. They learned new Paul Rolland Pedagogy technique exercises including flying pizzicato, shuttle + pizzicato, and place and lift — exercises that were brand new to my curriculum this year, designed to create balanced playing free from tension — that they then were able to demonstrate to the 4th graders during combined rehearsals. I did not need to be worried about the 5th graders’ rehearsal inexperience — they were able to take some of the basic lesson structure from their year over zoom and easily translate it to in-person instruction.

The 5th graders proved to be excellent role models and supporters of the beginning players.

I wanted to ensure our rehearsals focused first on ensemble skills — listening, communication, a deeper understanding of orchestration, and creating/performing — and focused second on executive skills. At the start of each ensemble rehearsal, I sprinkled in plenty of technique exercises designed to acclimate students to a large group setting and foster their listening and communication skills. We continued doing MLT pattern-based activities including rhythmic, melodic, and “same and different” pattern activities. During the pattern practice, students are asked to respond as a whole group or in small groups. I enjoy mixing up the small groups by creating categories in the moment. The spontaneity ensures that the students are listening to, internalizing, and maintaining their steady beat (see figure 3).

Creating a Safe Space to Learn

To make sure that the rehearsals were a safe space for all students, I would fill transition time by having students greet each other with phrases like, “Happy Tuesday” and “I am happy to see you today!” Sometimes we share favorite colors, foods, and answer silly “Would You Rather” questions as a way of interacting with each other. An additional way I encourage interaction and listening while playing is by having students actively listen to a player outside of their section.

While playing Hot Cross Buns, for example, I will ask the students to play with one ear on themselves and the other on someone across the room. This typically results in better tempo maintenance, closer listening, and better tone quality. The students also enjoy the quick moment to notice their friends playing other instruments.

Arranging: Melodies and Bass Lines

A new activity I added to rehearsals this year was having students learn bass lines by rote. I applied my experience with MLT rote song procedure and tried to stick to open strings for the benefit of the beginners. The 4th graders eventually learned open string bass lines by rote to accompany the 5th grade melodies that we performed in the Winter Concert (see figure 1). Additionally, we combined the 4th grade beginner songs into a medley, and I created a notated accompaniment consisting of chord tones in rhythm for the 5th graders to play (see figure 2). Since the musicians had foundational experience with two-part music, it went together quickly! As the year progressed and the 4th graders started reading notation, I created flexible arrangements to accompany the 5th grade melodic material, focusing on tone and bow control.

More Work Ahead

My biggest worry on this adventure was in my ability to arrange music. The most significant lesson I learned here was not to crowd the page — keep the paper looking simple and keep it to one page for the
using the first finger and creating the characteristic bow sound are the most successful examples of this. I was extremely pleased to hear the musical understanding flow between grades. The musicians could consistently sing each other’s parts and some 4th graders learned the advanced melodies by ear! The 5th graders loved hearing the familiar tunes, which aided their steady beat practice and helped them rebound from Zoom strings. The 4th graders were excited to learn more advanced pieces next year.

While combining the 4th and 5th graders together in an ensemble started as a necessity based on the pandemic plus school building and concert schedules, the resulting ensemble was rewarding and successful. I know the musicians will be a step ahead this year thanks to this new program structure. I look forward to refining it as the school year begins anew and hope that some of these strategies and activities can apply to your ensemble rehearsals as well.

LIST OF RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY AND INFORMATION:

- The Gordon Institute of Music Learning (GIML), including the Instrumental Music Professional Development Levels Course (PDLC) and online workshops [www.giml.org](http://www.giml.org)
- The Paul Rolland String Pedagogy Society, including the endorsement level workshops [www.paulrollandsociety.org](http://www.paulrollandsociety.org)

Leigh Schoepflin (she/her) is currently the district-wide elementary string instructor for the Marshfield Public Schools, teaching 4th and 5th grade string players. Additionally, Leigh serves as the South Shore Conservatory Youth Orchestra’s Harmony Orchestra director and is a violist in the Parkway Concert Orchestra.

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The Day My Elementary School Music Teacher Changed My Life Forever
by Cheryl Melody Baskin

I’m supposed to be retired, but it’s not in my DNA to say a permanent goodbye to my music teaching career. In my heart of hearts, one of the most sacred words I know is teacher and being a music teacher is the chocolate frosting on an already delicious cake.

Still nesting in my basement going nowhere fast are a collection of instruments, colorful teaching props, life-size puppets, melody bells, early childhood rhythm instruments, a dulcimer, 6 guitars, my beloved cello, my sacred Native American Flute, the large gong I rang in every “peace begins with me anti-bullying” concert and lesson, two crystal chakra bowls for meditation and sound healing, my synthesizer, an assortment of multi-cultural instruments, and my wireless headset and speaker system.

Contrary to widespread belief about my age and stage, I have no intention of downsizing right now. A strong inner voice whispered that I may need this equipment in the near future, and when my inner voice offers me her highest intuitive wisdom, I listen. Until that “someday” comes, I will continue to hone my craft, sing for the joy of it all, compose new songs with meaningful lyrics, and record new albums with positive messages and values.

For over thirty years, I’ve had the honor of teaching vocal music to babies, toddlers, preschoolers, kindergarteners and elementary school children. If I receive a call to teach tomorrow, I will sing an operatic YES on high C, using my enthusiastic mezzo soprano fortissimo voice, and I will elongate the emotional tone of that “YES” for a duration of sixteen beats in largo tempo.

YES to all the joy.
YES to all the laughter.
YES to the light that the children shine into my soul.
YES to teaching a well-balanced music curriculum that challenges children's minds.
YES to teaching a well-balanced curriculum that ignites imagination and creativity.
YES to a well-balanced curriculum that encourages children to not only play the melody and rhythm with accuracy, but to also feel the emotion of a musical piece.
YES to teaching children how to compose and improvise original songs.
YES to encouraging children to share their unique creation with their peers.
YES to consciously leaving my structured lesson plan for the teaching moment, intuitively trusting that a creative force within me will intuitively sense what to do next.
YES to the energy that the vibration of music offers both young and old alike.
YES to all the love that forever bonds both student and teacher.

Allow me to share a short story that reinforces the powerful truth within that last sentence: “YES, to all the love that forever bonds both student and teacher.”

I am the founder and moderator of a Facebook community called “Shift of Heart.” One day, I received a Facebook message from one of its members.

“Are you the same Cheryl Melody Baskin that taught elementary school music in Malden? If you’re the same person, I was your student and you inspired me to sing, love music, and I am even learning to tap dance now. I belong to several major choirs, sing at an assisted living facility, and often do cantorial services. Thank you for inspiring me. I remember you and appreciate all you did to make music come alive for me. I was shy and bullied a lot, and you changed my life.”

I share this anecdote to emphasize the emotional and lasting impact we can have on every child we reach, teach, and inspire. When we incorporate a strong music education program, we have the potential to change lives, and yes, even save our tweens and teens from committing suicide.

Music making and music education are beneficial to every child of every background and ability. It can also have a dramatic effect on children who are “on the margins” intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially, too.

As music educators, we have the magic potion. Many of these children feel like they are “the other,” left out, are bullied, don’t do well academically, and feel alone in the world. Music is the gift that can save these precious children emotionally and spiritually, giving them opportunities for self-esteem development, social-emotional interaction, musical exploration, and creative learning.

I was one of the children who needed music and needed saving. I was shy, bullied, disinterested in school, lonely and dead inside. Mrs. Pappasakis, my elementary school music teacher, changed my life. She not only saved me emotionally, but the holistic way she enthusiastically imparted her joy for teaching music made me curious to know more about that world and I haven’t stopped since. When she entered my class, something in my spirit lifted and life was good again. I loved her long black hair with a ribbon in it, her shining smile, her inviting speaking tone, her beautiful singing voice, her natural joy, and her
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enthusiasm. I felt safe, and that feeling of safety, acceptance and warmth opened my mind and heart to want to learn anything she was willing to teach.

Every Wednesday, she would walk into my classroom with a warm smile on her face and would teach us about scales, notation, key signatures, melody, rhythm, meter, musical expression, rounds, canons, partner songs, musical form, and harmony. Everything we learned was hands-on and experiential, and I was in music heaven.

We would sing the same song six diverse ways. She would ask, “How many ways can you sing this line, Cheryl Melody? Can you sing it in a staccato kind of way? How about legato? How about singing it using your forte voice? Class, can you add a crescendo in the eighth measure? Let’s change the rhythm and meter. Let’s take a little creative liberty for a moment. Can we find a way to syncopate the rhythm in the second measure? What if we want to make this song sound sad? Angry? Excited? What could we do to it? Could we change the key, the tempo, or the words? How about inventing different movements to go with the lyrics? Ideas, anyone? Now, let’s sing the song in its original form.”

I was in the palm of her hand. Captivated, curious, and in awe. I couldn’t wait for the following Wednesday to come.

I became a music educator because of Mrs. Pappasakis, and when I teach, I emulate her comprehensive approach to music education along with her joy, smile, tone of voice, full presence, patience, love, safety, acceptance, compassion, and even the bow in her long hair.

One more point. Mrs. Pappasakis was not only an excellent music educator, but she was also a beautiful human being, and as a child, sensing the wonderful human being who was also my music teacher made all the difference in my willingness to learn.

An inspirational anecdote: I was busy teaching the “One Planet” song to my kindergarteners. One of the students in the class suddenly raised his hand. He asked, “Where is the flower in your hair, Cheryl Melody? It’s not in your hair today!”

His question caught me off-guard. I was focusing on teaching all the musical aspects and lyrical messages of this song. His question addressed the human being inside the music teacher.

I had always worn a colorful plastic flower in my hair, and this time, I had left it in the car. This beautiful child pointed out that everything matters.

Teaching music is more than the lesson plans and a stellar music curriculum. It’s about who we are as human beings and the values we bring into the classroom. The lesson plan, an enthusiastic presentation, the lyrics within a song, eye contact, tone of voice, choice in clothing, and yes, even a plastic flower matter. The whole package matters. If we’re having a difficult day and we lose patience, even a human apology matters.

Fall is filled with excitement and new beginnings. A fresh start. As you begin the year, take a few meditative moments to acknowledge all you give to the children without realizing it, and keep in mind that you are someone’s Mrs. Pappasakis, too.

Cheryl Melody Baskin is an early childhood and elementary school music educator, composer, national performing artist of peace and anti-bullying concerts, sound healer, motivational speaker, and a recording artist of nine award-winning albums under the name, “Cheryl Melody.” She has also written a three-act musical peace play and is an award-winning author of three motivational self-help books.
Allow me to re-introduce
Embracing the New Music Educator!

By Catherine Iatesta

About twelve years ago, Mary Correia, a veteran teacher and mentor to many, began a program to support new teachers in Massachusetts. The program was piloted by North East District and created a strong community. I remember many meetings in the Correia home that created a safe space to ask questions and participate in professional development. The program expanded to support teachers across the state through mentorship and collaboration.

ETNME is starting again this year and hopes to support new teachers whose student-teaching and early teaching experiences were impacted by Covid and remote learning.

Are you a veteran teacher that is willing to help mentor a new or new-to-the-area teacher?

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Connecting Authentically through Improvisation

By Gareth Dylan Smith

It is essential for people to express themselves, and vital that we get to do so authentically. Music can provide awesome opportunities for authentic expression, yet, as in other areas of our lives, freedom of expression can be inhibited by strict adherence to rules. It’s important that we follow instructions, of course, to keep everyone safe and assured, but often having fewer guidelines can open up more expressive opportunities. In this article I provide a brief exploration of some of the potential of free improvisation.

Improvised Drum Solos

The Managing Director of Boston University Art Galleries likes me to play two hours of improvised drum solos in the glass-fronted Stone Gallery once each semester. I keep pinching myself because noodling around on a drum kit for hours with no one complaining because you’re essentially an art installation is my teenage dream come true! It’s also quite a responsibility. Alongside the physical and emotional preparation for soloing in public, I re-imagine my instrument and the content of my playing according to the exhibition I am accompanying in the gallery; this past year I played solos alongside Steve Locke’s exhibition, Homage to the Auction Block, and amidst graduate MFA design students’ final portfolios. For the latter, I built a drum kit (pictured below) that was bigger than any I had played to date, that I hoped was visually inviting, and which provided me with visual and timbral stimuli to explore.

These art gallery solos are incredibly freeing because, without any instructions to follow or a score to answer to, there is no way I can get the music wrong – a source of considerable relief. That being said, I am keen to improvise well. To improvise freely and well, one has to be completely focused and present. This is of course true to an extent in all that we do – the more we pay attention, the better outcomes are likely for all. A constantly distracted friend at a dinner party, for instance, can be intensely frustrating (I write as someone who is perpetually distracted). But when improvising with no roadmap and only a rough sense of how long to play for till we’re done, total focus and devotion to the task at hand are essential for continuity and coherence.

My primary responsibility as an improviser is to be authentic and honest in what I play – a principle I try to adhere to across my creative output. This means letting the music evolve organically; avoiding falling back on obvious, lazy tropes in my playing; ensuring I listen and respond to the sounds I make and how they resonate in the space; not playing more than I need to; and playing everything the music and the moment demand. The soloing opportunities in the art gallery enable me to be expressive, creative, and playful – core aspects of how I like to approach music and life. British musician and scholar, Simon Rose, writes in his marvelous book, The Lived Experience of Improvisation: In Music, Learning and Life (2017), that “improvisation is a condition of being-in-the-world,” urging fellow music makers that “our response to being truly alive is to act with what is, the world of time and things, through which we improvise.” Putting improvisation at the center of how we engage with the world really resonates with me.

Being Authentic

When playing improvised music, I bring my full self. I bring an honest, open, vulnerable version of me, otherwise I cannot play authentically. This is perhaps an easy claim to make, and an easily refutable one at that, given that I am the only one who can really tell how present or honest I am in my playing. I try to “show up” for myself, and in doing so, the most authentic version of me is there for anyone watching, listening, or improvising with me. On some days it is easier to show up than on others; I am getting better, though,
at unburdening my mind for a while on cue and allowing myself to “just be” at the drums. I strive for the same in my teaching, and being authentic in my music making makes it easier for the authentic me to show up in the classroom.

I understand that the many privileges I embody and carry with me – such as my white skin color, English language proficiency, and education – allow me a level of comfort to be my authentic self in ways and to an extent that others may not feel comfortable doing. I hope, though, that, rather than being a gratuitous exhibition of privilege, by improvising I am modeling a mode of musicking with which all my students can be encouraged to engage. I firmly believe that modeling for our students an authentic way of being can be empowering.

Some aspects of work and other obligations can pull me in directions less conducive to evincing the most authentic version of me. For this reason, I invested in some accountability tattoos. One on my upper left arm reads “Eudaimonia”, an ancient Greek term focusing me on what matters and reminding me I am only able to thrive if those around me also flourish. A tattoo on my right forearm depicts a fiery quill inscribing “Sinceritas”, a Latin affirmation that spurs me to create with clarity and passion but without BS – in text, in teaching, and when making music.

Parker J Palmer, in his inspiring book, *The Courage to Teach* (1998), urges teachers that the more authentic the version of ourselves we bring to the classroom, the more authentic and honest the engagement will engender among our students; furthermore, the more authentic versions of themselves our students may feel confident being.

When musicians improvise, we discover and express ourselves through our authentic voices, and by listening and responding to the sounds we make and to those of the environment and musicians around us. When we consider the people and places with whom and in which we improvise, this holistic, immersive musical practice helps us to be kind, vulnerable, sensitive, reciprocal, engaged, humble, confident, and fully present. When we collaborate on anything as non-verbal and fundamentally human as making music – especially making improvised music – it is essential that we bring ourselves in the fullest and most authentic way possible. Improvising demands of us investment of time, self, and spirit, and it rewards us exponentially for it!

### Freeing Students to Improvise Freely

When the Managing Director of BU Art Galleries invites me to play drums, my imagination runs wild – it is so liberating! Wanting my students to be able to feel the same, I ran a course last fall semester on free improvisation. I also included a free improvisation intervention in the middle of my three-hour Tuesday evening class in the spring semester on psychology and sociology in music education. The guidelines I gave the class for making music were 1) Listen, 2) Support your friends, 3) Think “How can I make this sound better?” and 4) Trust yourself and one another.

Free improvisation was new to most of my students, so it took a little while to get used to playing without a safety net and for everyone to feel comfortable. After not too long, though, we made some beautiful and frequently quite profound music together.

Feedback from students about their experiences was affirming:

- I feel like our inner child came out during these improvisations… I think we were all able to open up a bit and share our more vulnerable, human sides.
- In all my band career through school and college I’d had no chance to improvise, no chance to explore… this made me think about creating a classroom culture that is more open and focused on being present.
- Teaching doesn’t have to be serious all the time. Teaching is also about play, making mistakes, and try new things.
- I think I’d like to include free improvisation in my teaching as a way for students to have fun, try new instruments, be playful and curious, and bond with each other.

I also ran free improvisation sessions with middle school students at the recent Play On festival hosted at Boston University and the students warmed to the chance to make music together without fear. The dynamic and timbral variety was stunning, and we all got to laugh as well – improvisation can elicit an unadorned joy.

Improvising might not be in everyone’s comfort zone, but if you think it could be in yours, I strongly urge you to try it. Moreover, encourage your students to improvise too; I have a suspicion they might love it. You can create something original and unique together. The process helps to cleanse the cognitive palette, to revive and refocus the mind, and on top of all that, you get to experiment with sound. Creative play is an important part of what makes us human, and you don’t need an art gallery to do it in (although I admit that is rather good fun!). Improvising alone and together helps adults and children alike to rediscover an innocence that can be lacking in lives full of responsibilities and deadlines.

Improvisation helps us to hold and cherish the present, and it provides a unique calm while we do it. Most of all, improvisation is invigorating and fun.

### REFERENCES


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.
Amplifying the Voices of Music Educators in Policy-Making Within and Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Helen Leung

In Summer 2021, I explored how music educators perceive and engage with policy in their schools as part of the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program at Boston University. I worked alongside Dr. Kelly Bylica, Assistant Professor at Boston University’s Department of Music Education. We aimed to explore music educators’ knowledge of policy knowhow, particularly amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Policy knowhow is “the capacity to understand, speak, and act with a policy frame of mind that is relevant to educators.” We were curious, specifically, about how music educators feel present and active in the making and enactment of policies.

Although teachers are the frontline enactors of policy, they often report feeling left out of the administrative decision-making processes. As a result, policies that are made without music educators’ input often do not acknowledge the needs in the music classroom. If administrators find music teachers’ input to be inconsistent to their agendas, the needs for music programs may be forgotten, intentionally ignored, or selectively attended to. Or, policies would be twisted into Edvertising strategies, only aimed to meet state benchmarks rather than to provide a meaningful arts education to all students. Teachers are then put in a passive position to navigate policy. They may react by maneuvering through policies to maximize how the policy can support their students in the music classroom. This can limit music teachers’ ability to enact policies when their voice can only be heard in their own sphere in the music classroom.

To help music educators feel acknowledged and heard in policy conversations, here are three suggestions we propose:

Recognizing the Work of “Street-level Bureaucrats”

Teachers are policy makers, changers, and enactors, acting as “street-level bureaucrats who interact directly with the public.” Even though music educators actualize policies on the ground-level every day, their roles and their work with implementing policy are not always recognized. When teachers are constantly kept out of the decision-making processes in their schools, it can feel disempowering. Administrators as well as local and state officials should find ways to recognize, acknowledge, and label what teachers are already doing. Teachers should also recognize their own policy knowhow to claim space and amplify their voices at the policy making table.

In order for resources to reach the needs on the street level, close examination between policy, people, and place is essential. To recognize the policy work in which teachers engage, local decision makers should collect information from teachers on needs and conditions of the music programs, in order to adjust resource allocations accordingly. Framing, listening, and working to understand the stories of how policies are implemented on the classroom level are credible ways to shape policy practice and advocacy.

Using Policies to Refocus at the Heart of Education

There is often a lack of transparency and communication in the process of policy design. When policy is often perceived as intrusive and forced from a top-down hierarchy, teachers may develop “benign” policies, which act as subversive procedures to work around the current policies. Teachers sometimes use these “benign” policies to create policies they actually trust. These “benign” policies then allow teachers to manifest an ethos that aligns with their educational beliefs to resist other policies.

However, “benign” policies are only a backdoor to avoid policies that do not align with music educators’ beliefs and interests. The policy design processes and decision-making structures need to be more transparent, communicative, and inclusive. Multiple stakeholders, including music educators themselves, should be included in the decision-making structure. By involving teachers who enact policies on the ground-level, it can help ensure that the focus of policy work is on students and school environments.

Policy can be used as a tool to promote agendas, but it should rather be an opportunity to refocus on the students, their participation, and wellbeing. Patrick Schmidt reminded music educators that policy action is about “creating the conditions for the practices we think...
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matter most.” Different stakeholders should initiate honest conversations on the focus of the music program, to determine how the policies should be designed. Is the community focused on musical achievements and awards? On the ability of playing more difficult repertoires? On the expansion of different ensembles? On engaging more students regardless of ability level? On strengthening a young music program? Depending on individual music programs, topics as such can help navigate the direction of policy design and resource allocation. Ultimately different stakeholders can collaboratively construct a mutually agreed meaning of “a successful music program” that is unique to their students.

Equipping Educators with Knowledge and Policy Knowhow

Deeper understanding and increased awareness of policy will help teachers to better adapt to policy changes. To help create places for teacher voices at the decision-making table, we must move toward a more collaborative approach to making policy. Teachers can collaboratively construct a mutually agreed meaning of “a successful music program” that is unique to their students. As early as starting from music educator preparation programs, teachers of policy knowhow should include music teacher preparation, professional development, and professional organization initiatives, as well as knowledge of how different stakeholders can work together to implement policy.

1. Other than teaching pedagogical knowledge, music educator preparation programs should also prepare pre-service teachers with understanding and tools to increase policy knowhow and readiness. An earlier exposure to policy knowhow and the decision-making process will benefit pre-service educators before they engage with policy more frequently in the field. The understanding of policy taught in pre-service programs should expand beyond budgetary concerns. Institutions can provide course offerings related to school governance and decision-making on different levels to increase pre-service teachers’ policy knowhow.

2. In-service teachers engage with policy in their daily work in the classroom frequently. Teachers who share similar experiences can be a great resource to each other while navigating policy. Resource gathering and networking opportunities on the local and state level can facilitate the sharing of experience among in-service teachers. Professional organization initiatives play an important role in organizing professional development and networking events.

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State MEA and national organizations should provoke more conversations on policy awareness and participation in conferences and professional development opportunities.

The pandemic has shed light onto the ongoing issue that music educators are often left out of the policy making process. More recognition of music educators’ effort in enacting policy as well as increased transparency and communication may help create a more friendly decision-making structure for music educators. Increased policy knowhow among music educators might help generate policies that are able to bring out the potential of music programs.

Helen Leung currently teaches chorus at Randolph Community Middle School in Randolph, MA. As a Hong Kong native and a Boston Public Schools alum, she recently received her undergraduate degrees from Boston University in Music Education and Sociology. Leung also serves as Assistant Conductor at Boston Children’s Chorus, where she works with talented middle school singers in the Central Intermediate Advanced choir. Through celebrating students’ various identities in the classroom, Leung endeavors to foster compassionate advocates for social justice and equity grounded in cultural responsiveness.
Synthesizer Basics

By Chee-Ping Ho

Are you interested in using synthesizers with your music students? While this idea can be intimidating, some basic knowledge can support you and your music learners in accessing this electronic instrument. This article will present some foundational definitions and ideas to get you started!

Most virtual and hardware synthesizers in the market are filled with bells and whistles, which can be very confusing and distracting especially for young learners.

In order to understand them better we will explore the most important modules/components using Ableton’s Synthesis Playground online synthesizer:

This web synthesizer is a great tool to learn the fundamental aspects of synthesis in electronic music.

The key elements to learn from the learning synthesizer:

- Oscillator
- Amplitude Envelope
- Low-Pass Filter
- LFO

The purpose of an Oscillator is to create the sound. The Oscillator is a sound generator (commonly seen in hardware synthesizers as VCO / Voltage-Controlled-Oscillator). The waveforms are used to design the timbre, frequency, and tone color as source material in electronic music sounds.

The Amplitude Envelope is a shape that controls volume and it does this every time a note is pressed. The four stages of a standard Envelope are: ADSR (Attack, Decay, Sustain, and Release)

- **Attack:** When the key is pressed you can modify the volume taken from 0 to 127. Instruments like drums and guitar sounds usually have fast attack. Atmospheric Pad sounds usually have slow attack.
- **Decay:** Follows after attack time, going from maximum level to sustain level.
- **Sustain:** Same level of amplitude as long as the key is pressed.
- **Release:** Starts as soon as the key is released.
Some of the most common settings for the Amplitude Envelope:

- **Switch**: On or Off
- **Bowing or Blowing**: Attack decay and release would be longer for string instruments. Sustain levels would be lower for brass instruments.
- **Pluck**: Non sustaining envelope perfect for imitating struck or plucked instruments.
- **Ramp**: This envelope imitates a reversed crash cymbal; it swells in with sudden stops. Great for transition raisers to build energy then followed by a drop.

The role of the **Low-Pass Filter** is to shape the sound; it acts as a subtractive tool to remove some of the upper harmonics or control the brightness from what the oscillator generates. [https://learningsynths.ableton.com/en/filters/filters-in-the-real-world](https://learningsynths.ableton.com/en/filters/filters-in-the-real-world)

**LFO** (Low Frequency Oscillator), something that moves exclusively and cyclically, that’s designed to control a parameter from another module. For example to control the pitch to create vibrato. [https://learningsynths.ableton.com/en/lfos/modulating-pitch-with-oscillators](https://learningsynths.ableton.com/en/lfos/modulating-pitch-with-oscillators)

Each preset in Ableton Synthesis Playground has its own characteristic. For example, what are the differences between the American Siren and The German Siren? You will find the answer by comparing the **LFO** settings. I would recommend students to go through the entire preset list, analyze the **Amplitude Envelope** settings and pay attention to the **LFO Envelope** as well.

Due to budget constraint, purchasing a professional analog or virtual synthesizer can be costly. But there are more affordable options: for example, Ableton Synthesis Playground is a free, web-based and Chromebook friendly tool. In addition, if your school district has the **SoundTrap** subscription you are in luck! There is a built-in synthesizer students can have access to create their own original synthesizer sounds for electronic music composition/production.

Apply the techniques and terms in this article as a guide, and you should be able to come up with your own lesson plan and start introducing synthesizer basics to your music classroom. Have fun!

Chee-Ping Ho M.S. is an MMEA Conference Committee member and serves as the Manager of Academic Technology for Berklee College of Music. He received his Masters of Science in Music Technology from Indiana University, Graduate Certificate in Compositional Approaches to Film Scoring, and undergraduate dual major in Contemporary Writing & Production, and Music Production & Engineering from Berklee College of Music. He is an active composer/arranger. He also serves as an Associate Lecturer at University of Massachusetts Boston Music Program.
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Remembering Faith Lueth

By Dr. Melinda Bargreen

“Faith” was her middle name – and it was a lifelong principle for Dorothy Faith Lueth, who passed away in August after a brave battle with an aggressive cancer. A devoted teacher and musician, she was Professor of Music Education at Berklee College of Music, where she taught music courses and served as Student Teacher Coordinator. Among the ensembles she regularly conducted was the Gordon College Women’s Choir; she was an active member of Mu Phi Epsilon music honorary.

A graduate of Boston University, Faith Lueth held a master’s degree in choral conducting from the Boston Conservatory and an Artist-Teacher Diploma from the Choral Music Experience Institute. During her career in public school music education, she taught general music, chorus, strings, and music technology. She inspired generations of students with her love of harmony and her formidable work ethic.

Mrs. Lueth served as a choral adjudicator, clinician, and conductor throughout the East Coast and as far afield as Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The winner of several awards for distinguished teaching, she presented choral workshops for state, regional and national music educators’ conferences, and her choral groups have been selected to perform nationwide.

Her students knew her as a warm-hearted, generous mentor and a mighty advocate for music, a woman of high principles and a gift for connecting with all kinds of students. She believed in teaching the whole student, not just to sing, but also to think and to understand.

Her daughter, Rachel Carroll, recalls: “Long before it was part of the school curriculum, she had her students read ‘The Diary of Anne Frank’ and taught them about the Holocaust, and showed them the poetry that came from the students who were their age and how music became a refuge for them. She culminated it by having them perform ‘I Never Saw Another Butterfly,’ and then took the middle-school students on a trip to Europe, showing them the Terezin and Auschwitz death camps, which greatly impacted the kids.”

In order to start a traditional boys’ choir in the public school, Mrs. Lueth bribed the boys with donuts to come to early morning rehearsals. To better connect with the kids, she bought a Nintendo and learned how to play Super Mario Brothers, so she could speak their language and build relationships.

“She cared deeply about each student,” her daughter Rachel remembers. “Every single one.”

Her awards for distinguished teaching have included the Lowell Mason Award, presented by the Massachusetts Music Educators Association for excellence and leadership in music education; the prestigious Distinguished Service Award given by the Massachusetts Music Educators Association for outstanding leadership and contributions to Music Education; and the Dean’s Award for Creative Scholarship and Professional Contributions presented by Berklee College of Music Professional Education Division.

Mrs. Lueth was a past president of Massachusetts ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) and she served on the board of the Eastern Division as Middle School Repertoire and Standards Chair. She also served on the Massachusetts MEA Executive Board in several capacities, including President, Secretary, Higher Ed Representative, and High School Representative. A proponent of strong professional development, she was a three-term Conference Chair. Most recently, she was the Choral Techniques Editor for the Massachusetts Music Educators Journal.

Faith Lueth was also a prominent activist in high-school music education, helping to develop anchor standards for high school choral ensembles in Massachusetts. She was instrumental in developing Common Music Assessments with Connecticut and Massachusetts music educators. For the past several years she was an Ed Prep Reviewer for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. She served as consultant to several school districts in the areas of curriculum development, assessment, and development of the choral program.

“Teaching,” Faith once wrote, “is the most noble of all professions. You can change thousands of lives during the course of your career and affect those lives into adulthood. Letting students develop to their greatest potential has always been part of my teaching. The focus is on the student.”

Faith’s love of music and her ability to motivate students were passed on to her daughter Rachel Lueth Carroll, who also became a music teacher. Faith’s example also has inspired granddaughter Emma to major in Music Education.

Faith is survived by her loving husband of 54 years, Rick Lueth; her daughter Rachel Carroll; her son-in-law Brendan Carroll; and granddaughter Emma Carroll.

The Lueth family would like to extend their sincere gratitude to her many friends who enriched her life for so many years and offered support during this difficult time.
Day in the Life of a Music Teacher:
The First Day!
By Deb Rossmeisl

It’s the fall, and as we all head back into our classrooms or begin the year in a new school, we all experience the same types of issues: What will the first few days of lessons entail? How should we set up our rooms? Is the technology ready to go? Will we remember everyone’s names? …And somehow, with careful planning everything comes together!

For this issue, we take a first-hand look at a “Day in the Life” of a music teacher on her first day of school. Deb Rossmeisl has been a music teacher at Chandler Magnet School in Worcester, MA for the past 28 years. She is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst where she received her bachelor’s degree and master’s degree in music education.

Thank you, Deb, for sharing your first day of the 2022-2023 academic year with us!
—MMEJ Editor

First Day of Music!

We Started the class at the rug with introductions.

We then sang our welcome song and various songs they recalled from the previous year. I always try to get them singing within the first 2 minutes of class.

We transitioned back to the rug where we performed various locomotor movements to a recorded piece of folk music while practicing keeping a beat, starting and stopping, and finding our seats.

We sat in a circle and played the game “Hickey Tickety”. We all kept the beat while saying the chant. The student with the drum responded with “My name is” on the beat and the class echoed. We lined up and went back to class. Great first day!

Music room set up for students.

We have an area for seats with a projector and chalkboard.

We also have a large rug area for movement activities, games and instrument playing.

Seats were assigned and we went over and practiced the school wide PBIS classroom expectations.
Look who is celebrating a new job or milestone this year!

Thank you to those of you who liked, shared, and responded to our social media posts on the MMEA Twitter and Instagram page, as well as on the PreK-12 Music Educator Group on Facebook, over the past several weeks! Please see the Letter from the Editor for how to see our posts. We want to hear from you!

Matthew Buono has recently been selected as the music director of the Andover Choral Society! Matthew is also a member of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus and is the K-4 music teacher at Harrington Elementary in Chelmsford.

Catherine Connor-Moen recently retired as Director of Fine Arts for the Norwood Public Schools! This coming fall she will be joining the music education department at URI as a field supervisor.

Katie Gould is celebrating her 18th year in teaching and is starting a new position in the Norton Public Schools District!

Benjamin Tan is in his fifth year teaching and is celebrating his first year at Ellis Elementary in the Boston Public Schools!

Matt Cunningham’s Concert Choir at Brockton High School has recently been selected to perform at the 2023 NAfME Eastern Division Conference in Rochester, NY in April 2023!
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berklee.edu/music-education
My name is Ashley Paradis and I am the new Chairperson for MMEA-Western District. As a former student who went through Junior and Senior Districts in Western Mass, I am looking forward to taking on this role, now as a music teacher myself. I am entering my sixth year as the Band Director at Pittsfield High School, way out in the Berkshires. In this position I work with Concert Band, Jazz Big Band, and Jazz Combo. In addition, I teach AP Music Theory, Introduction to Guitar, Music Appreciation and World Drumming. I absolutely love this position, the school, and the students; it has truly become my home.

This year, as we enter a somewhat normal school year, I have decided to continue to meet on Zoom for our board meetings, as I know for myself and others, the drive from their respective schools can be a bit cumbersome. That being said, we will still go forth with our two in-person dinner meetings, one in the fall and spring, as well as our in-person meetings during the first rehearsals of our Junior and Senior Festivals.

I am excited to begin my tenure as Chairperson. I would not be able to do this without the help and guidance of our Past Chairperson, Amanda Johnson. As chair, she was able to lead us in two successful festivals during the pandemic, one virtual and one in person. Her dedication to our district was unmatched and I learned so much the last two years.

I hope everyone has an excellent start to the school year!

Below you will find all of our dates for the upcoming 2022-2023 school year.

—Ashley Paradis
Western District Chair
Happy New Year! I sincerely hope that you all had a wonderful summer vacation and were able to take time to not only rest and recharge, but to also recalibrate! Though last school year edged a bit more towards a more typical experience (at least towards the latter part of the year), it was still a far cry away from the world we were so used to pre-pandemic. As we head into this coming school year, I encourage you all to be reflective within your approach to your students, your program, and even your own mindset around the purpose; the “why” of music education, teaching, and learning. What instructional strategies, creative projects, perspectives, and lessons learned will you take with you this coming fall? What initiatives and practices will you leave behind? We work in a world where we are given the chance to reset and reimagine every year and, if taken earnestly, can further provide both our students and us the opportunity to remain energized and hopefully avoid burnout. Speaking of which, one of my own main goals this year is to really focus on my own mental and physical health, and I encourage you to do the same! As the saying goes, “you can’t fill other people’s cups without filling yours first.” To this end, our own personal well-being will only enable us to bring our best selves forward in order to best serve our students and programs as effectively as possible.

Now in my second year of being your Northeastern District Chairperson, I have to again extend a tremendous amount of gratitude to the Executive Board and all of the festival chairs, managers, and assistant managers. I feel fortunate to be working alongside so many incredibly dedicated professionals—thank you! Because of their collaborative efforts through the many challenges we had to navigate last year, the Northeastern District was still able to provide many high quality music-making experiences for our students and for all of you. Additionally, we truly appreciate your flexibility and understanding as we had to make many shifts through last year’s health and safety guidance. To that end, having our students come together in person to collaborate, learn together, and just do something that is so universal to all of us as musicians was exceptionally impactful and meaningful. There were so many conductors of our festivals that commented on how exceptionally well prepared our students were and the quality of human beings they were given the chance to work with. We just have wonderful students and teachers here in the Northeastern District and it shows through so directly and authentically via these experiences. Thank you all for your commitment and belief in what we are trying to provide here!

Along with this, amidst the planning and execution of our festivals this past year, we continue to be committed to working at strengthening our current structures and procedures. Based on the feedback we received from the Spring General Membership Meeting and from our electronic survey that so many of you contributed to regarding our current Junior District Chorus structures, a subcommittee was formed to consider this feedback and to create a more inclusive structure for all vocal students in the MMEA Northeastern District. The plan was presented and approved at our Executive Board meeting on June 6. Upon careful consideration, it has been decided that next year the Jr. District Festival will be running a full Mixed Chorus (SATB) with an additional Treble Chorus (SSA) that is void of any gender-based enrollment. Students will audition by voice part only and will be sorted into groups similar to how our band students are sorted into band and orchestra. It is hoped that this new structure will provide a more inclusive experience for students of all identities and backgrounds. For more information and audition details around this change, please check out the following QR code!

We are planning on holding all auditions and festivals in-person this year unless things change around Covid19. Please note our district website (www.northeasterndistrict.org) for updates as well as festival and audition information. If you are a new teacher, an experienced educator who has moved positions into the Northeastern District, or an educator who has changed positions within the district— congratulations and WELCOME! We are psyched to have you here! Please be sure to login to our website’s registration page to update teacher information as soon as possible to ensure that you receive important email updates and so our program information will be correct. You can also
sign up for emails and Remind updates via our website. Also, if you are interested in serving on the MMEA Northeastern District Executive Board, there are two open positions: Professional Development Coordinator (will need to be voted in) and College Liaison (appointed position). Please reach out to me directly with your interest and your bio!

Finally, if you have any announcements, updates, or exciting things going on within your own work or in your own school districts, please share them with us! We would love to highlight and celebrate all of the amazing things that our membership has going on here in the Northeastern District.

I wish you all the very best for an amazing District.

With warmest and most sincere regards,

—Jared L. Cassedy
Chairperson
MMEA, Northeastern District

K-12 Performing Arts Coordinator
Lexington Public Schools, Lexington, MA
chairperson@northeasterndistrict.org
As we enter this new year I hope this finds you well rested and ready to resume some more normality in our chosen profession post pandemic. I know that many of our programs are experiencing “long COVID” that may take us years to recover fully from. Smaller numbers, lessened capability, social issues and more seem to be what I’m hearing from folks across our district. Keep plugging away! It will get better soon!

In June we were able to award five $500 scholarships in memory of Dick Shattuck, longtime teacher, mentor, organist, friend and our former chairperson. Those who received scholarships are: Kyle Gildner - Brockton, Allison Zeoli - Pembroke, Andrew DiCicco - East Bridgewater, Lauren DeCoste - Dighton-Rehoboth and Anna Minichino - Hanover. This was an impressive group of young people and they will receive their checks after successfully completing their first semester. If you have students who you know are going to pursue music education please encourage them to apply for next year.

As a result of our elections in June I’d like to welcome new members to our Board. Matt Harden is your Chairperson Elect and will take over for me after this year. Adam Gruschow will serve as Instrumental Representative and Molly McNulty will be our General Music Representative. Returning will be Jennifer Hartnett, Choral Representative and Sara Goddu, Secretary. Congratulations to you all!

You have probably heard by now that all our audition forms have been aligned with the other four districts and Allstate. This was a monumental project that took well over a year to accomplish. The forms are now on our website and you should review them as you prepare your students for auditions this fall.

As you’re driving home this week I’d like to ask you to ask yourself two questions. The first is “What can the Southeastern District do to serve me better?” The second is “What can I do to serve the Southeastern District in some small way?” When you get those answers please share them with me! We are a dedicated group that want you to be involved and have fun too. Some of the things we do are pretty epic. All are welcome! At this writing there are a few vacancies including hosts for our festivals.

—Bill Richter
Southeastern Chairperson

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT CALENDAR 2022–2023

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<td>MOLLY MCNULTY</td>
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EASTERN DISTRICT

It is my distinct pleasure to begin my tenure as your Eastern District Chairperson. I was fortunate to serve as the Central District Chairperson about 10 years ago during my time at North Middlesex Regional High School and I’m currently in my 5th year in the Medfield Public Schools as K-12 Director of Music and Medfield High School Band Director.

Although my time in Eastern District has been brief and my time on its Executive Board has only been 2 years as chair-elect, I have been blown away by the members of your board and their commitment to music education across ALL grade levels and ALL types of education experiences. As a past chairperson, I remember how the logistical details and complexities of running the junior/ senior festivals could easily dominate meetings/discussions, giving very little time and attention to general music, advocacy, and outreach. I have been so impressed that the Eastern District Board is truly committed to all music educators, not just those who bring students to traditional large ensemble festivals.

We are excited to welcome some new members to the board: Blake Siskavich as Chair-elect, Craig Chisholm as Senior Festival Coordinator, and Joanna Compitiello as Junior Festival Coordinator. Many thanks go to out-going board members Chris Noce, Sarah Grina, and Kevin Maier for their years of service to our district and its students. We are thrilled that plans...
are in place to return to in-person events and more detailed information will be forthcoming. Our General Membership Meeting will be held on Monday, October 17th, in the evening with more information on location and exact time to come.

Around this time last year, I gave up on trying to predict the future beyond about a week or so. Instead, I decided that no matter what direction things went, I’d try to be prepared and be at peace with that plan. I have no doubt that no matter how this school year unfolds, the dedicated members of your board will do an amazing job and that you will all continue your inspirational work with students.

—Jason Bielik
Eastern District Chair

**Eastern District Updates**

Check the MMEA Eastern District website for 2022/2023 audition dates and festival information.

Our annual Fall General Membership Meeting will take place on Monday, 10/17. Details/location will be forthcoming about the event.

PDP’s are available for participation in Eastern District activities—more info can be found on the Professional Development page on our website.

**IMPORTANT:** Make sure to log in to the festival registration area and update your contact information, as well as add any colleagues not currently listed.

**ADVERTISERS INDEX**

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**EASTERN DISTRICT EXECUTIVE BOARD 2022–2023**

**CHAIR**
Jason Bielik
jobielik@mmeaeasterndistrict.org

**CHAIR-ELECT**
Blake Siskavich
bsiskavich@mmeaeasterndistrict.org

**PAST DISTRICT CHAIR**
Brianna Creamer
bcreamer@mmeaeasterndistrict.org

**SECRETARY**
Susan Memoli
smemoli@mmeaeasterndistrict.org

**TREASURER**
Ryan Snyder
rsnyder@mmeaeasterndistrict.org

**ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH**
Daniel Rivenburgh
drivenburgh@mmeaeasterndistrict.org

**GENERAL MUSIC COORDINATOR**
Colleen Martin
cmartin@mmeaeasterndistrict.org

**JUNIOR FESTIVAL COORDINATOR**
Joanna Compitiello
jcompitiello@mmeaeasterndistrict.org

**SENIOR FESTIVAL COORDINATOR**
Craig Chisholm
ccchisholm@mmeaeasterndistrict.org

**AUDITIONS COORDINATOR**
Christopher Memoli
cmemoli@mmeaeasterndistrict.org

**HIGHER EDUCATION**
Sommer Forrester
sforrester@mmeaeasterndistrict.org

**HISTORIAN**
Rebecca Damiani
rdamiani@mmeaeasterndistrict.org

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**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
MUSIC AT Providence College

MUSICIANS AT PROVIDENCE COLLEGE enjoy individualized attention in small classes, a broad range of performance opportunities, and state-of-the-art practice and performance facilities. Grounded in the liberal arts, our programs prepare students for careers in music or virtually any field.

AREAS OF STUDY:
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Music Education Major
Musical Theatre Track
Music Technology & Production Major or Minor

ENSEMBLES:
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Jazz Ensembles • Opera Musical Theatre
Orchestra • Pep Band • Symphonic Winds

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT AUDITIONS.

MUSIC.PROVIDENCE.EDU/PROSPECTIVE-STUDENTS
Welcome back to all educators as we all strive for a successful school year. It is my pleasure to be the CDMMEA Chairperson and my hope to provide a voice and support to all K-12 music educators across central Massachusetts. As we look ahead to this year our executive board is excited to bring our festivals back to “normal”. These past few years have been difficult to say the least for all of our programs across central MA with each of us finding strengths and struggles as we rebuild or maintain our programs. While the Covid-19 pandemic opened our world to the use of zoom for meetings, it could never replace the act of a live performance. All of us at CDMMEA wish you all across the Commonwealth the best throughout this year in music education.

—J.P. Lancot,
Central District Chair

### CENTRAL DISTRICT CALENDAR 2022–2023

**OCTOBER**
  - 4:00 p.m. Junior Festival Manager’s Meeting
  - O’Connors, Worcester, MA
- 4:30 p.m. Executive Board Meeting
  - O’Connors, Worcester, MA
- 5:30 p.m. General Membership Meeting
  - O’Connors, Worcester, MA
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner
  - O’Connors, Worcester, MA
- Wed. Oct. 19
  - Senior Festival Audition Registrations due.

**NOVEMBER**
- Wed. Nov. 9
  - 4:00 p.m. Executive Board Meeting, Virtual (Zoom)
- Sat. Nov. 19
  - 8:30-3:30 p.m. CD Senior Festival Auditions
  - (Milford HS)
  - (Jun. Nov. 20th )
- DECEMBER
  - Fri. Dec 9
    - Senior Festival participation forms due
  - Wed. Dec. 21
    - Junior Festival Audition Registrations due.

**JANUARY 2023**
- Wed. Jan. 11th
  - 3:00–9:00 p.m. Senior Festival Rehearsals
  - (North Middlesex Reg. HS)
  - (Snow date Thu. Jan. 12)
  - 3:30 p.m.
    - Sr. Manager’s Meeting
    - 4:00 p.m.
      - Executive Board Meeting
- Fri. Jan. 13
  - 3:00 to 9:00 p.m. Senior Festival Rehearsals
  - (North Middlesex Reg. HS)
  - (Snow date Sat. Jan. 14)
- Sat. Jan. 1
  - 9:30 am–3:00 p.m. Senior CD Festival Dress Rehearsal
  - Mechanics Hall
  - Worcester
- Concert Mechanics Hall,
  - Worcester
- *Concert order: Concert Band, Orchestra, Jazz, Chorus*
- Sat. Jan 21
  - All State Auditions,
  - Shrewsbury High School
  - Shrewsbury, MA
  - (Snow date Jan. 22)

**FEBRUARY 2023**
- Sat. Feb 4
  - 8:30–3:30 p.m.
    - Junior CD Festival Auditions (Grafton HS)
- Wed. Feb. 8
  - 4:00 p.m.
    - Executive Board Meeting
    - Virtual (Zoom)
  - (Snow date Sat. Feb. 11)

**MARCH 2023**
- (tba)
  - MMEA All State Conference and Concert
  - Boston, MA
- Wed. Mar. 8
  - 4:00 p.m.
    - Executive Board Meeting
    - Virtual (Zoom)

**APRIL 2023**
- Mon. Apr 3
  - 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.
    - Junior CD Festival Rehearsal #1,
    - (Bromfield School, Harvard, MA)
  - 4:00 p.m.
    - Executive Board Meeting
    - O’Connors, Worcester, MA
- Wed. Apr 26
  - 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.
    - Junior CD Festival Rehearsal #2,
    - (Bromfield School, Harvard, MA)
  - 4:00 p.m.
    - Executive Board Meeting
    - Bromfield School
    - Harvard, MA

**JUNE 2023**
- Sat. April 29
  - 9:15 to 3:00 p.m.
    - Junior Festival Dress Rehearsals
    - (Franklin HS)
  - **2:00 p.m.**
    - Junior Festival Jazz Band and Chorus
  - **4:00 p.m.**
    - Junior Festival Orchestra and Concert Band

### CENTRAL DISTRICT EXECUTIVE BOARD 2022–2023

**CHAIRPERSON**
- J.P. Lancot
  - (North Middlesex Regional School District)

**PAST CHAIRPERSON**
- Todd Shafer
  - (Blackstone Millville Regional School District)

**SECRETARY**
- Sherri Der Kazarian
  - (Wachusett Regional School District)

**TREASURER**
- Henry Muniz
  - (Medon Upton-Retired)

**PUBLICITY**
- James Joinville
  - (Quaboag Regional School District)

**MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**
- Greg Shannon
  - (Worcester Public Schools)

**HIGHER EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVE**
- Reagan Paras
  - (Ana Maria College)

**SENIOR HIGH REPRESENTATIVE**
- Doug Miller
  - (Wachusett Regional-Retired)

**JUNIOR HIGH REPRESENTATIVE**
- Kate Melfert
  - (Ashburnum)

**ELEMENTARY/GENERAL MUSIC REPRESENTATIVE**
- Leigh Spignese
  - (Northborough/Southborough Public)

**SENIOR CONCERT CHAIRPERSON**
- Arthur Pierce
  - (Leominster Public Schools)

**ASSISTANT SENIOR CHAIRPERSON**
- Craig Robbins
  - (Bromfield Public Schools)

**JUNIOR CONCERT CHAIRPERSON**
- Nick Marcotte
  - (Blackstone Millville Regional School District)

**ASSISTANT JUNIOR CHAIRPERSON**
- Todd Shafer
  - (Blackstone Millville Regional School District)

**AUDITIONS COORDINATOR**
- Steve Archambault
  - (Lunenburg Public Schools-Retired)

**ASSISTANT AUDITION COORDINATOR**
- Michael Lapomardo
  - (Shrewsbury Public Schools)
MMEJ Board and Staff: Who are We?

For each issue, the volunteer MMEJ Board members write articles and recruit other MMEA members to contribute to the Journal in order to represent a wide array of content areas. Let’s meet the Board!

Tony Beatrice (he/him)  
**LARGE MUNICIPALITIES**  
In addition to coordinating the Large Municipalities Column, Anthony Beatrice is the Boston Public Schools Executive Director for the Arts. He received both undergraduate and graduate degrees in music education from UMass Lowell.

Dr. Rhoda Bernard (she/her)  
**HIGHER EDUCATION**  
Rhoda is the founding managing director of the Institute for Accessible Arts Education and the assistant chair of Music Education at Berklee College of Music. She has taught, created courses and programs, and led programs in higher education in Massachusetts for more than 25 years.

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/biaesn](https://www.facebook.com/biaesn)  
Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/biaesn/](https://www.instagram.com/biaesn/)

Kelly Bylica (she/her)  
**RESEARCH & MUSIC TEACHER EDUCATION**  
Kelly serves as Assistant Professor of Music Education at Boston University where she teaches in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. Prior to her work at BU, she was a middle school music educator in Chicago, IL.

[www.kellybylica.com](http://www.kellybylica.com)

Adam Gruschow (he/him)  
**INSTRUMENTAL**  
Adam serves as a music educator in the Scituate Public Schools. He co-teaches 4-12 Band, conducts the SHS Symphonic Band, and teaches 9-12 music technology. He received a Bachelor or Music degree (bassoon) from Ithaca College and received his MA in Music Education from American Band College of Sam Houston State University.

Twitter: [@scituatebands](https://twitter.com/scituatebands) @scituatemusictech

Dr. Brian Gellerstein (he/him)  
**Jazz/Contemporary**  
Dr. Gellerstein is the Director of Fine and Performing Arts for Framingham Public Schools and an Assistant Professor of Music Education at the Berklee College of Music. His research and scholarship concerns the dismantling of White supremacy in music education.

Catherine Iatesta (she/her)  
**NEW MUSIC EDUCATOR**  
Catherine teaches 4-6 beginning and advanced band in the Needham Public Schools. She is also an Executive Functioning coach and mentor to students around the country. She is working to grow ETNME to help mentor novice teachers in the state of MA. She can be reached at catherine_iatesta@needham.k12.ma.us.

Allison Lacasse (she/her)  
**ADVOCACY**  
Allison is the band director at Belmont High School in Belmont, Massachusetts. Allison also serves as the assistant conductor of the Senior Massachusetts Youth Wind Ensemble (MYWE) at New England Conservatory, is a member of the Cambridge Symphony flute section, serves as the Chair-Elect & Junior Festival Coordinator of the Northeastern District of MMEA Executive Board, and is on operational staff for the Western International Band Clinic (WIBC) in Seattle as well as the American Band College Master’s Degree program in Ashland, Oregon.

Instagram: [@belmontbands](https://www.instagram.com/belmontbands)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/marauderbands](https://www.facebook.com/marauderbands)

Allyn Phelps (he/him)  
**GENERAL MUSIC**  
Alongside being the editor of the general music column, Allyn is a lecturer of music education at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and Commonwealth Collegiate Academy. Previously, Allyn taught K-6 elementary music in central Massachusetts, where he experimented with student-directed education and unstructured musical play to encourage agency and autonomy in his classroom.

Stephanie Riley (she/her)  
**TECHNOLOGY**  
Stephanie is the 8-12 choral, music theory, music technology, and piano teacher at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School in South Yarmouth, MA and is her district’s Tri-M advisor. Mrs. Riley holds a BM in Music Education from The Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, MMEd. from the Hartt School at the University of Hartford and a CAGS in Choral Conducting from Messiah University. She is also a Google Certified Educator and Apple Educator and has presented on various music technology topics at the local and regional level.

Jarritt Sheel (he/him)  
**CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS**  
Jarritt is an assistant professor of music education at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA. He is co-founder of #HipHopMusicEd, and a passionate advocate for student-centered learning in arts education.

Twitter: [@jsheelmusic](https://twitter.com/jsheelmusic)  
IG: [@jsheel](https://www.instagram.com/jsheel)

Tom Westmoreland (he/him)  
**INNOVATIONS**  
Tom taught Instrumental Music in Massachusetts from 2004 to 2020 where he focused his teaching on contemporary ensembles and informal learning practices. He currently serves as the chair of MMEA’s Innovations Council and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access (DEIA) Committee, as well as serving on the Conference Committee and MMEJ Editorial Board.

Noreen Diamond Burdett (she/her)  
**BUSINESS MANAGER**  
Noreen is the Associate Executive Director for MMEA and the Business Manager for the Massachusetts Music Educators Journal. She is an Associate Professor at Berklee College of Music and Boston Conservatory.
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*Ph.D. in*: Music Education

JANUARY 15
Deadline for Common App & Music Application

FEBRUARY 2023
Live Audition Days
See UMass music website for dates
Remote audition options available

Learn at umass.edu/music or contact musicadmissions@umass.edu