teaching music
NOVEMBER 2011 VOLUME 19, NUMBER 3

Learning to LEAD

Techniques that can make you a better ensemble director

Turning RHYTHM Into COLOR

Recording Software for the Music Classroom

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT on the Rise

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National Association for Music Education

Neil Varon (lower right) leads the Summer Conducting Institute at Eastman School of Music

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The **SoundTree Institute** Gives Back To School A Whole New Meaning

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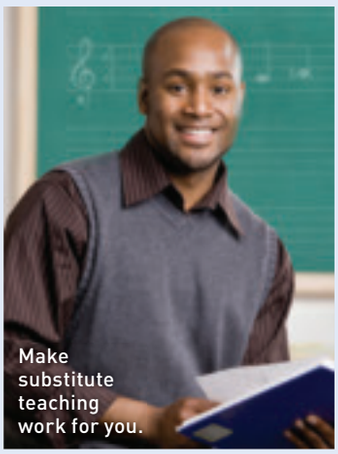
SPOTLIGHT ON nafme.org

WHAT'S NEW AND TIMELY ON THE NAFME WEBSITE



Make substitute teaching work for you.

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FUTURE TEACHERS: *Help—I'm a Sub!* explains how substitute teaching can be career-building.

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FEATURES

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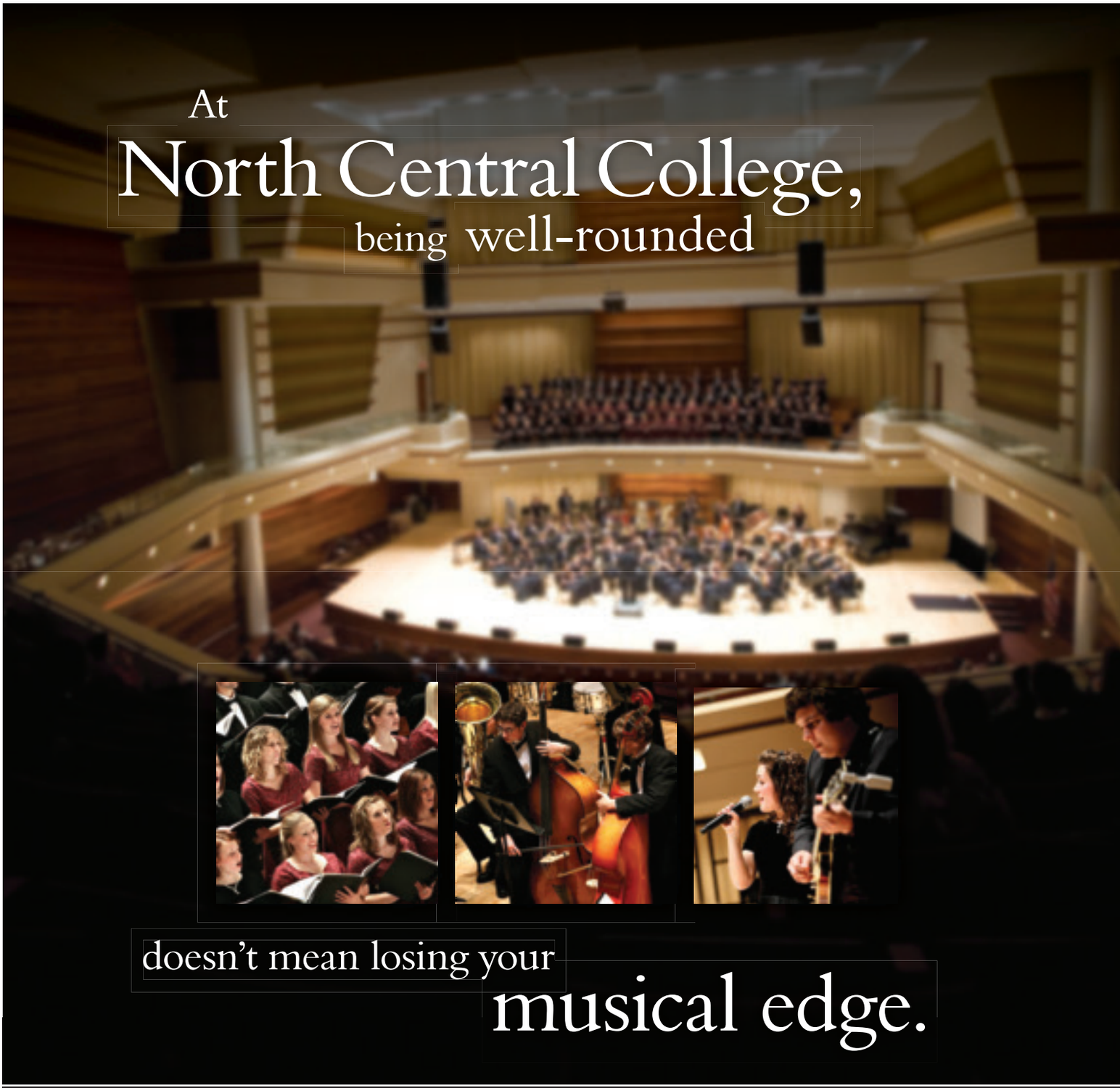
Activate your school's Tri-M Music Honor Society Chapter

Sign up for NAfME Advocacy Ground-swell information and alerts

PHOTO: HEMERA/THINKSTOCK

PLUS >> Vote on Glee Give a Note contest videos through November 7



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The National Association for Music Education is a voluntary, nonprofit organization representing all phases of music education in schools, colleges, universities, and teacher-education institutions. Active NAfME membership is open to all people engaged in music teaching or other educational work in music. *Teaching Music* (ISSN 1069-7446), an official magazine of the National Association for Music Education, is issued to members 6 times per year in August, October, November, January, February, and April at an annual subscription price of $10. **Office of publication: National Association for Music Education, 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191-4348; 703-860-4000.** Produced by In Tune Partners, LLC. Institutions may purchase one volume year of six print or electronic issues for $120. Single copies of issues are $20. A limited number of back issues are available for purchase. Permission requests to reproduce or otherwise use material published in this journal should be submitted to Caroline Arlington at carolinea@nafme.org. Periodicals postage for *Teaching Music* is paid at Herndon, VA 20170, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Teaching Music*, 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191-4348, U.S.A.

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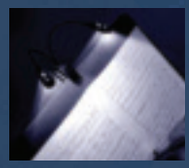
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letters

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Teaching Music has certainly become more inviting to readers, with extremely practical articles. More elements of the music field seem to be covered than in vintage issues. The April 2011 edition contained a real smorgasbord of items; there was something for everyone, from the beginning music teacher to the veteran.

One of the themes embedded in several of the pieces was reaching out to others. Two of the departmental sections focused on advocacy: "What Arts Education Advocates Must Do" by Sandra Ruppert (At Large) and "How to Make Your Principal Your Strongest Advocate" by Debbie Galante Block (Advocacy). In these days of extreme budget cuts, music educators must take up the challenge of promoting music as core curriculum for a sound education.

Keep working in the same direction you have been headed, so *Teaching Music* will continue to be a valuable resource for everyone associated with music education.
—Art Stellar, *former superintendent of the Burke County Public Schools, Morganton, North Carolina*

Research Issues

NAfME has a responsibility to be smart and sensible when discussing research with practitioners, and to present research in ways that are accessible is a challenge. However, there is a difference between making something accessible and getting it wrong, and I feel that *Teaching Music* owes the profession, and the researcher whose work is reported on, an apology over the August 2011 article, "The More You Play, the Better You Read."

The article contains five serious kinds of problems—and it is only a single page in length! First, the conference presentation detailed in the article presents a correlational finding, which is not sufficient to establish a causal link. In other words, the article's title is deeply misleading in suggesting that a causal link has been established, which is reinforced in the also-overreaching graph title ("Effects of Music on ELA Test Scores"). This is a highly significant mistake.

A related problem is that the article fails to consider alternate explanations. More research may establish that music instruction improves reading scores, but the correlation found might be the reverse of what the article suggests—maybe success on an English test causes more success in music! It is also plausible that no causal relationship exists, or the correlation may simply reflect the demographic reality that middle school students who participate in music may be like their high school counterparts who, research finds, are more likely to have better-educated parents and higher GPAs (*cf.* Elpus and Abril's outstanding article in the July 2011 *Journal of Research in Music Education*).

A third problem is presenting a conference presentation as settled knowledge. A conference presentation does not deserve the same respect as a finding scrutinized by the scholarly community through refereed publication. Early research should be shared, but there is an ethical imperative to point out to the reader that this knowledge is tentative and preliminary, and may not stand up to deeper scrutiny.

Good terminology matters, and a fourth problem is the inclusion of terms that muddy the waters of understanding. Specifically, the article suggests that only a correlation was found, but it also introduces terms not normally used to discuss correlational research such as "connection," "positive relationship," and "sustained correlation." Taken together, these terms may mislead the reader that something greater than a correlation has been established.

Lastly, the article reports an anecdote as explanation: a retired music teacher who suggests that "fine motor skills and self-discipline required to play [brass and woodwind instruments]" caused increased scores. To then reinforce this anecdote with a quote from the researcher is misleading to readers. This is not an explanation; it is no more than a hunch.

Every cloud has a silver lining. I used this article in my graduate course in music education research as an example of all that can be done wrong when reporting research, and it worked wonderfully. However, one article like this is more than enough. Let's hope that NAfME can take much more seriously their responsibility, especially when communicating with practitioners who deserve the best information we have to offer.
—Matthew Thibeault, *assistant professor of music education, University of Illinois*

A conference presentation is indeed different from publication in a scholarly journal, and we never meant to suggest otherwise. It should be noted that Juanita Huber's presentation at the December 2010 NYSSMA conference was based on her doctoral dissertation for Liberty University, which necessarily passed through a review process. That said, Dr. Thibeault's points on the editing of the article are well taken, and we will strive to use more cautious language in future Research section articles.—Ed.

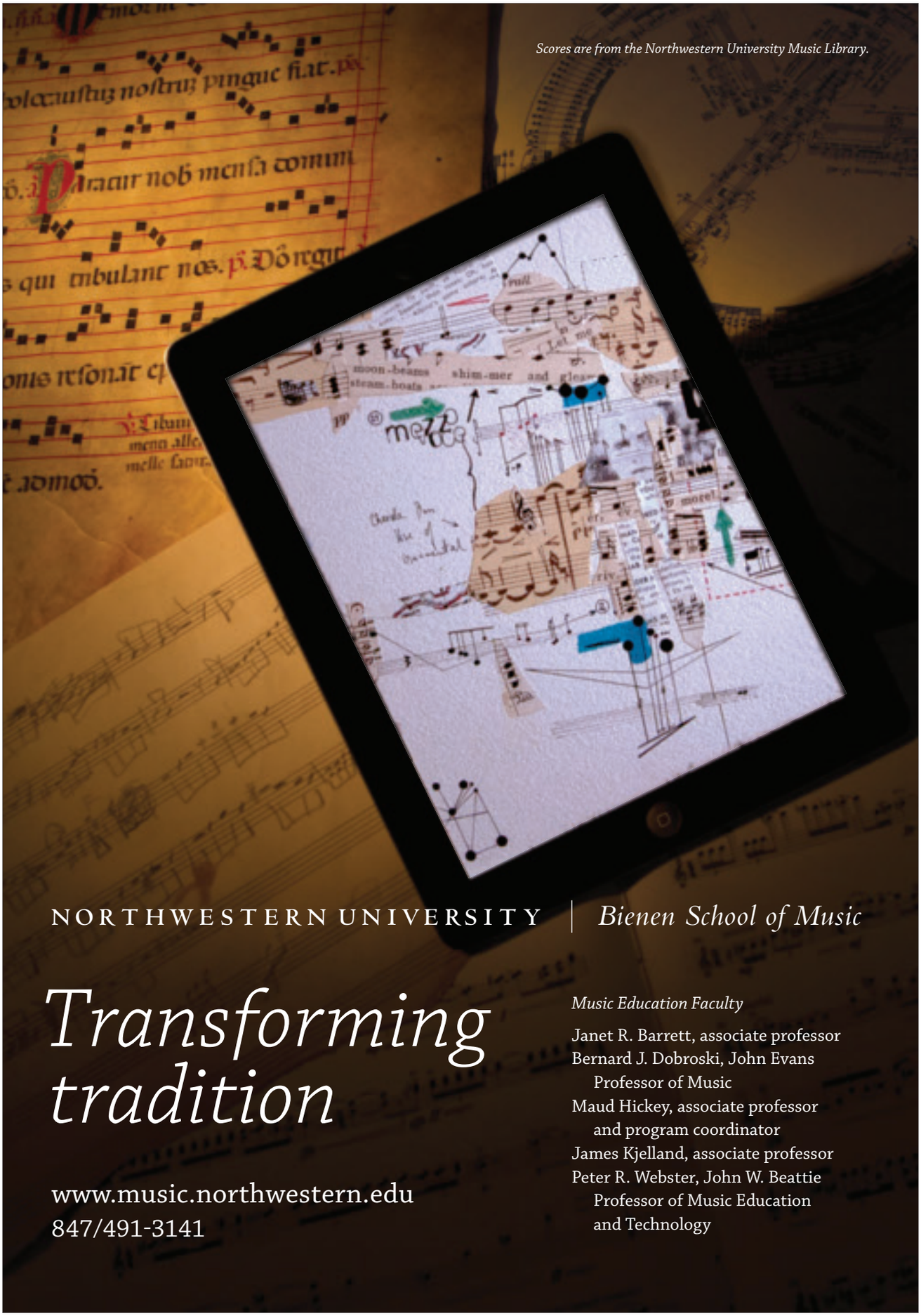
Correction

A story about the Glee Give a Note contest that appeared on page 10 of the October 2011 *Teaching Music* incorrectly attributed a quote to Ryan Murphy, creator of the Fox television show *Glee*. We apologize for the error.

Write to us

Send your thoughts to *lindab@nafme.org* or fax a letter to 703-860-9027. We appreciate hearing from you and sharing your thoughts with your fellow NAfME members. Letters are edited for style and to fit available space. Please include your full name, job title, and the name of the school, city, and state where you teach.

PEN PHOTO: BRAND X PICTURES/THINKSTOCK



By Rosalind C. Fehr, rozf@nafme.org

NAfME member Ron Frezzo took this photo of President Obama speaking in the Rose Garden in September.

NAfME Members Will Use White House Visit to Advocate

In September, three members of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) attended a Rose Garden speech by President Barack Obama at the White House. Although their visits were brief, they are using the event to generate support for music education issues.

NAfME advocacy staff worked with the White House and the U.S. Department of Education to identify exemplary music teachers to participate in the event. One of those teachers was Jason Chuong, an instrumental teacher from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who teaches at seven different public schools. During a pre-speech reception, Chuong was able to speak briefly with President Obama.

The following day, the president made a speech at Fort Hayes Art and Academic High School in Columbus, Ohio, and he mentioned Chuong and how hard he works to bring a high-quality classroom experience to his students. Read more about Chuong at advocacy.nafme.org.

The other two teachers who attended said that the event was meaningful for them as well, and they believed the experience would help as they look for ways to advocate for their music programs.

Ron Frezzo, a vocal music teacher instructor for 24 years at Richard Montgomery High School in Silver Spring, Maryland, is also the advocacy chair for the Maryland Music Educators Association (MMEA), a federated state affiliate of NAfME. "It was a thrill and an education to participate in this national event," he said. "In preparing for it, I spent numerous hours reviewing materials on music advocacy. While late in my career, I believe more and more that we must fight, and that there is a good reason to fight, to maintain and promote the role of music education in the schools. As music teachers often feel alone, we must be our own best advocates. Go to the NAfME website! Have the statistics at hand about the role of music in promoting the whole student; perform the best music you can. Students don't need pablum." Frezzo urged other music educators to enlist the support of parents because "they are your best supporters."

Brian Stacey

Frezzo with members of the Marine Band

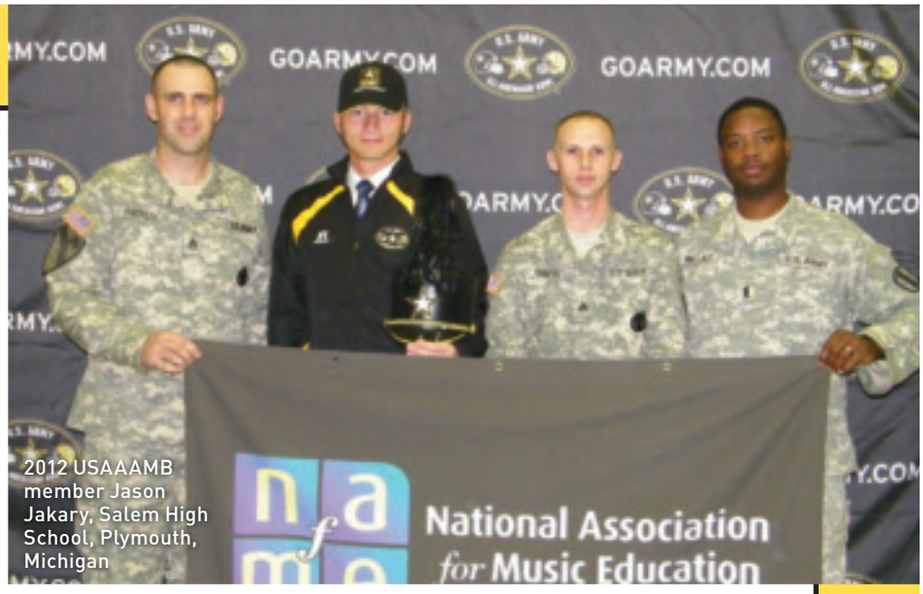
Brian Stacey, a member of the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association and past PMEA district president, teaches general music, music theory, and 4th- through 12th-grade instrumental music in the Glendale (Pennsylvania) School District. "We are fighting to keep a high-quality program in our district," he said, "but it's hard because we're still considered expendable when budget talks roll around."

Stacey said that "it was exciting being 15 feet away from the president," and he believes that his White House visit will help him advocate for a high-quality music education."I've already done a couple of local interviews and it gave me a chance to discuss music education advocacy," he added.

Read more about the music teachers' Rose Garden visit at nafme.org/news.

PHOTOS FROM TOP: COURTESY OF RON FREZZO (2); COURTESY OF BRIAN STACEY

2012 USAAAMB Tour Recognizes Stellar Musicians



2012 USAAAMB member Jason Jakary, Salem High School, Plymouth, Michigan

The 2012 U.S. Army All-American Marching Band (USAAAMB) Selection Tour is under way, continuing until early December. The tour honors 125 marching band musicians throughout the United States chosen for the band, which will perform at the U.S. Army All-American Bowl on January 7, 2012, in San Antonio, Texas.

During the tour, a local Army representative will participate in a special ceremony for classmates, family, and the media that honors each USAAAMB member. The presentations are the first public announcements of each student's selection to the band.

To follow the announcements of 2012 USAAAMB members, visit usarmyallamericanbowl.com/selection_tour.php. The USAAAMB Facebook page includes additional information at facebook.com/USAAAMB.

NAfME is the official selection partner of the USAAAMB and partners with title sponsor the U.S. Army, along with Drum Corps International and All-American Games.

Seniors chosen for the band exhibit exceptional musicianship, marching achievement, character, and leadership.

The U.S. Army All-American Bowl is the premier high school football game in the nation and features the nation's top high school senior football players and marching musicians. The marching band will spend a week creating the halftime show they will perform on game day.

NAfME will accept 2013 USAAAMB nominations until January 31, 2012. Visit nafme.org/zforms/aamb/2013auditionAAN.html for the 2013 nomination form. A nomination does not guarantee acceptance into the USAAAMB. To formally apply for the 2013 band, students must submit an application outlining accomplishments and specific audition videos for All-American Selection Committee review. Applications for the 2013 band will be accepted beginning in the spring of 2012.

Register Now for NAfME's 2012 Music Education Week

PHOTO TOP: COURTESY OF ALL-AMERICAN GAMES; BOTTOM: VISIT BALTIMORE

In 2012 the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) will hold its Music Education Week June 22–26, 2012, in Baltimore, Maryland. Registration is open at nafme.org/events/view/2012-music-education-week-registration.

Most 2012 Music Education Week events will take place at the Baltimore Convention Center and the Baltimore Marriott Inner Harbor at Camden Yards. The exceptions are the All-National Honor Ensembles and the 2012 NAfME Student Composers Contest at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC.

The annual summer meeting gives music educators the chance to participate in hands-on, in-depth professional development academies, network with other music teachers, advocate for music education policy on Capitol Hill, and attend student and professional concerts.

Music educators attending NAfME's professional development academies will receive clock hours and graduate credits.

The academies are

- **Contemporary Popular Music for 21st-Century Middle and High School Students**
- **Instrumental Music Education: Conducting, Rehearsing, and Inspiring with Passion**
- **Jazz Academy (for both new and experienced teachers)**
- **Marching Music Academy**
- **Minds on High School Composition**
- **Musical Theater for Middle and Junior High School-Age Students**
- **Making Eclectic Performance Styles and Technology Work in Your Orchestra Classroom**
- **Students with Special Needs—All Ages, All Abilities Welcome in Music**

Visit nafme.org/events/view/2012-music-education-week-academies to read more about academy sessions. Find an overview of Music Education Week information at nafme.org/events/view/music-education-week. Learn more about the All-National Honor Ensembles at nafme.org/events/view/2012-all-national-honor-ensembles.

The 2012 Concert for MIOSM is aimed at secondary as well as elementary school singers.

The World's Largest Concert® Has a New Format—and Name

Following a nationwide member survey earlier in 2011, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) has revamped the World's Largest Concert® (WLC®) beginning in March 2012. NAfME designates March Music In Our Schools Month®.

The new concert name, The Concert for Music In Our Schools Month, reflects use of the concert as an advocacy tool throughout the month of March.

Music teachers asked for more flexibility because of scheduling challenges in March, so the new format allows teachers to have their students sing and celebrate daily or weekly, or put on a full formal performance of the concert repertoire.

Another change driven by member input is the variety of concert repertoire. At members' request, the 2012 concert program contains songs appropriate for all grade levels, through 12th grade. Songs with choreography, rhythm instruments, and Orff parts, and two songs in foreign languages are also included.

The free downloadable sheet music and audio performance and rehearsal tracks for the Concert songs are available at nafme.org/wlc. For questions or tips on how you can participate in the The Concert for Music In Our Schools Month, contact Susan Lambert at SusanL@nafme.org or at 800-336-3768, ext. 311.

The Hal Leonard Corporation generously supports the 2012 Concert by providing the sheet music and audio files for the program. Teachers are permitted to reproduce sufficient copies of this music for use only in preparation for and performances during March, Music In Our Schools Month. The copyright notice must appear once on each piece and teachers must destroy copies of the music at the end of March 2012.

The 2012 Concert songs are:

- Discussin' Percussion
- Dona Nobis Pacem
- El Vito
- Everlasting Melody
- Feel the Beat
- Rock Island Line
- The Star-Spangled Banner

The Concert for Music In Our Schools Month®

NAfME Responds to the Issue of Teacher Evaluation Systems

Increasing numbers of states, as well as local school districts, are developing teacher evaluation systems. The issue is being brought to the front burner by recent discussions of reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Race to the Top requirements.

In order to actively monitor this important policy area, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) has created a teacher evaluation advisory guide. The guide provides ideas for responding to developments that might affect how you provide music education to your students, and it is available at http://advocacy.nafme.org/page/how-to-advocacy-guides.

NAfME has also prepared a position statement on this topic. Like all such NAfME statements, it is meant to give direction to decision-makers at the national, state, and local levels. Visit nafme.org/about/view/nafme-position-statements to read the statement. (The comment period has concluded.) In addition, the Association has been in contact with key legislators in the United States Congress, using the draft language to inform national elected officials of the issues.

Share what's happening with teacher evaluation in your school district or state at nafme.org/forums or write to info@nafme2.org.

PHOTO: BECKY SPRAY

Candidates Announced for National and Division Presidents-Elect

In 2012 NAfME members will select the 2012–2014 national President-Elect, and members in NAfME's North Central, Western, and Southern Divisions also will choose a 2012–2014 President-Elect. Online voting begins January 4, 2012, and concludes on March 4, 2012.

THE NAfME NATIONAL PRESIDENT-ELECT CANDIDATES ARE

- **Glenn E. Nierman** (Nebraska)
- **David Weatherred** (Washington)

THE NORTH CENTRAL DIVISION CANDIDATES ARE

- **William T. Jastrow** (Illinois)
- **Lance D. Nielsen** (Nebraska)

THE WESTERN DIVISION CANDIDATES ARE

- **David C. Fullmer** (Utah)
- **Kimberly Barclay Ritzer** (Nevada)

THE SOUTHERN DIVISION CANDIDATES ARE

- **Marvelene Moore** (Tennessee)
- **Maribeth Yoder-White** (North Carolina)

The term for national President-Elect and each division President-Elect begins on July 1, 2012, and these individuals will succeed to the presidency on July 1, 2014.

For more information on NAfME's election procedures, visit nafme.org/about/view/guidelines-for-national-and-division-elections.

For questions, contact Marlynn Likens at 703-860-4000 or 800-336-3768, or email MarlynnL@nafme.org.

PHOTOS FROM TOP: JIM TROTTER/COURTESY OF THE ST. LOUIS CONVENTION & VISITORS COMMISSION; BECKY SPRAY

Make Plans for 2012 NAfME Biennial Conference


Union Station in St. Louis, Missouri

Registration is open for the NAfME Biennial Music Educators National Conference March 28–31, 2012, in St. Louis, Missouri. The gathering is sponsored by the National Association for Music Education.

Music education researchers, music teacher educators, PreK–12 music educators, music administrators/supervisors/curriculum specialists, and collegiate music education students will all find valuable sessions and materials.

The 2012 Biennial Music Educators National Conference has a special focus on research in music education and on music teacher education. It will also explore cutting-edge research and pedagogical innovations that will shape the future of the profession.

The biennial gathering will take place at the St. Louis Union Station Marriott. The conference rate is $107 plus tax, and includes complimentary guest room Internet. To receive this rate, make hotel reservations by February 29, 2012.

Visit nafme.org/events/view/2012-biennial-music-educators-national-conference for a tentative schedule and registration, hotel, and other travel information.

Composers Contest Offers Critiques, Cash Prizes

A new collaboration between the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and the European American Musical Alliance (EAMA) will provide several unique opportunities to the student composers who enter the 2012 NAfME Student Composers Contest.

The winning composition in each of three categories—elementary/middle school, high school, and collegiate—will be performed at the John F. Kennedy Center Millennium Stage in Washington, DC, during Music Education Week. In addition, the winner and honorable mention in each category will receive cash prizes provided by the European American Musical Alliance.

Philip Lasser, president of the EAMA and composition faculty member at the Juilliard School, will conduct a mini-seminar prior to the Kennedy Center concert for the winning composers and attendees of the Composition Academy at Music Education Week.


As with the 2011 Young Composers Contest, students' compositions will be played at the Kennedy Center.

An award-winning composer, Lasser conducts the European American Musical Alliance Summer Music Program at the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris in France. The high school winner will be considered for admission to this prestigious seminar. In addition, at least one winner will be invited to a tour of the Juilliard School as Lasser's guest.

For the 2012 contest, compositions can be written for any combination of flute, clarinet, oboe, horn, or bassoon, not to exceed a quintet, with or without piano. No piano solo compositions will be accepted. All entrants, who must be students of NAfME members, will receive written evaluations of their compositions.

The submission deadline for the NAfME Student Composers Contest is March 1, 2012. For more, visit nafme.org/gp/student-composers/competition or contact SusanL@nafme.org.

Online Auditions Are Open
for NAfME's 2012 All-National Honor Ensembles

Outstanding student musicians from throughout the country will rehearse and perform with renowned conductors in the 2012 NAfME All-National Honor Ensembles. The Concert Band, Orchestra, Mixed Choir, and Jazz Band will perform on Sunday, June 24, 2012, at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. Online applications and auditions are open, and auditions close on December 17, 2011. Selected students and their teachers will be notified by February 29, 2012.

THE 2012 CONDUCTORS ARE:

Concert Band: Daniel Bukvich is professor of percussion and theory and director of jazz choir at the Lionel Hampton School of Music at the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho.

Orchestra: David Becker is the director of orchestral studies and conductor of the symphony and opera orchestras at the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music in Appleton, Wisconsin.

Choir: Sandra Snow is associate professor of music education and choral conducting at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan.

Jazz Band: Terrell Stafford is professor of music and director of jazz studies at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Visit nafme.org/events/view/2012-all-national-honor-ensembles for applications and audition materials.

NAfME Partners With RightsFlow to Offer Online Mechanical Licensing to Members

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) is partnering with RightsFlow, a technology-enabled licensing and royalty service provider. RightsFlow's online mechanical licensing utility is called Limelight.

Limelight is being made available to NAfME active and Collegiate members as a simple method to clear cover songs for their physical, digital, ringtone, and interactive streaming usage.

As significant numbers of student performances are being recorded for various uses, educators must be aware of both licensing responsibilities and solutions.

NAfME's membership will be invited to use and share the Limelight utility for their mechanical licensing needs for recordings and to take advantage of educational resources and affiliate benefits that will be a result of the partnership.

"We continue to embrace partnerships that enhance the process of recording and sharing the music being performed by our students," Mike Blakeslee, NAfME chief operating officer, said. "Limelight is a simple tool that ensures copyright compliance for our membership while also delivering royalty revenues to songwriters and publishers globally."

For more information, visit songclearance.com /nafme.

Composers Sought for Association "Audio Logo"

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) is holding a com-

position contest, and Collegiate, active, and retired members are all eligible. NAfME is looking for a simple, short motif and three arrangements that will be used to identify and promote the Association. Entries should use a variety of instrumentations and styles. The different arrangements of the motif will serve as

- **A signal for the opening of the website (or various areas of the website)**
- **A lead-in for videos or webinar presentations**
- **Openings at ceremonial occasions (e.g., National Assembly)**

Submissions, which will be accepted between January 1 and February 1, 2012, should be professional-quality recordings.The instrumentation may include acoustic instruments and/or synthesized and computer-generated sound sources. Please label each treatment with its intended use—ceremonial, website, or webinar/video.

Entries will be reviewed in a blind evaluation by a panel headed by Daniel Deutsch, chair of NAfME's Council for Music Composition. The winning motif and arrangements will be used on NAfME's website and elsewhere. All entries become Association property.

Visit nafme.org for additional information or contact Susan Lambert at SusanL@nafme.org with questions.

PHOTOS FROM TOP: BECKY SPRAY (2); ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

THE JACK KENT COOKE YOUNG ARTIST AWARD

From the Top and the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation have awarded more than $1,000,000 in scholarships to deserving young musicians like harpist Angelica Hairston, enabling them to buy new instruments, attend music programs, and perform on NPR's *From the Top*.

Application Postmark Deadlines*

- December 1, 2011
- February 1, 2012
- October 1, 2012

LEARN MORE AT FROMTHETOP.ORG.

* Students must apply by October 1 of senior year.

JACK KENT COOKE FOUNDATION

FROM THE TOP

Nebraska MEA Celebrates a Milestone Anniversary

The first meeting of the Nebraska Music Educators Association

When members of the Nebraska Music Educators Association (NMEA) meet for their annual conference November 16–18 in Lincoln, they will celebrate their 75th anniversary with a special program. NMEA is a federated state affiliate of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME).

Rex Barker, NMEA president, said: "As teachers and musicians, we know it is important to celebrate. Without celebrations, there would be a lot less music, and vice versa. The 75th anniversary gives us a chance to reflect on our history and appreciate the trails blazed by members of the past. They established the philosophies and principles of our organization. It always takes an extra effort to get things started, and we have all benefited from their efforts."

He added: "Our members over the years have amazing stories to tell of successes and challenges. We learn so much from each other by visiting with each other and sharing these stories in formal clinic sessions or informal gatherings."

That sharing, Barker said, extends to relationships that the state association has with clinicians and guest conductors who participate in NMEA conferences. "The opportunity to meet and share ideas is critical to the health and strength of our profession," he said.

The NMEA president also said that through the anniversary celebrations, current and future NMEA members can learn more about the history of the organization but also "bring the ideas and questions that allow us to reflect on what we are doing and test our traditions against current trends and needs."

To read more NMEA history, visit the association archives at nmeanebraska.org/member_svcs/archives.html.

New Collegiate Facebook Page Is "Likeable"

Collegiate members of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) have a new Facebook page that enables them to share chapter information, photos, and videos—and to compete in contests like the friendly Music Trivia Battle that Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas, and North Greenville University in Tigerville, South Carolina, waged in early October.

The page also contains information about NAfME programs and links to the monthly Collegiate Newslink online newsletter. Newslink includes feature stories, information for future teachers, and a list of NAfME member benefits and resources.

Visit facebook.com/pages/NAfME-Collegiate/180870331986452 to join in.

Past National President Charles Benner Remembered for His Service to the Profession

Charles H. Benner, past president of the National Association for Music Education and a college music educator who championed the cause of music education for all, died September 13 in Blue Ash, Ohio. He was 99 years old and a 72-year member of NAfME. He was also a past president of the Association's North Central Division.

NAfME President Scott C. Shuler said, "Charles Benner's presidency was pivotal in making us the strong association that we are today. He will be remembered for his work in overseeing the transition of our organization from an associated organization of the National Education Association to becoming a self-supporting organization and moving us to Reston, Virginia.

"Dr. Benner's service to music education encompasses his positions held in the Ohio Music Education Association and MENC. After serving as national president from 1974-1976, he faithfully advised national presidents that followed after him. He was always there when staff and elected officials called on him for advice. His legacy will live on."

A Lowell Mason Fellow, Benner taught in public school in Butler County, Ohio, and was director of instrumental studies in the Wyoming, Ohio, public schools. He taught at Ohio State University, and was a professor and director of graduate studies in music education at the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. He was professor emeritus at the University of Cincinnati at the time of his death.

PHOTOS FROM TOP: COURTESY OF THE NEBRASKA MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION NAFME ARCHIVE; BECKY SPRAY

This Holiday Season, Give Thanks, Give Gifts, But Most Importantly...Give a Note!

Music education is a powerfully positive part of a child's life! The leaders of NAfME created Give a Note Foundation to connect everyone who cares about music education and empower them to fight for music education in children's lives. As a music educator, YOU need to be part of this new call to action. As we approach the season of giving, we ask you to "give a note" about a musical future and make a donation to support Give a Note Foundation.

Please include your donation in the envelope in this magazine or scan the QR code below to go to our **giveanote.org** donation site. For more information, please visit giveanote.org. Follow us on Twitter **@giveanote** and 'like' us on **Facebook Give a Note.**

give a note FOUNDATION

National Association for Music Education

Give a Note Is More than Just *Glee*

Foundation launch takes off with support from Fox Home Entertainment ■ BY KEITH POWERS

Although Give a Note Foundation is hardly a known commodity yet, the $20 million initiative, meant to assist underserved music education programs, started off the right way: by calling the Gleeks.

On December 15, winners of the *Glee* Give a Note contest will be announced—and more than 70 school music programs will share $1 million donated by Fox Home Entertainment through sales of *Glee* Season 2 DVDs. The contest, which began in September, invited public school music programs to submit a two-minute video outlining why they need support. The splashy contest is just the beginning of a more substantial initiative aimed at the most underserved music programs. Leadership comes from NAfME, but ultimately a consortium of businesses, educators, and public advocates will raise funds and identify and create promising programs.

The bounce from the "*Glee* effect" should help get things started, says Scott C. Shuler, president of NAfME, who applauds "*Glee* and its creators for showing millions of people how music benefits kids. We would be delighted if the success of *Glee* results in citizens contacting their local school boards in support of music programs."

"We want to leverage attention from the DVD release and the TV show," says Jane Mell Balek, NAfME's assistant executive director for resource development. "We launched it because we knew we'd have this *Glee* Give a Note opportunity. But we will have other partners, and an emphasis on involving state affiliates. This is a long-term initiative. The whole reason for starting the foundation is to build an awareness of music education outside of those who already have a passion about it. [Executive director] Michael Butera is the foundation's interim CEO, and he has pledged to raise $20 million in a decade. Everyone on our executive board made a commitment when we announced the foundation—we raised nearly $8,000 in one night. To have only a handful of our members raise that much shows a lot of strength."

The Give a Note website offers tips for supporting school music programs.

> "The whole reason for starting the foundation is to build an awareness of music education outside of those who already have a passion about it."

Plans call for a startup board of about 15 people. "We are looking beyond the music education community," Balek says, "for people with an entrepreneurial spirit from a variety of backgrounds.

"We know there are business leaders who have benefited from their own music education, and who can serve as advocates. Our resources are devoted to our members, but there are many other people who are solid believers in music education. We didn't have anything previously that would allow them to make an impact."

Current board members of Give a Note Foundation include Shuler, Butera, NAfME CFO Paul Baker, Lynn Brinckmeyer, and Barbara Geer. Balek says that other members should be in place by the first meeting this winter. A website, giveanote.org, tracks the foundation's progress, offers tips for advocacy and support, and has features on inspirational stories.

PHOTO: HEMERA/THINKSTOCK

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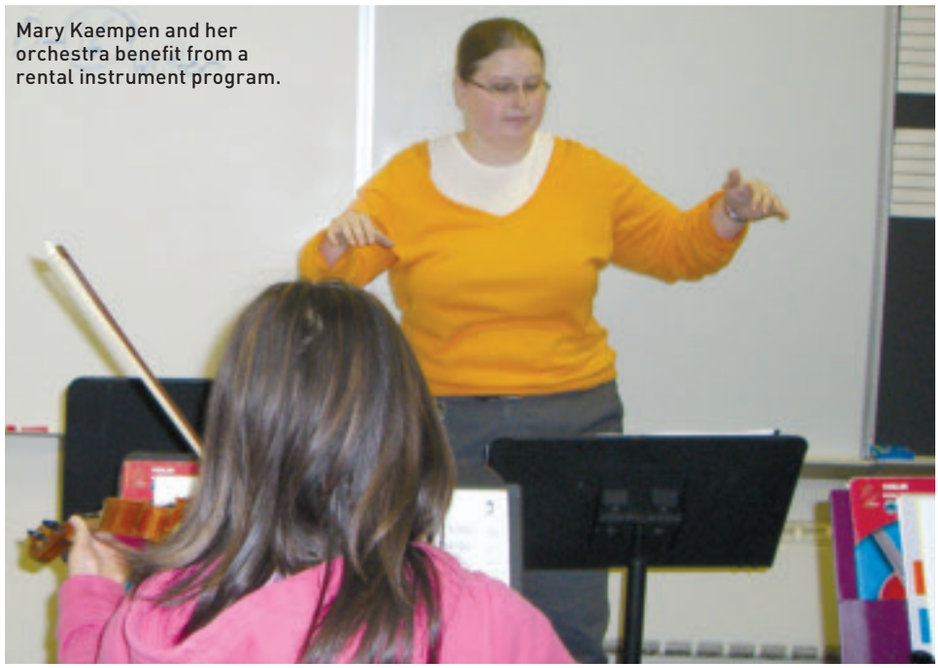
No Deposit, No Ritornello

A long-running school instrument rental program in suburban Illinois is gaining in popularity as budgets tighten ■ BY MATT ROBINSON

Across the country, music programs are getting less funding and parents are being asked to pick up more of the tab. Because many instruments are relatively expensive, schools are increasingly adopting instrument rental programs to minimize upfront and overall costs. Among the champions of this idea is Mary Kaempen, orchestra teacher at Hunting Ridge Elementary School in Palatine, Illinois. "We have a huge district rental program that was created in the 1950s by one of the school principals, who strongly believed in the value of music education," she says. "Essentially, the framework of our program has gone unchanged since that time."



Mary Kaempen and her orchestra benefit from a rental instrument program.

Hunting Ridge is part of the 20-school Community Consolidated School District 15, which offers instrumental music instruction to students starting in fifth grade. Participation in music is widespread and demand for instruments is high. "We are focusing on trying to buy new instruments," Kaempen says, "in order to give students the best experience we can while keeping yearly costs down." But because the annual budget only goes so far, the rental program also includes some used instruments and donations from families of students who decided to switch or give up instruments.

One of the biggest challenges of the rental program, Kaempen says, is determining financial need: "Many need-based programs are based on whether or not a student qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches. However, just because a family doesn't qualify for the lunch program doesn't mean that they can take on monthly payments. We do not want students forced into playing violin or flute just because they are the cheapest to rent, and we do not want to let finances be the reason a student cannot participate in the music program." For these reasons, the district charges a flat $30-per-year rental fee. While this is very low, there have been instances in which it was waived altogether for an eager student who sincerely could not afford it.

Kaempen reports that taking part in the program requires filling out a standard deposit form and receiving "a district booklet that states for parents and students our expectations of instrument use." Because most students have lessons or performances on a weekly basis, she and her team get to keep an eye on the instruments and make sure they are being used and cared for properly; all instruments must be returned to school for the summer.

Parents are informed of the rental option at the first meeting of the school year, and the process takes little time. "Making our rental agreements out of three-part paper results in the paperwork being handled very efficiently and accurately by teachers and families," Kaempen notes, adding that much of the paperwork is now bilingual.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MARY KAEMPEN

FACTS & FIGURES

Community Consolidated School District 15 (CCSD15)
Palatine, Illinois

SCHOOLS: 20 (15 K-6, 4 7-8, 1 PreK-8)

ENROLLMENT: 11,998 in 2010

PERCENTAGE OF LOW-INCOME STUDENTS: 29%

ETHNICITY OF STUDENT BODY: 51.6% White, 28.2% Hispanic, 13.9% Asian, 3.7% Black, 2.2% Multiracial, .4% Native American

MUSIC TEACHERS: 5 orchestra, 8 band, 22 comprehensive, 1 music therapist

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC ENROLLMENT: 1,845 for fall 2011

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Taking a Stand on Student and Teacher Evaluations

Standardized tests may carry too much weight, but assessment can still be a positive process ■ BY DEBBIE GALANTE BLOCK

Most teachers will argue that student scores on state-mandated tests are not a true reflection of a child's skills and by no means a true reflection of a teacher's value. The problem is that success on such tests is increasingly being linked to teacher effectiveness (for more on this, see "The Formative Years," page 38). According to William Guegold, director of the School of Music at the University of Akron and North Central Division president-elect of the National Association for Music Education, this trend is being driven more by politics than educational decisions. The result is that music teachers have to advocate for themselves as they never have before.

Teacher evaluations depend on student test scores more than ever.

"If you take the date off articles in professional journals from the 1970s, '80s, '90s, and now, the issues are interchangeable," Guegold says. "Nothing really ever changes except the political winds, but now we have the added burden of attaching teacher merit."

For this reason, it's important for music teachers to keep pointing out the achievements of the students in their programs to administrators, parents, and the district as a whole. And it's just as essential to make the case that the results of any assessment, whether it be for a student or a teacher, are only valuable if they are "informative and help someone's development. I have been an adjudicator at music festivals for the last 30 years," Guegold says, "and people are quick to pick out problems, but how good are they at giving someone constructive advice as to how to improve?"

> "We need to get to the point where we can improve education and not punish."

With many schools now evaluating teachers as many as six times a year, administrators are in classrooms often. Be prepared. "Set high standards for yourself and your program," Guegold counsels, "and make certain you use appropriate assessment practices in your classroom. In order to make improvements to curriculum, we need to test in a way that will allow us to check if we are doing well, and then keep devising teaching methods that will enable students to be more successful next time."

Guegold also suggests that teachers take the time to get out into the community and explain the testing indicators: "In Ohio, sometimes we see that a school has met more of the indicators on the tests than last year, but they've dropped in a ranking because the state's changed the rules and classification levels. Sometimes it looks like we're doing worse, even though that's not the case. It's just that the specifics have changed."

No matter how they choose to approach the problem, music teachers need to take their frustration and channel it outward, into positive action. "Cars can be recalled," Guegold says, "but you can't recall a ninth-grade class to do it again. Educational reform is difficult. We need to get to the point where we can improve education and not punish. The way rules and laws are written now, it becomes a punitive process."

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Playing Today May Help Remembering Tomorrow

Study results suggest that playing a musical instrument contributes to better cognitive function in later life ■ BY CATHY APPLEFELD OLSON

Studying a musical instrument in childhood could pay off much later in life. In a recent research study of healthy adults ages 60 to 83, those who had music experience performed better on several cognitive tests than those who had never studied an instrument.

A departure from the plentiful research related specifically to music cognition, the study by Brenda Hanna-Pladdy, a clinical neuropsychologist at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, looked at performance on tasks involving nonverbal memory, naming objects, and the brain's ability to process new information.

"We are not looking at music cognition. We are looking at transfer effects to non-music cognition, the ways that learning music changes your brain," Hanna-Pladdy says. "Typically, when we look at learning paradigms in the lab, there is a very specific skill set [for tasks], and that skill set rarely transfers to something outside of that task. Music is one case where it does transfer."

The study divided 70 participants into three groups: those with no music training, those with one to nine years of music study, and those with 10-plus years. All musicians began studying around age 10, and the participants were of similar health and education levels. The group that had studied the longest performed best on the tests, followed by the lower-level musicians, and then the non-musicians.

Hanna-Pladdy theorizes that because playing and learning to read music engages both hemispheres of the brain and involves multisensory processing, it has an effect on the neuroplasticity of the brain. Additionally, musicians get constant feedback by way of the sounds they produce on their instruments. "That feedback really affects the learning, and what you tend to see is that the feedback will drive the practice and performance," she says.

Interestingly, although half of the higher-level musicians still played an instrument at the time of the study, they didn't perform better on the tests than their counterparts who had stopped playing earlier. "This implies that the neuroplastic effects were taking place at an earlier age. Our brains are more plastic when we are younger," Hanna-Pladdy says. "That was a little surprising. I expected the people who continued to be active to maybe have more of a cognitive benefit."

What should music educators take away from this? "Begin music programs earlier," Hanna-Pladdy says. The brain functions measured in the tests—particularly nonverbal memory and executive function—typically decline as adults go through the aging process. "People with increased plasticity tend to do better on cognitive tests, and things that tend to boost executive function tend to boost plasticity," she adds.

LONG-TERM COGNITIVE BENEFITS OF PLAYING MUSIC?

The scaled scores here compare the three groups' performance on tests of four cognitive procedures: visual reproduction delayed recall (VR II), visuomotor speed (Trails A), visuospatial sequencing and flexibility (Trails B), and verbal functions (BNT= Boston Naming Test).

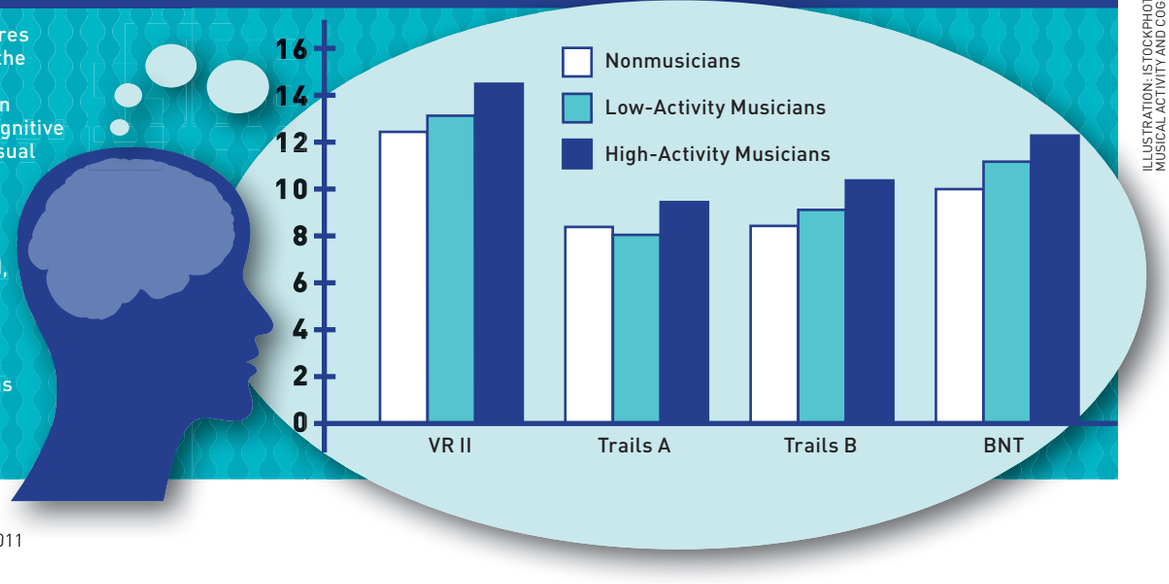

ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK; SOURCE: BRENDA HANNA-PLADDY AND ALICIA MACKAY, "THE RELATION BETWEEN INSTRUMENTAL MUSICAL ACTIVITY AND COGNITIVE AGING," *NEUROPSYCHOLOGY*, VOL. 25, NO. 3, APRIL 2011. ©2011 AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

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Bringing Digital Audio Workstation software to school ■ BY CHAD CRISWELL

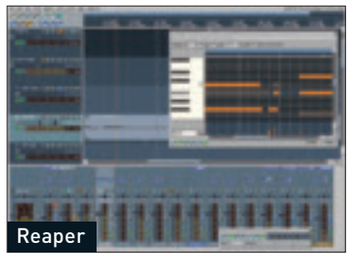
Some DAW programs, like Cubase Elements (pictured), are available for free download in demo form.

What to Do When You Want to Make Tracks

Setting up a digital recording studio in a school classroom requires specialized software. While you can do it on the cheap with a basic audio program like Audacity, you'll need something more advanced to produce really high-quality recordings, work with multiple instruments, or teach your students the skills necessary to prepare them for a job in the audio industry. Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) programs are the next step up, and there are many of them on the market. But there's more to setting up a DAW system than simply grabbing the first piece of software that comes to mind. It's essential to balance the software with the capabilities of the hardware you intend to run it on.

Proper Hardware

No software will provide good results without good hardware. At a bare minimum, any digital audio workstation must have a decent interface for plugging in microphones. The built-in microphone jacks on a PC or Mac are usually not adequate for master-level recording; they tend to be noisy, allowing the whirs of the computer's hard drive or cooling fan to distort the sound. Some newer computers—HP machines with the Beats Audio interface, for example—may perform well enough that this is not such an issue, but in most cases it's better to bypass the computer's internal sound card entirely and invest in an external audio interface from a company like M-Audio or MOTU, with as many channels as you think you may need at one time. These audio interfaces are different from traditional mixers and allow each channel to be recorded onto its own track in the DAW software. More channels on the interface will allow you to record from more sources at one time, but with more inputs comes more expense.



Reaper

A good DAW system will be able to accept multiple voice and MIDI tracks at the same time, but remember that you are also limited by other factors, such as your computer's processor, hard drive speed, and memory. As a result, it's often a better idea to create a workstation from a specialized computer rather than an off-the-shelf model from your school's lab. Ask your IT person just what kind of hardware's hiding under the hood of any computer you are considering turning into a DAW, then check those specifications

PHOTOS TOP : ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK; CHALKBOARD: HEMERA/THINKSTOCK

against the requirements of the software you intend to buy.

Software Shopping

Dozens of DAW programs are available in many different price ranges. Many high-end programs retail for more than $500, but unless you're outfitting a professional studio, you don't need the advanced feature set that flagship-level DAWs provide. Richard McCready, music technology teacher at River Hill High School in Columbia, Maryland, says, "To me it's not the actual DAW that's important, but the development of recording, mixing, signal processing, and mastering skills. If you teach those skills within any DAW, students can use any other DAW without too many difficulties. It's like swapping between word processing programs." McCready also feels that some DAW software, like Logic and Pro Tools, can be intimidating to young students. Because of this, he usually begins by exposing students to GarageBand before moving on to more advanced audio mastering programs.

Audio expert Clark Murray, the owner of Digital Music Doctor, a company that produces video training courses for DAWs, feels much the same way about this topic. He has been doing head-to-head reviews of dozens of DAW titles for the past decade, and he concedes that for most high school-level music classrooms, the programs tested in his "Shootouts" are probably too complicated. He recommends looking for the "light" versions of these products, which often have the same core features but lack capabilities that tend to be needed only by professionals. These light versions also come with much lower price tags and can be purchased for less than $300.

Plugging In Virtually

Virtual Studio Technology (VST) plugins are small programs that simulate pieces of audio hardware (preamps and compressors, for example) and create special audio effects that can be applied to individual tracks. Without using plugins, you won't be getting the full benefit out of any DAW setup. Basic VST plugins ship with every DAW program and allow you to adjust the audio tracks with reverb and chorus effects, as well as equalizing the overall sound to clean up background noise or other problems.

In general, the more expensive the program, the more plugins will be included with it. Some programs, such as Cubase Artist, even include more advanced VST plugins like automatic tuning software that can be used to adjust slightly off-pitch vocals. For needs not covered by the included plugins, there are thousands of additional ones that can be purchased from other companies and used with almost any VST-capable audio recording program.

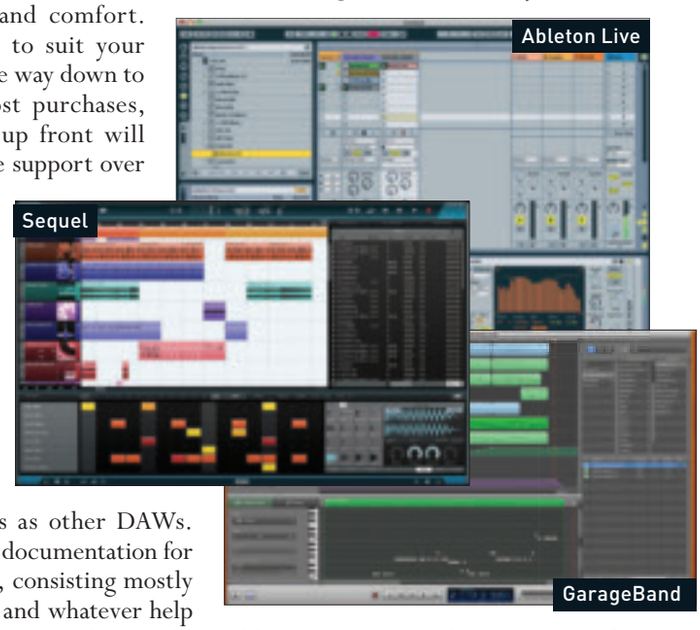
Which DAW to Buy?

All DAW systems work essentially the same way and do essentially the same thing. In the end, the decision of which one to purchase should come down to personal preference and comfort. You can find a DAW to suit your needs from $300 all the way down to free, but as with most purchases, spending a bit more up front will provide you with more support over the long term.

For example, at the bottom of the price chart is the freely available Linux MultiMedia Studio (lmms.sourceforge.net). Despite its name, this program runs on Windows and offers almost all of the same functions as other DAWs. However, support and documentation for LMMS is very limited, consisting mostly of community forums and whatever help you can find through a Google search. For about $60 more, you can find programs like Reaper (reaper.fm), Sequel 3 (sequel-music.net), or Cubase Elements (steinberg.net), but support remains limited (in Reaper's case, it's provided solely via online forums; with Sequel and Cubase, you can get help via email as well). The good news about all three of these programs is that demonstration versions of them can be downloaded for free.

For Mac users at this same price point, a smart music teacher should consider the most obvious choice: Apple's GarageBand (apple.com). Because it doesn't have cross-platform compatibility (i.e., it doesn't work with non-Apple programs), we're only mentioning GarageBand briefly here. But if you're on a Macintosh system, few DAWs can compete with its ease of use, especially considering that it comes along with the iLife suite of programs for only $40.

At the next price and feature level are products like Ableton Live Intro (ableton.com) and Cubase Artist (steinberg.net). Both have educational versions available for under $300, but Ableton Live Intro is the only program of those listed here that actually offers phone-based tech support in addition to email and forum support. For the additional money, you also get a more streamlined interface, more intuitive controls, and additional plugins that the lower-priced DAWs may not offer.



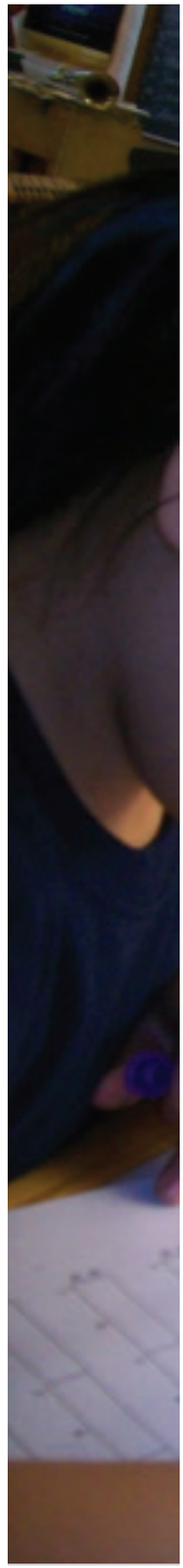
Ableton Live Intro also provides a free trial version that you can download and test out, while Cubase Artist does not.

Whenever possible, download demo versions of the software you're considering, and be sure to test them out on the computer and with the audio interface that you intend to use in your final setup. For much less than $500, you can build a recording studio in your classroom that will serve you and your students well.

The New Beat Spectrum

With a Rhythm Color Worksheet, learning to count can take on an extra dimension.

By H. Ellie Falter



How do we teach students to count rhythms? Teachers can choose from various techniques. Younger students may learn themed words (such as "pea," "carrot," or "avocado"), specific rhythm syllables (such as "ta" and "ti-ti"), or some other counting method to learn notation and internalize rhythms. As students grow musically, and especially when they focus on an instrument in band or orchestra, they must transition into counting using numbers. This transition can be frustrating, but here's something you can try.

Some students already know the names and durations of notes in their sheet music but need to learn more advanced counting (e.g., progressing from "car-rot, pea" to "one and two"). The Rhythm Color Worksheet described here can help them, and it also works well with students who already have an understanding of the number counting system but need help to become more rhythmically precise.

The worksheet connects visual, aural, and kinesthetic concepts in rhythm, so it is likely to help students with diverse learning styles. One eighth-grade student of mine responded to the precise visual representation of the rhythm in the Rhythm Color Worksheet with this comment: "I've been looking at music for a while, but now I know what the rhythm really looks like."

Developing the Rhythm Color Worksheet

I noticed that some middle school string students could tell me that a half note lasted two beats, but they had no practical sense of rhythm. They thought the half note should be played on beat two because it lasted two beats. The terminology seemed to confuse them. Since their counting methods rarely worked accurately, these students mostly listened to others to learn how to play rhythms by ear in orchestra. I was not satisfied with this lack of independence, so I sat down and tried to develop a tool to help. After some trial and error, tweaking, and input from various sources, I created the Rhythm Color Worksheet.

Using the Worksheet

Completing the Rhythm Color Worksheet takes several steps, but students quickly catch on. I initially included instructions for students on the worksheet, but discovered that was too confusing. The worksheet works much better if you introduce it to students by completing a few worksheets together, starting with very simple rhythms. The first set of steps (Steps 1-6) involves writing and coloring. The second set (7-10) uses kinesthetic and verbal experience to internalize the rhythm based on its notation. Here's a step-by-step example; you can see how these processes work in practice by looking at Figure 1 on page 30. The steps below use the sample rhythm shown in Figure 1, beginning with the first note of the sample.

- **Step 1:** What type of note is it? (*Quarter note*)
- **Step 2:** Draw the note.
- **Step 3:** How many beats does that note get? (*One beat*)
- **Step 4:** Color in that many boxes.
- **Step 5:** Repeat Steps 1–4 until there are no more notes. Point out to students that if the music is written correctly and they do the worksheet correctly, each measure will start on 1 and conclude at a solid line.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF H. ELLIE FALTER

■ **Step 6:** Circle the numbers or symbols under the beginning of each new color. In Figure 1, the first color is red, so circle the 1 beneath it. Next is blue; circle the 2 beneath it. Next is red again; circle the "&" below the beginning of the red. The last color is purple; circle "1" below the beginning of it. The circled symbols will tell students how to count the rhythm: "1 2 & 1," but a student could easily say that out of rhythm. Steps 7-10 alleviate this problem.

One seventh-grade flute player decided to use the colors to make a pattern. She made quarter notes red or orange and half notes blue or purple to see if there would be more warm or cool colors on the page. She was not thinking in mathematical terms, but she was looking for the ratio of time spent on quarter notes compared to time spent on half notes in the song we were playing. (We spent slightly more time on quarter notes.) This student used the visual representation of the rhythms from her Rhythm Color Worksheet to analyze the music in a way she found meaningful.

Steps 7-10 of the worksheet make use of the same sample rhythm as Steps 1-6.

■ **Step 7:** Keep a steady beat and point to each symbol as you say it. [Say "one and two and one and two and."]

■ **Step 8:** Repeat Step 7, but say the words in your head only. Make sure you are not mouthing the words, because that will confuse you later and does not help you learn to internalize the rhythm. Point along and silently think "one and two and one and two and."

■ **Step 9:** Repeat Step 7 again while tapping the steady macrobeat with your foot, but follow with your eyes only—no pointing, no speaking. It may feel a little silly, but it's an important step. [Silent "one and two and one and two and."]

■ **Step 10:** Repeat again with your foot tapping the steady macro beat, but this time you need to say aloud only the numbers that are circled ("ONE" and "TWO AND ONE" and two and). This may be tricky at first. You may need to add back in the pointing, or say aloud the circled words and whisper the ones that are not circled. With a little practice, you will be able to accurately count the rhythm you colored.

A fifth-grade trumpet student responded very well to tapping the steady beat in Steps 7 and 8. He said that the movement helped him feel how steady the subdivisions should be. Afterward, he worked hard to play even rhythms.

Other Rhythm Examples

Rests (Figure 2): For rests, color the length in with pencil. When you get to the circling step (Step 6), don't circle the number or symbol under pencil markings. Remember that in the last step (Step 10), you will say only what is circled.

Ties (Figure 3): When a note is tied, continue using the same color because you will play it as one note. This is true even if the tie is over the measure line.

Stem direction (Figure 4): I tend to always write my stems going up, but some of my students prefer to write the stems to match the music they are reading. A few even prefer to always write stems going down. You can do whatever stem direction you find most comfortable. Example 4 shows mixed stem directions.

Time signatures: You have already seen examples of different time signa-

Use the Rhythm Color Worksheet to review note names and durations or to introduce new notes and rests.

tures. Each worksheet works for one time signature only. The same time signature can also have different worksheets if the subdividing method is different. You may use a worksheet that subdivides "1 and 2 and" with your beginners, and use "1 e and a 2 e and a" with more advanced students. Take note that Example 4 is in 6/8 time with two different counting methods: "1 la li 2 la li" compared with "1 2 3 4 5 6." You could make a worksheet with either or both of the counting methods, depending on students' needs.

Putting it all together: Figure 5 uses multiple techniques (rests, ties, and different stem directions).

Added Benefits

You can use the Rhythm Color Worksheet for more than its initial purpose to transition students from various counting methods to using numbers. Use it to review note names and durations or to introduce new notes and rests. Start by reviewing simple rhythms, and then move on to more complicated rhythms, eventually making interesting rhythm compositions and analyzing how different rhythms fit together. Also, the second part of the worksheet (Steps 7-10) helps students understand and internalize why teachers constantly tell them to subdivide as they count.

Perhaps most important, this worksheet will help students take ownership of their own learning and musicianship.

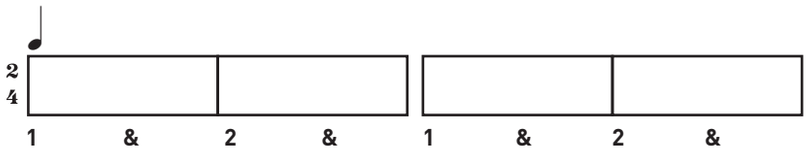
FIGURE 1:

RHYTHM COLOR WORKSHEET

Sample Rhythm: 

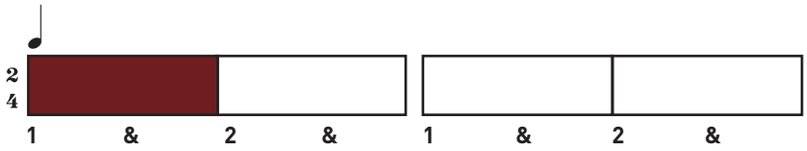
STEP 1 Look at your music. What type of note is it? _____

STEP 2 Draw the note.

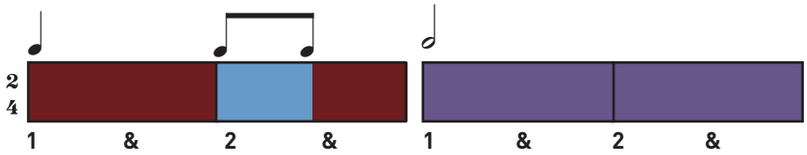


STEP 3 How many beats does that note get?_____

STEP 4 Color in that many beats.



STEP 5 Repeat steps 1-4 until there are no more notes.



STEP 6 Circle the number or symbol below the start of each new color. This tells you how to count the rhythm. (Don't worry if this sounds a little weird. It will make sense.)

STEP 7 With a steady beat, say and point to each symbol from left to right.

STEP 8 With a steady beat, point to each symbol but only say it in your head. (No mouthing the words either!)

STEP 9 With a steady beat, look at each symbol and say the words in your head.

STEP 10 Repeat Step 9, but say aloud the numbers and symbols that are circled (some students may need to temporarily point along at first).

FIGURES 2-5:

OTHER RHYTHM EXAMPLES

FIGURE 2

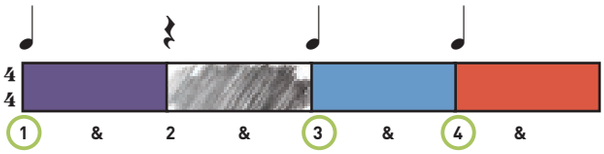


FIGURE 3

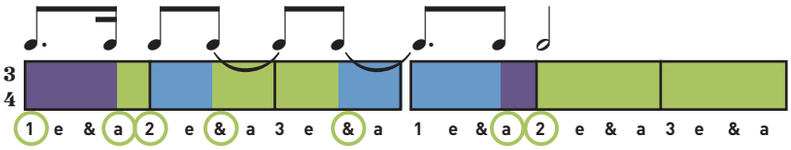


FIGURE 4

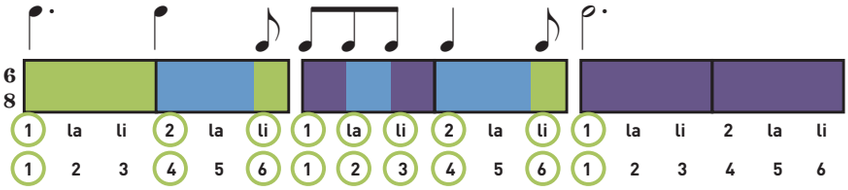


FIGURE 5

Once students know how to use it, they can figure out new rhythms by themselves. If they're not quite sure about a rhythm, they can use the worksheet and develop confidence. This is especially true for infrequently used time signatures or rhythm combinations.

Conclusions and Implications

The Rhythm Color Worksheet helps students who have different strengths and learning styles to better understand rhythm. They have a chance to see precise visual rhythmic relationships, physically feel how subdivisions work within specific written rhythms, and hear the rhythms as they speak them. Some students will benefit from all of the rhythmic experiences, whereas others may need only one or two. Also, some students enjoy the break from playing a difficult passage because the worksheet lets them think about it while resting their chops. They also find it refreshing to change how they're thinking about music. Everyone can use the Rhythm Color Worksheet. I use it occasionally in my own playing when I need to work on rhythmic precision.

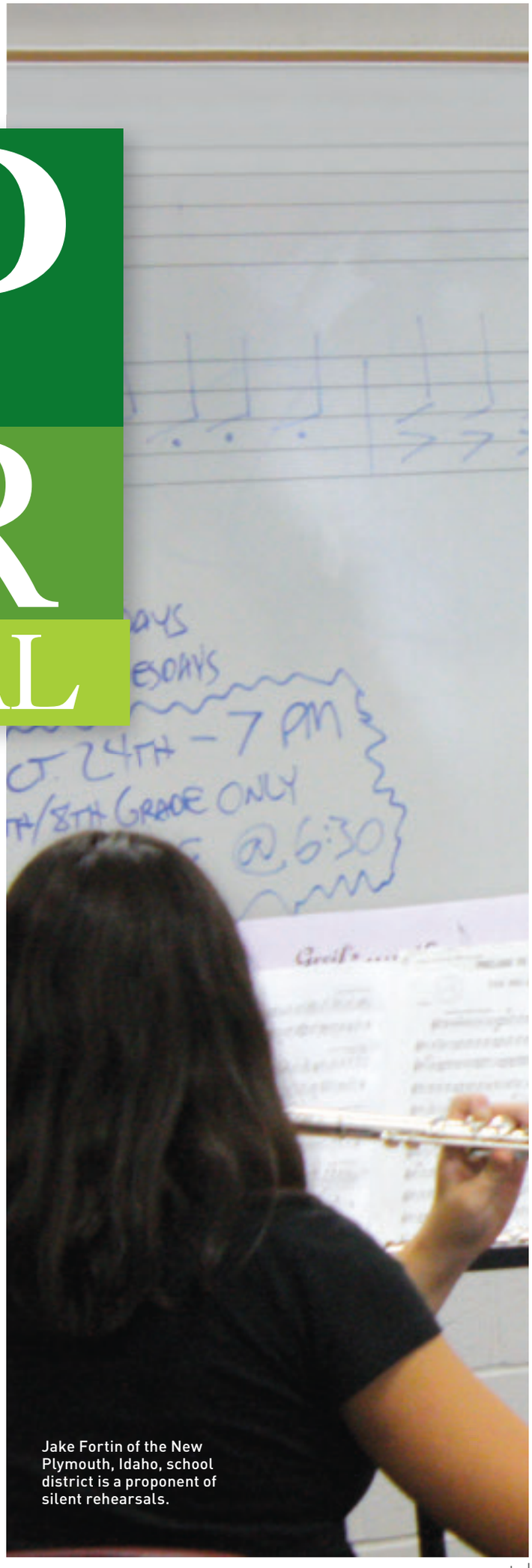
You may feel awkward using the Rhythm Color Worksheet at first, but try it. Learn to use it, and teach it to your students. It's a useful tool for learning rhythm accuracy and can help many students in several ways. Different students will appreciate different aspects of the worksheet and grow rhythmically. Students are especially happy with how the worksheet enables them to take ownership of their rhythmic musicality. The improvement and pride in independence are truly amazing!

H. Ellie Falter *teaches general music at Davis Elementary School in Washington, DC.*

TAP YOUR POTENTIAL

Rehearsal approaches that can help make you a better ensemble director

BY SUSAN POLINIAK



Jake Fortin of the New Plymouth, Idaho, school district is a proponent of silent rehearsals.

Being an effective and engaging leader of a band, orchestra, or choir involves both the application of appropriate, purposeful techniques and successful communication on a variety of levels. Tackling problems regarding tone, dynamics, and difficult passages requires a good "game plan" that you can convey clearly to your group, so that both they and you may achieve the optimal result. What are some ways to bolster your effectiveness as a director? We've spoken to four music educators about what they do to ensure that their members can focus appropriately on the task at hand and be the best ensemble players they can be.

Silent Rehearsals

When issues like lack of attentiveness need to be resolved quickly, it may be useful to apply the silent treatment. Silent rehearsals work on the "less is more" principle to help bands, choruses, and orchestras alike get to the heart of the matter. "I have had great success with the technique of silent rehearsal in band," says Lynn Johnson, the music teacher for grades 3 through 5 at Olga Brener Intermediate School in Shawano, Wisconsin. "The students begin to realize that I really do give

PHOTO: COURTESY OF JAKE FORTIN

"Slow down to a tempo the kids can perform correctly, and then build from there. Otherwise, we can build bad habits." —*Jake Fortin*

them instructions when I conduct. It's always interesting to hear the comments after a silent rehearsal. Often, they comment on how they never heard the cool melody that the flutes had or didn't know that the clarinet part was so hard. They begin to hear more because, during a silent rehearsal, they have to concentrate more."

Some teachers may be apprehensive about being able to communicate effectively in a silent rehearsal, but the lack of talk can winnow out unnecessary elements that are hindering progress. "Even without words, they almost always understand what I want from them," says Jake Fortin, director of bands for the New Plymouth School District in New Plymouth, Idaho. "With the kids so focused on figuring out what you're going to do next, it's very easy to fix quick problems and get back into making music with them."

But how exactly does this talk-free approach work? "Past research studies have shown that overall, music teachers talk a lot, but that the expert teachers tend to talk less than novice teachers," says Robert Woody, associate professor of music education at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and one of the co-authors of *Psychology for Musicians: Understanding and Acquiring the Skills*. "In normal 'verbal rehearsals,' a teacher's delivery of instruction can take too much priority over students' applying the instruction. With experience, the less talkative expert teachers probably come to realize that the improvement really comes when students apply instruction to their performing."

Although silent rehearsal can be effective, don't trot it out too often. "I usually do this around concert time when we are working on specific elements of the music—e.g., dynamics, articulations, etc.," Johnson says. "At that time, the students are focused on the little things in the music. Using this technique too early in the rehearsal process frustrates the students because when they are first learning a piece, they need the direction from their director."

Difficult Passages

If your students are having problems "getting it," it can help to step back and evaluate the techniques you use in rehearsal. For instance, what are your first steps through a piece?

"In band, I've had the students hiss their parts to learn articulations and rhythms," Johnson notes. "This method gets the instruments out of the way so that they can concentrate on the 'interesting' stuff of the piece. Another method is using various rhythms from the piece we're working on, in the key the piece is in, for the warm-up. I've found that this helps the students focus on that particular piece and understand the rhythms better. I use this method if we have an especially difficult section of music." She has found that similar techniques work for choral groups: "In choir, I have students speak the lyrics in rhythm when first learning a piece. After that, I have them sing a syllable (usually 'loo') on pitch and in rhythm. Then we end by trying to sing the song. If they're having a particular problem with a passage, we'll go back through the piece using the same method."

One band method used by Jason Schoonover, band and choir

Ann Howard Jones conducts the Boston University Symphony Orchestra and Symphonic Chorus at Boston's Symphony Hall

PHOTO: BOSTON UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHY

director at Zillah High School in Zillah, Washington, works as follows: 1) say the rhythm; 2) "ta" and finger; 3) play. "I do not move to the next step until the one before is mastered," Schoonover remarks. "I spend time with every beginning class and have them pick words that work for different rhythms. This year we're using food: 'Pie' for quarter notes, 'French fry' for a pair of eighths, and 'food' for anything longer than a quarter. As they progress, we add new words to fit the rhythms. This has worked well, and kids figure out rhythms much faster than with the traditional counting method I used before. It also takes the beat number out of the rhythm game. 'Ta' and fingering is about lining articulation up with fingerings. At this point, percussion is playing on rims or with the back of mallets. This takes time but kids get faster at it. The benefits are great, and it also transfers into the home practice time well."

With young ensembles, Fortin favors an approach that doesn't include working in sections. "This invites too much talking," he notes. "If the trumpet players can't remember to play B-flat, I'll inform them and run the section a couple more times until they get it right with the whole band. If I have to run a section by itself, I try and limit it to a very short period to minimize down time. Most of the time when introducing new concepts, rhythms, etc., I write something from the piece on the whiteboard. We begin by counting the rhythms, clapping them, and saying the counts in order to get them in our heads. After that, we'll play the rhythm on a concert B-flat. Then we introduce the actual pitches. One thing that I think a lot of band directors, including myself, can do better is *slow down* the tempo. Slow it to a tempo the kids can perform correctly, and then build from there. Otherwise, we can build bad habits. I have also introduced 'sizzling' with my beginning band, and that is working quite well, since it's sort of in between playing a passage and clapping/singing it."

How Well Are You Really COMMUNICATING?

Communication is one of the basic requirements of an effective ensemble leader. Sometimes, it's necessary to evaluate your own skills as a communicator, and determine what is and isn't working for you and your group.

Jason Schoonover recommends recording yourself about midway through the rehearsal process. "I have seen some things in my conducting that I was very surprised to see," he says. "Things I thought I was doing, turns out I was not. I also practice conducting gestures during warm-ups. Once students memorize a B-flat or F scale, I have them follow my gestures with different tempos, articulations, patterns, time, dynamics. We work on following gestures every day. That way, when we are in a piece they understand my language better."

Relating back to the concept of the silent rehearsal, it can be valuable to notice if you're confusing the subject by overcommunicating. "I think we all do this as teachers, as we are passionate about our content," Jake Fortin says. "I have tried to make sure that I'm giving short, meaningful phrases to my kids rather than a huge dissertation on the value of dynamics in regard to expressive playing in band. Here's what I think music educators tend to do: 'Trumpets, I really need you to give me more sound at measure 19. Your part, combined with the trombone countermelody, will really spice up the music and add expressive content.' Anybody hear Charlie Brown's teacher yet? Here's what we should say, and it could still probably be pared down: 'Trumpets, please play a bit louder at measure 19.' Give a count-off and go!"

Working on Tone

"Without tone, nothing else that a band does well matters," Fortin says, and most directors of any ensemble would agree. There are a number of methods for helping your students to get it right in the tone department. "I try to make it as fun as possible," Fortin says. "Every rehearsal starts with long tones, usually on a major scale in the key of the first piece we'll play. I emphasize that in order to sound great, your embouchure must be solid, and air must steadily and continuously move through the instrument, like air through a big pipe organ. To make long tones more fun, sometimes we turn it into a competition. I have all of the kids stand up and tell them to play a note. Once I've counted them off, they play until they run out of air. When they run out of air, they sit down. The last person standing wins! To keep the percussionists busy and not committing crimes against humanity in the back of the room, they act as the 'judges,' walking around and making sure that nobody is taking a second breath, trying to screw others up, etc."

Sometimes, tone problems have nothing to do with the musician. "Dealing with poor-quality instruments in various states of repair is frustrating. How great our bands would be with

"If the clarinet section plays with a great blend of all three parts and I cannot pick out individual players, life is good!"—*Jason Schoonover*

PHOTO: BOSTON UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHY

"Overall, music teachers talk a lot, but expert teachers tend to talk less than novice teachers." —*Robert Woody*

matching quality instruments for all!!" Schoonover laments. "Dealing with air issues is a daily battle. I use the *Breathing Gym* book by Sam Pilafian and Patrick Sheridan—so much great material for getting kids to understand the work the lungs can do. The challenging part after that is transferring those skills to the instrument. For section tone we talk a lot about balance and blend. I find that kids have a better grasp on balance and blend within sections rather than the entire band. I place the responsibility for section balance on the players and band balance on me. If the clarinet section, for example, plays with a great blend of all three parts and I cannot pick out individual players, life is good! Spreading this out around the band, including percussion, makes my job of balancing all of the sections easy."

For director and student alike, having a clear mental picture of tone is optimal. Woody suggests seeking out models of tone to hold in one's head and ear. "It's difficult," he says, "for a conductor or teacher to fix tone problems when the underlying issue is that students don't have a clear idea of what their instrument or voice is supposed to sound like. In most schools, few of the young people in music ensembles listen to recordings of the styles they're learning to perform. I'd encourage school ensemble directors to assign their students not only practice as homework, but also listening to high-quality recordings."

Improving Dynamics

Analogies and visual imagery can often come in handy to convey what you're going for as a director—and never more so than when you're dealing with dynamics. Schoonover uses a "distance" approach. "From the time they're beginners, I teach students that dynamics are about distances, not volume. I want kids to think about sending the sound to certain places. There's a canal across the street from my school and that is *fortissimo*. I ask, 'Can someone hear you with a good sound on the canal?' The person in front of them is *pianissimo*: 'Can only the person in front of you hear you with a good sound?' I also might say, 'You played that song with a dynamic range of the last two rows in the auditorium; let's make it from the music stand to the canal.' Kids understand distance, and it gives them a visual to go with the aural."

Fortin also uses visual imagery with his band, but takes a different approach: "As a band director, I focus on dynamics as being like a window that's open on a breezy day. When it's all the way open, tons of air can get through, and obviously sound is louder. As it closes, the sound diminishes. The kids know they need to focus on 'opening' and 'closing' that window as the piece requires to be effective. Also, when teaching dynamics, especially in middle school with beginners, I like to relate dynamics on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being as loud as they can play and still maintain quality and 1 being as quiet as they can play with good tone. We line out the in-between dynamics as well: *mezzo forte* = 5 , *forte* = 7 to 8, and so on."

The warm-up period can be used to sort out some issues in advance of the rehearsal proper. When Johnson is preparing to rehearse her band, "I will usually choose a scale in the same key as the piece or pieces that we'll be working on that day. Then I'll use simple rhythms with the students, using different dynamics as we progress. For example, I may use whole notes, starting soft and getting louder as we go up the scale or, for more of a challenge, start loud and get softer as we go up. I have also used chorales to help with dynamics—reminding the students that a chorale needs to be played soft and tender instead of a march, where they would play loud and rigid."

A similar approach may be used for choral groups. "I have used a familiar warm-up, such as the scale, and had the choir sing it at different dynamic levels," Johnson says. "One other technique that I use is to have the students sing the piece at the wrong dynamic to discover how important dynamics are. For example, if we're singing a soft, emotional piece, I have the students sing as if it were a loud piece of music. Then I have them sing it at the correct dynamic. They usually discover that when they sing a piece at the wrong dynamic level, it 'feels' wrong."

A session of the Eastman School of Music's Summer Conducting Institute

PHOTO: COURTESY OF EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Learn More

Want to spruce up your directing skills? A number of institutions offer summer conducting programs for music educators, including the Eastman School of Music (esm.rochester.edu/summer/institutes.php), Boston University (bu.edu/summer/courses/music), Bard College (bard.edu/ci), and Georgia State University (cmp.music.gsu.edu/SummerConductingInstitute.htm).

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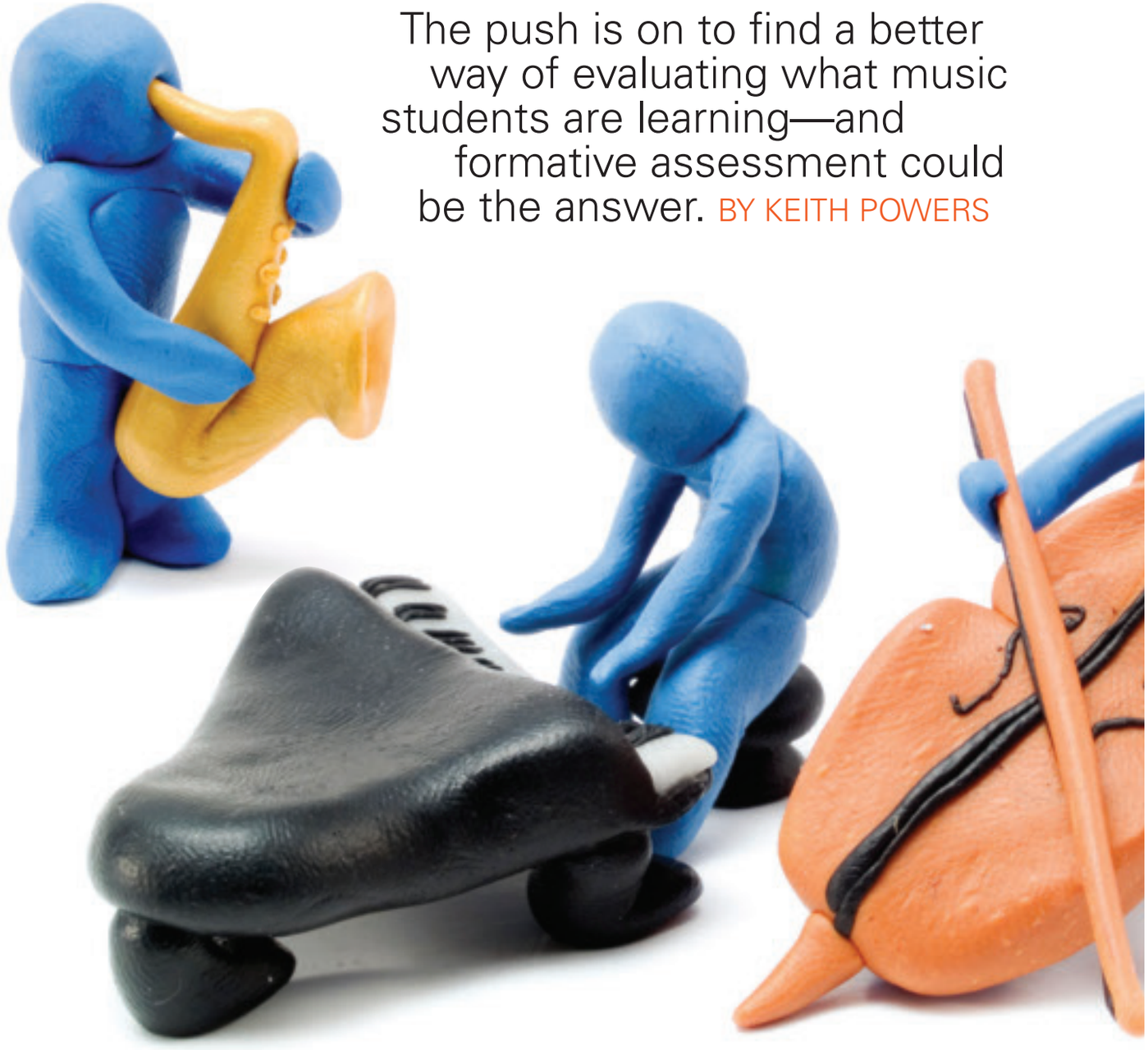
ENTERING THE FORMA

The push is on to find a better way of evaluating what music students are learning—and formative assessment could be the answer. BY KEITH POWERS



"If you can't prove your worth, they might as well eliminate your job," says Cindy Brewer. "If you don't take the time to assess students, you're setting yourself up for failure. Having assessments validates your programs."

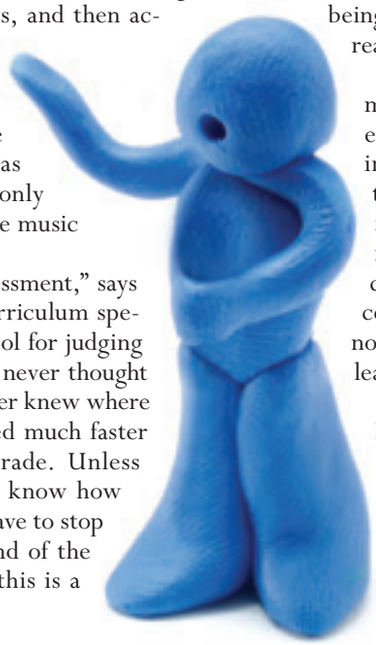
That's blunt talk from a woman who is quick to describe her job as "getting to sing and dance all day long." But Brewer, who teaches at Boulder Bluff Elementary School in Goose Creek, South Carolina, touches on an issue that affects everyone in music education, from every small classroom all the way to the people who decide who gets hired and fired: how to make sure students are learning what they're supposed to learn.

The issue at hand is called formative assessment—classroom strategies that ensure students are understanding music concepts. Unlike summative assessments (end-of-process evaluations

> IF WE DON'T KNOW IF THEY'VE LEARNED IT, WE DON'T KNOW IF WE'VE TAUGHT IT. —*Kelly Parkes*

like final exams, SATs, or auditions), formative assessments need to be non-threatening, helpful, and most of all, effective. The process starts with a teacher understanding what is supposed to be taught, breaking it down into incremental goals, making students understand those goals, and then accomplishing them.

It sounds a lot like plain old teaching, but the emphasis has shifted to measurable methods—not just at the end of the process, but along the way as well. And what's at stake includes not only student success, but the livelihood of the music educators themselves.



"It's a new buzzword, formative assessment," says Denese Odegaard, drama and music curriculum specialist in Fargo, North Dakota. "It's a tool for judging students realistically. Before I started, I never thought about [assessment] a whole lot, and I never knew where my kids were. But students will succeed much faster with feedback than with a number grade. Unless we check for understanding, we don't know how we're doing. It's like taking a trip; you have to stop along the way. You're looking at the end of the road, at a summative assessment, and this is a checkpoint."

"Summative assessment is high-stakes," says Timothy S. Brophy, director of institutional assessment at the University of Florida, and current chair of NAfME's Special Research Interest Group on assessment. "We need valid measures in music. I wouldn't characterize it as a trend, but teachers in the field— practitioners like Denese—are sharing expertise on how to develop and implement assessment tools."

"I hear it called 'the outcomes movement,'" says Kelly A. Parkes, assistant professor and program area leader in music education at Virginia Tech, and Brophy's designated successor as NAfME's assessment SRIG chair. "Music educators have taken program evaluation more seriously. Simply put, it's a way to show better what we do. There is a willingness from music educators to assess, and to do it deliberately and transparently every day. If we don't know if they've learned it, we don't know if we've taught it."

WHY IT MATTERS

There's another reason why music teachers are paying more attention to assessment methods these days—the overall educational landscape is shifting. As Brophy points out, "There is a growing emphasis on student achievement in teacher evaluation. It's a multilayered issue. On the national level, there are laws and money attached. But assessments are devised and written at state and district levels. The problem arises when music teachers are being evaluated on their students' abilities in math and reading, because music measures don't exist."

Parkes estimates that this is true for 40% of the music teachers in her home state of Virginia: "Teacher evaluations are used to make personnel hiring and firing decisions. Sometimes what it comes down to is that a music educator has students who are not performing in other areas, and they are subject to dismissal or reassignment based on data that do not come from their field. That's what teachers are concerned about: that their teaching is being evaluated not on the learning their students do in music, but [on learning] in some other discipline."

"Some teachers are not buying into it at all," Cindy Brewer says. "They think kids deserve to pass, period. But more of our teachers are being evaluated on how they assess kids."

"Coming from 30 years of public school teaching," says Connie Hale, associate professor of elementary music education at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and author of *Six Key Principles for Music Assessment*, "the biggest fear is that assessment causes teachers harm, that it takes away the soul of music." Hale shares a related quote, which she found in a *Music Supervisor's Journal* from 1922: "Teachers feel that the most vital elements in music are the intangible, the artistic, the aesthetic, the emotional elements."

But, as she notes, there is a sea change happening in music education, and it's simple: "Assessment is starting to drive raises." (See the Advocacy column on page 22 for more on this subject.)

TOOLS OF ASSESSMENT

Cindy Brewer claims that formative assessment in the classroom "has to start early. Start off slow, just like you would learning a new piece of music. Use a checklist or a rubric, whatever works for you—they did this, or they didn't. Go from there."

Denese Odegaard starts with three basic questions: "Where am I going?," "Where am I now?," and "How do I bridge the gap?" From there, she has developed non-threatening assessments that provide a vision of a given target, offer regular feedback, and teach students to self-assess. The trick is to focus on

FURTHER RESOURCES

The following NAfME online articles are helpful resources on the subject of assessment.

- **"ASSESSMENT: THE HOW, WHAT, AND WHY" nafme.org/v/general_music/assessment-the-how-what-and-why-part-1**
- **"CHECKING PROGRESS WITH CHECKLISTS" nafme.org/v/general_music/checking-progress-with-checklists**
- **"ASSESSING WITH RUBRICS" nafme.org/v/general_music/assessing-with-rubrics**
- **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MUSIC TEACHER EVALUATIONS ON ADVOCACY GROUNDSWELL: advocacy.nafme.org/page/how-to-advocacy-guides (see bottom of list)**

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National Association for Music Education

> ASSESSMENT DOESN'T HAVE TO TAKE ALL DAY. IT CAN BE JUST AS QUICK AS LISTENING AND SAYING, 'WE NEED TO DO THIS' OR 'THIS WASN'T A PROBLEM.' —*Cindy Brewer*

one target at a time and revise along the way. "I always try things in baby steps," she explains. "One of the components is making students responsible for their own work. We say, 'Here's the target,' and they track their own progress.

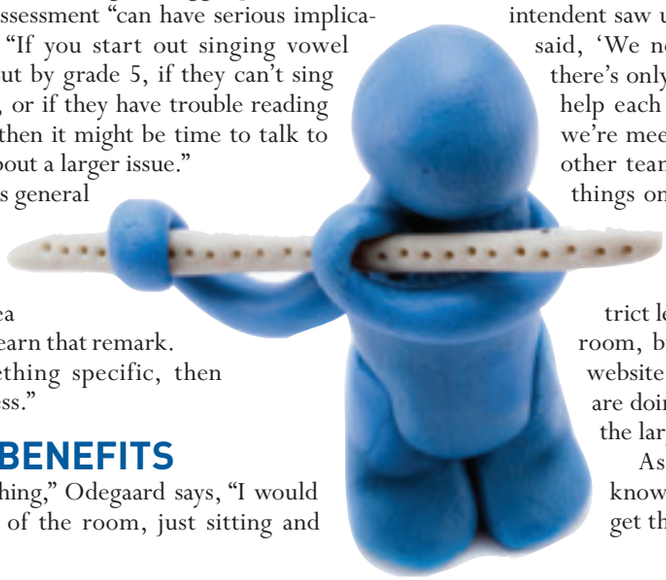
"A lot of teachers feel like they don't have to tap into [an assessment strategy] for performance-based classes," Odegaard adds. "We're good at giving feedback when performance is involved. But when the focus turns more toward the individual student, we're not as good. It's as simple as walking by a student and hearing what they sound like. Or saying, 'Give me a show of fingers of how well you understand this.' It's just a different way of thinking, instead of focusing on the group. If we allow a student to play a line or sing a phrase and then just give the student a grade, that student never gets any better. Time is an issue, of course. But if you set this up, it's like teaching a kindergartner how to get to school. Once you learn the way, it's easy."

"Assessment doesn't have to take all day," Brewer says. "It can be just as quick as listening and saying, 'We need to do this' or 'This wasn't a problem.' It's just giving guidance."

One important thing to address in assessments is the way that progress in one area can mask overall deficiencies. "If we listen to a recording of students singing, and use a rubric to evaluate the singing, it may sound better if they're getting pitches right," Odegaard says. "But maybe we overlooked rhythm because we were looking at a bigger picture."

A lack of proper assessment "can have serious implications," Brewer says. "If you start out singing vowel sounds, it's simple. But by grade 5, if they can't sing certain vowel sounds, or if they have trouble reading music off the board, then it might be time to talk to the reading teacher about a larger issue."

Connie Hale avoids general feedback: "You're saying to them, 'You're so smart,' and they have no idea what they've done to earn that remark. But if you say something specific, then you're making progress."



FORMATIVE BENEFITS

"When I started teaching," Odegaard says, "I would see kids in the back of the room, just sitting and breathing. Now all students are engaged and take responsibility for their own learning. Smart kids in the classroom hide what they don't get; they don't want to have education *done* to them. But just a little attention teaches kids to be responsible for their own work. Sometimes kids have the answers that we don't."

"Ultimately we want our students to have a lifetime enjoyment of music," Connie Hale says. "Our assessment needs to be in line with that. I know that children can learn to sing, but my belief is not enough. Allow the students that sense of being, let them feel that they are the musicians in the classroom."

"In the long run it helps parents appreciate their programs, and fight for me," Cindy Brewer says. "Look, music and the arts always get shortchanged on resources. There was a period in three or four weeks when I was moved around about 10 times. One day we didn't have class because I was being moved again. One of the parents found out and said something, and the problem was solved. That would not have happened if those parents didn't know what was going on in the classroom. If I didn't have assessments, and didn't share them with the parents, I wouldn't have that kind of support."

NEXT STEPS

To devise a truly effective system of formative assessment for music, it's crucial that teachers work together, across discipline and district lines. "Teachers have come to appreciate how valuable it is to share ideas," Odegaard says. "It brings reluctant teachers on board when they see others having success."

"In middle and high school there's so much competition," Brewer notes. "We forget to collaborate. The elementary music teachers in my district started meeting once a month to share ideas and lesson plans and to talk about the problems and successes we had. We did it for a year or so until an assistant superintendent saw us one day and asked what we were doing. I said, 'We never see or talk to each other, and since there's only one of us in a building, we get together to help each other.' Now we have early dismissal, and we're meeting not just with music teachers, but with other teams at the schools. Instead of making us do things on our own time, they let us solve problems like a business, during the school day."

"Be aware," Timothy Brophy advises. "Stay tuned of what's going on at the district level. It's easy to become isolated in the classroom, but keep the radar turned on. The NAfME website is a good start, not only for what teachers are doing in the classrooms, but also for changes on the larger political issues."

As Cindy Brewer wisely says, "If we don't know where we're going, we won't know how to get there."

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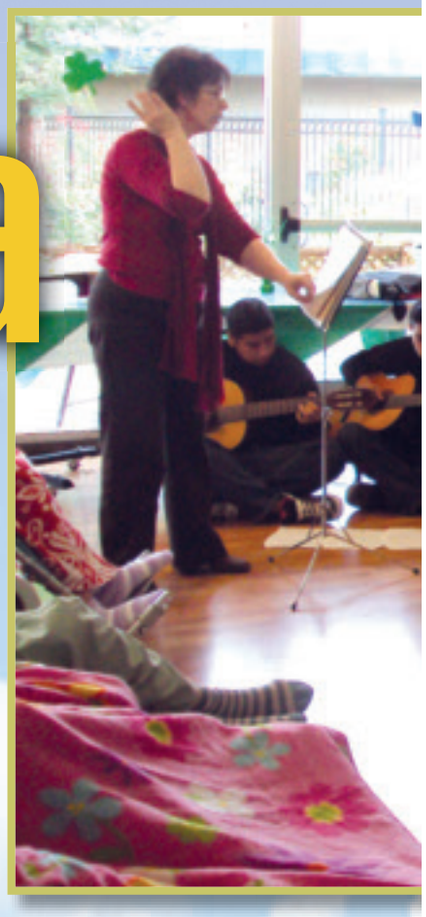
National Association for Music Education

California Dreaming

BY CATHY APPLEFELD OLSON

With help from her students, Lindsay High School music teacher Nancy Wills has created a top-notch high school guitar program.



If you're a music teacher looking to start a unique program, Nancy Wills has some advice. "If you can build it, you can have it. Just start something," she says. "Even if it's just a small group after school, if you feel passionate about something, the kids pick up on that."

Wills should know. After getting her master's degree from UCLA, she dreamed of starting a school-based guitar program so she could teach students to make music on the instrument she'd loved since she was a kid growing up outside of Yosemite, California. She had a strong belief that guitar was perfect for schools, ideal for individualized playing but also capable of jibing with a band or orchestra.

She landed a job at Lindsay High School in Lindsay, California, which had been struggling with an unsuccessful music program and whose administrators thought that perhaps adding guitar to the repertoire would liven up things. "They didn't get the signups for guitar they thought they would, so I ended up teaching all over the district," Wills says. "Music history class, color guard, elementary music, beginning band, music appreciation, and one guitar class. It was terrible."

But something interesting happened during that first difficult year. "I had 13 kids in that one guitar class," she recalls, "and they got really good. I had them out performing a lot, and news spread. And the next year, the guitar program grew."

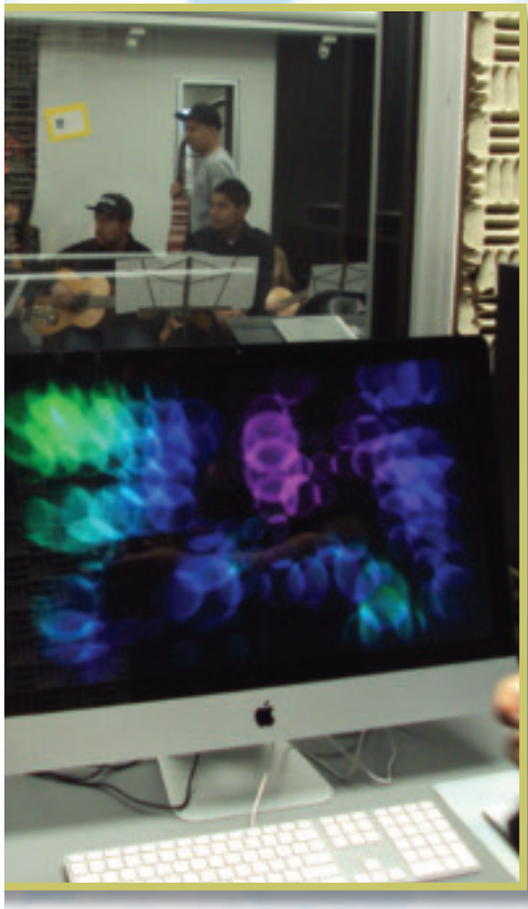
Fast-forward 13 years, and Wills is teaching guitar to about 215 Lindsay High School students. The school also has strong band and choir programs, helmed by another teacher—which brings her to another realization.

"Teach a small group, and teach them really well," she says. "Sometimes as teachers we get so busy trying to recruit people—because if we don't have a big program, we're in danger of getting cut—that the quality is lacking. But if we have a strong small group, they will do the recruiting for us. Just put the kids out there and let them play."

Students participate in two performances per year that showcase their prowess on classical and flamenco guitar, the two genres that Wills teaches. Additionally, her kids learn to read music; there's no playing by ear in her classroom. She structures her yearly classes so that the first semester centers around solo repertoire—building reading skills and technique—while the second semester embraces ensemble playing. The dual focuses of the curriculum were handpicked by Wills from her experience and observations.

The concept of empowering students through individual learning was inspired by a class Wills observed while she was in

Clockwise from top left: Nancy Wills leads her students during a performance at a local hospital; the advanced guitar ensemble takes a gold medal at a CMEA festival; and two shots from the ensemble's appearance at a Fresno radio station.

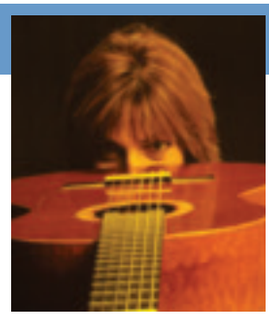


school. "In 1992 I saw a teacher who was working in a school in Fresno that had a bad reputation as a gang school," she says. "And this teacher started the Fresno Guitar Society, teaching guitar class to these students who had mohawks and piercings and tattoos. If you saw these kids on the street, you'd be terrified, but someone gave them an instrument and a focus, and they did something beautiful."

Another program Wills witnessed, this one at CalState Fullerton, featured a guitar ensemble in which students at various levels played together. "It would just be powerful to listen to them play," she says. "So that's how I designed my program, to do both of those things [solo and ensemble performance]."

Although she is open to the direction that her students' learning may take,

Q&A with Nancy Wills



Q What do you know to be true about teaching music that you didn't know when you started?
I know that music makes a difference; it breaks boundaries and unites those who make it together. I always *thought* that might be true, but I now know for sure that it is. When you get a group of people together making music, they share a common goal, rhythm, and purpose, even if only for a moment. And those moments make walls disintegrate. I believe that it positively changes the ways in which people interact together.

Q If you weren't a music teacher, what would you be doing?
The only other career I think I might have found to be a good fit would be a mountain ranger. I grew up near Yosemite and have always loved the mountains and hiking.

Q What advice would you offer someone just coming up in the profession?
Always remember to bring out the best in your students. By doing so, you will also bring out the best in yourself. Students want to learn, even if they may act at times as if they don't. Take small steps and let them get very secure in what they are doing. That will cause them to sound good, and if you can get them to sound good, they are yours.

Q Music education would be better if...
All schools began music education in the elementary grades. Many elementary schools do not have band, orchestra, or choir. General music programs for the early grades are becoming less common as the demand for more time on other core subjects rises. I believe that a strong music education program would support strong academic results, but the reality is that music is often considered expendable.

Q I hope I'm most remembered by my students for...
Inspiring them to achieve what they thought was beyond their reach, and for using music as a powerful tool to make their world a better place. I hope they remember that music always tells a story, even though the story may be different for different people, and I hope that by teaching them to play an instrument I have helped them begin to tell their own story.

PHOTOS: COURTESTY OF NANCY WILLS

Wills is less flexible when it comes to their repertoire choices. "Sometimes the kids ask to do rock guitar. Generally I don't let them do that because most rock music songs are written with a lead line," she says. "But in the second semester, if they can find something with written music that has melody, accompanying bass, and harmony—a complete piece—they can do it. I want them to be able to play what they love."

Not surprising given the unique nature of her program, Wills also sometimes finds herself answering questions from parents about the repertoire. "At the beginning of the year, before they know what's going on in class, some parents ask, 'Why aren't you teaching kids music they can play and sing along with?' They are thinking more country or folk music. And I tell them that by the end of the year they'll be able to play all that stuff in their sleep if they learn classical guitar. It's so much more difficult."

Besides fostering their love of guitar music, Wills also thinks of her class as a safe and artistically stimulating haven for her students. "Guitar is really good for kids who are not quite so social as they are in choir and band. Those kids are usually well-adjusted socially and work well with groups. More frequently with guitar, that's not the case," she says. "These are kids who are a little outside the edges, often really intellectual kids who like to work at their own pace."

For some students, that pace is quite fast. Five years ago, Wills introduced an honors program for advanced students, who perform around the Central Valley area, from Fresno to Bakersfield. "They do professional-level chamber music," she says, noting that recent performances included the music of Vivaldi and the Bizet opera *Carmen*.

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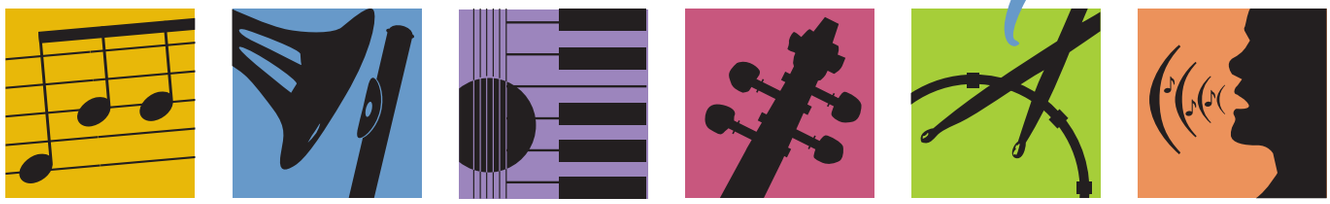


GENERAL MUSIC

From the World to the Classroom

Music is an essential part of cultures around the world, and yet music education in American classrooms tends to focus mostly on Western classical traditions. A general music class' horizons can be easily expanded, though, with an infusion of non-Western repertoire. Jui-Ching Wang, assistant professor of music education and world musics in the School of Music at Northern Illinois University, has some excellent ideas on how to go about doing this.

Wang grew up in Taiwan, and she is familiar with the children's singing games heard throughout her native country as well as in China, Japan, and Korea. She is trained in the music of Southeast Asia and also knows children's songs from Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, which she teaches these days along with traditional Chinese and Indonesian instrumental music—all music that can be approached organically in the general music classroom.

The beauty of incorporating multicultural repertoire is that it can be taught using the same methods as Western music, with whatever equipment is at hand. It's not much of a stretch to go from teaching a class an American folk song to a Southeast Asian folk song, as they both tend to be melodically straightforward. And while a general music classroom most likely won't include a set of instruments for, say, a Chinese silk and bamboo ensemble, the melodies and scales played by such a group can be rendered on keyboards or other standard instruments; a set of basic metallophones (like the one pictured below) can be used to simulate a gamelan orchestra, and so on.

As for specific resources for incorporating non-Western music in the classroom, Wang suggests investigating the books offered by World Music Press (worldmusicpress.com), most of which are accompanied by CDs or DVDs that demonstrate the music. She also recommends *Soundscapes: Exploring Music in a Changing World* by Kay Kaufman Shelemay, which gives a good overview of world music while explaining its meaning in different cultures. Also see NAfME books on world music, most with lesson plans, at nafme.org/view/categorized-list-of-selected-menc-books. In addition, Wang says, "I would encourage teachers to use a wide array of multimedia resources, such as documentary films of anthropological or cultural studies of music, along with audio and video clips of authentic performances and interviews of world musicians available on various Internet sites such as YouTube, NPR Music, and National Geographic World Music." The Tools for Teaching section of the Smithsonian Folkways website (folkways.si.edu) discusses ways to teach music from around the world.

Whatever international music a teacher decides to incorporate in the general classroom, Wang stresses the importance of keeping an open mind. Don't judge the music by Western standards, and encourage students to set aside their biases as well. "It is imperative," she says, "that music teachers be sensitive to various musical sounds/styles unique to particular cultural contexts by paying more attention to how musical elements are treated differently from culture to culture—and understanding the reasons that each unique musical idiom is formed." —*Adam Perlmutter*

BRASS AND WOODWINDS

Time-Efficient Band Rehearsal Techniques

The length of the average concert band rehearsal can vary greatly from school to school. While some schools may be

blessed with 90 minutes of rehearsal each day, many others must make due with as little as an hour a week (or less). When your ensemble is on the short end of that range, it's very important to make good use of each and every minute. Randall Coleman, associate director of bands at the University of Alabama, insists that productive rehearsals begin with productive planning, which means not only managing the flow of events during the rehearsal but also "making sure that you as the director are mentally prepared for each part of it."

One of the most important elements of preparing for any rehearsal is studying the scores. Although time constraints make this ever more difficult, score study is still vital, allowing you to predict where problems may arise and prepare solutions for them before they occur. The next piece of the puzzle is to plan out the rehearsal, using a template that makes sense for your situation. Coleman emphasizes that just as each student is different, so is each teacher. "It really comes down to the fact that you have to find a method that works for you and then stick with it," he says. "You should work to develop policies and procedures that will help you maximize the use of your rehearsal time." Just as repetition helps musicians fix challenging passages, repetition of the basic order of rehearsal events helps the ensemble work better as a team.

Coleman also encourages teachers to devote extra time to planning each day's warm-up routine. A well-designed warm-up will not only get the group in the right mode for the rest of the rehearsal but can also be used to work on musical challenges that are coming up later in the rehearsal order: "In the younger grades, the warm-up is an excellent time to work on teaching and reinforcing long-term goals and concepts. Doing so, however, requires the teacher to think in terms of not just a single day's rehearsal but a complete cycle of rehearsals, each one building on the previous day's activities."

Other important things to consider in the pacing and structure of a rehearsal include setting specific time frames for working on each piece of music. Let the students know about this schedule, put it up on the board or overhead, and then stick to it. This allows the entire ensemble to see what your goals are for the rehearsal as a whole. Do not allow your rehearsal to become derailed by problems that may pop up in individual sections. When problems arise, make a note of them, and then find ways to fix those issues in the next day's plan.

—*Chad Criswell*

PHOTOS FROM TOP: BECKY SPRAY; ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

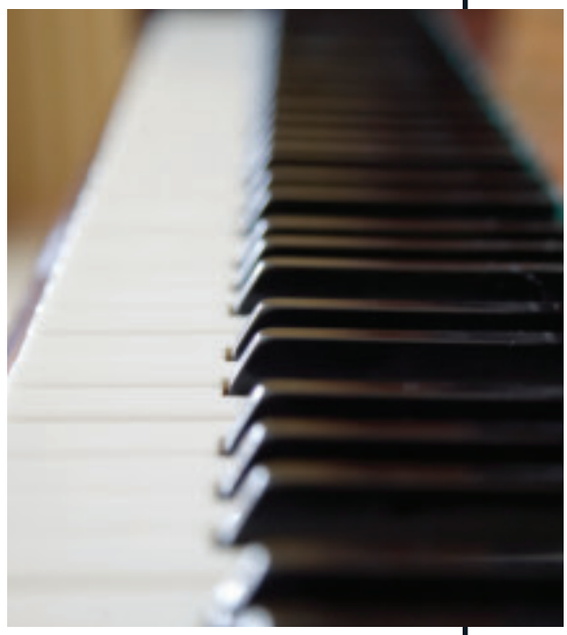
GUITAR AND KEYBOARD

Working with the Black Keys

Many piano methods ease students into the instrument by focusing on the white keys, but an emphasis on the black keys can have its own distinct advantages, fostering things like the development of hand strength and the exploration of improvisation. Mary Lynne Bennett, who teaches piano and music education at Fairmont State University in Fairmont, West Virginia, likes the fact that these keys allow students to easily grasp the layout of the keyboard—and that they give students' fingers a good workout.

"The black keys, with their neat groups of two and three, allow students to readily see all of the octaves throughout the piano," Bennett says. "I like to have the students explore the black keys by using their long fingers—2, 3, and 4, in various combinations like 2–3–2 and 2–3–4–3–2—to gain both strength and finger independence."

Intermediate students are often fearful of keys like C-sharp/D-flat major, which contain so many sharps and flats. To address this problem, Bennett has black key-averse students look at



such key signatures from a new perspective, which helps them greatly with sight-reading. "If a piece is in D-flat," she explains, "rather than having to remember to flat every B, E, A, D and G in the music, I'll encourage students to think of every note being flat except for F and C."

For more advanced students, Bennett likes to incorporate an exercise that

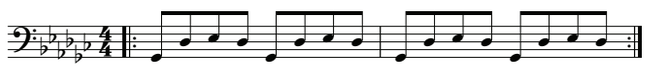


Figure 1. A boogie pattern played in swung eighth notes on the black keys can be used to set up an improvisational exercise.

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makes heavy use of the black keys while also enlisting some white ones. "One exercise, which I learned from an Isidor Philipp book, involves playing diminished seventh chords up and down the piano," she says. "This not only helps students get comfortable on the black keys, but it evenly spaces the fingers while teaching them to work independently."

Bennett also finds that the black keys are useful for exercising the ears. She might play a pair of notes or a short melody and have students try to play back the music on the keyboard—an exercise that instills aural confidence in young musicians and which can also be great fun for the classroom.

While improvisation might seem like an advanced concept for young musicians, it can easily be approached by students of all levels using the black keys. Bennett likes to kick off an improvisational session with a piano ostinato like the one shown in Figure 1 (see previous page). Against that pattern, she'll have students create melodies on all five black keys; their pentatonic configuration produces music that's instantly pleasurable. "Even beginning students can improvise without fear of sounding 'wrong' by using only the notes on the black keys," Bennett says, "and they can expand their creative horizons in the process."
—Adam Perlmutter

STRINGS

Giving String Ensemble Music an Early Start

String teachers often require students to master the elementary stages of fingering and bowing before having them play in an ensemble. But Anthony Pinelli Jr., orchestra director at Paul D. Schreiber High School in Port Washington, New York, believes that beginning and intermediate students should play ensemble pieces right from the start. His experience teaching string students at all levels has led him to believe that students do better by getting used to playing with others

right away, even as they're still learning how to play themselves.

"Students do not learn in a vacuum," Pinelli says. "They need to see their playing contextualized as early as possible. Small-ensemble and large-ensemble literature is a key component to learning music as an overall musician." His use of the term "overall musician" is telling here, emphasizing that students should be aware of themselves as performers alongside others and not simply alone onstage.

Pinelli has seen great results from using ensemble music at beginning levels. Some of the most concrete benefits? "Playing ensemble music opens students' ears to multiple parts and opens their

PHOTO: BECKY SPRAY

eyes to matching bow-stroke placement." Specifically, he has found that ensemble work helps students develop a sense of internal pulse: "If students play in a group, they have a sense of rhythm. Students also gain awareness of dynamics."

For Pinelli, leading an ensemble with beginning students wouldn't be possible were it not for the excellent ensemble arrangements available for these levels. "In a piece written in three or four parts for younger players," he says, "composers and arrangers clearly establish where each part fits, so each part is equal. There are no fights between first and second violin in these arrangements. Arrangers really do share the melody around." As a result, "students learn about lead voice and harmony voice," contributing to their growth as overall musicians.

Pinelli recommends several composers and arrangers who write explicitly for these beginning and intermediate levels and "spread the wealth really well between parts: John Caponegro, Elliot

workshop ... continued

Del Borgo, Deborah Baker Monday, Robert Frost, Sandra Dackow." He is also enthusiastic about the arrangements of Soon Hee Newbold, a composer who has been published by FJH Music Company for the past seven years. Her work, written for beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels, is influenced by a variety of world music traditions, and Pinelli advocates its use for teachers who are looking for new material that goes beyond the more familiar classics.

Finally, Pinelli believes in having students practice in groups during class time, and will often divide his students up into trios or quartets. By doing this, students learn how to rehearse on their own and become their own "music police," self-monitoring for pitch and accuracy. Engaging in this kind of self-evaluation is always valuable when it comes to playing in larger ensembles later on. —*Cynthia Darling*

PERCUSSION

Strategies for Elementary Percussion Auditions

Percussionists are rambunctious by nature; just ask any school music teacher. When left to their own devices, young percussionists can easily upset the pacing and goals set forth by the conductor—congregating in the back of the rehearsal room and becoming unmanageable while the rest of the ensemble warms up, for example. For those educators who struggle with classroom management issues caused by their percussion sections, it

PHOTO: BECKY SPRAY

may be helpful to establish auditions for percussionists on the elementary level. An audition process can also help instill motivation, discipline, and balance throughout your ensemble.

Adam Newton, director of bands at Gardiner Regional Middle School in Gardiner, Maine, says that a few simple audition practices can help address many potential issues before they fester. "My percussion tryouts involve a written part—students identify how many beats long different notes and rests are and identify notes on the staff. I also ask prospective students to perform a one-on-one audition where the focus is directed toward tapping out basic rhythms on a practice pad, which I start and the student repeats back to me. I then apply this method to the glockenspiel, playing simple note patterns and asking each student to play them back for me. This process can help gauge their retention of new information as well as their overall attention span, which might determine if percussion is a proper fit.

"Another essential aspect of an audition process is to check each student's ability to perform rhythms accurately with a metronome," Newton adds. "I ask students to tap a steady beat along with a metronome, then continue the steady beat—hopefully—after I've turned it off." This time-check exercise can also be applied at different tempi to determine a student's tendency to speed up or slow down a phrase.

"The students that get the highest total scores through the audition process are the ones that I select to play percussion," Newton says. "I limit my section to five students per school year, but if a student is right on the borderline of not being accepted and he or she seems very disappointed, I may make an exception. For those students who are not accepted based on an audition, I explain one-on-one to them exactly what areas of development they need to work on and aspects of their audition that might prevent them from doing well with percussion."

As you search for ensemble candidates, be selective in who you allow to start as percussionists. Look for students who possess strong independent skills and have a natural sense of rhythm. Once you have a complete section, your first- and second-year students should rotate between battery (snare drum, bass drum, and cymbals) and mallet instruments within every rehearsal. If you don't inspire new recruits to play mallet percussion early in their development, they will most likely discard the possibility in middle and high school. And if students feel consistently challenged by the material they're given, they are less likely to be disruptive during rehearsal.

—*Steve Fidyk*

CHORUS AND VOCAL

Overcoming Vocal Jazz Phobia

Vocal jazz ensembles can be great fun to listen to, but students whose sole experience is in more traditional choral groups may be apprehensive about singing in that style. How can you introduce young singers to the world of jazz with a minimum of agita?

First, consider why a student may be hesitant. "In jazz, one sings intervals and harmonies that are unusual and dissonant, but that can also be unfamiliar," says Connaitre Miller, associate professor of music, coordinator of jazz vocal studies, and director of the award-winning vocal jazz ensemble Afro Blue (of *The Sing-Off* fame) at Howard University in Washington, DC. "This can be intimidating to those who are used to the traditional 1–3–5–7 harmonies in most pop and traditional choral music. Also, the rhythms, which are highly syncopated, can be daunting. If the student dances well and can 'groove,' chances are he/she will be able to adapt to the rhythms used in jazz."

One vocal technique may also pose problems: "Minimizing vibrato can be frowned upon by some traditional voice teachers, but it is necessary [in jazz], not only for the style but also to allow dissonant harmonies to be heard clearly. We do an exercise in my beginning jazz choirs where the students sing intervals of a minor 2nd or major 7th and then add vibrato; you can't tell where the fundamental pitches are."

Miller recommends several ways to introduce students to vocal jazz harmonies. "I start by making reference to the


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workshop
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function of the notes they're singing in relationship to the chords in the songs they're currently learning," she says. "We also discuss the sounds of the color tones (9ths, 13ths). Once they can hear the functions of those notes and recognize them by ear and sight, then we move

on to some scales, chords, and guide tone lines from a soloist's point of view."

Improvisation can be a particular challenge for singers new to vocal jazz. According to Miller, one of the best ways to introduce students to it is through imitation: "Find a recording and have them all learn it. I like to use Sarah Vaughan's 'Sassy's Blues.' There are 14 choruses, so if they learn one per week (some may take two), they can sing them all together. I used to start the first class at the beginning of a new week with everyone singing this recording together, adding a chorus each week."

Listening to recordings is crucial to helping your students feel at ease with this vocal style. "To make the most of minimal class time, I always have jazz playing on the stereo when the students come into the room," Miller says. "I write the name of the piece and the soloist(s) on the board. Then, if we're working on a style that's difficult, I might take five minutes in the middle of rehearsal to play something in that same style, and we'll do active listening. Michele Weir in her *Jazz Singer's Handbook* has some great questions to which one can refer while listening. She also has a great discography, so if one is unsure of what music to play, start with her list, which was compiled from favorites contributed by lots of jazz vocalists." —*Susan Poliniak*

PHOTO: BECKY SPRAY

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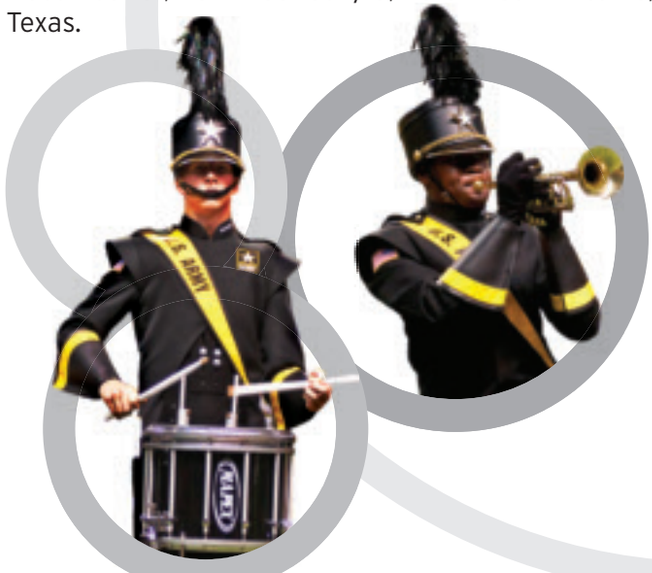

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It's Important to Have a Plan

An Oregon elementary teacher reveals her lesson plan creation methods for the organizationally challenged ■ BY PATIENCE MOORE

Some teachers dread creating lesson plans, preferring to focus on the fun parts: teaching and actually making music. But the advantages of a clear, time-tested lesson plan include benefits that reach beyond a single day's class. And for Mari Schay, a 15-year veteran of elementary music education, lesson planning *is* one of the fun parts!

Organize your weekly lesson plans by putting them in a binder.

After a couple of years in the profession, Schay, a K-5 general music and band teacher at Earl Boyles Elementary School in Portland, Oregon, found herself to be just "teaching day-to-day, week-to-week," without the benefit of a bigger picture or longer-term goals. Spurred by her district's requests for curriculum maps, Schay dug in. The system of lesson plans she came up with keeps her organized and in line with curriculum goals. Most important, she's a happy teacher with successful students.

Think of teaching K-5 music as going on a yearlong journey, says Schay, who uses Excel spreadsheets to map out her academic year week by week. "The lesson plans are the road map for how to get to the various destinations," she comments. For those of us who may be "organizationally challenged," Shay has easy instructions:

"At the beginning of the year, create a spreadsheet with tabs along the bottom for each month. Along the left column, put the first date of the week followed by 'Day 1,' 'Day 2,' or however many days you see your students. On *each day*, have row headings for lesson aspects such as song, instruments, movement, listening, and musicianship. Start filling in the boxes below the headings with just enough detail that you can remember your activities and goals."

These at-a-glance plans can then be printed and placed in the front of a binder at the start of each month for easy day-to-day reference. The remainder of the binder, divided by grade level, contains the materials needed in the classes (the songs, arrangements, worksheets, etc.). This one-binder system is especially helpful for teachers who do not have a designated music room and have to travel from class to class or even school to school.

Consistent lesson planning aids in assessing classroom management. Once her lesson plans were up and running, Schay discovered that she could easily gauge their success by how they affected the atmosphere of her classes: "If classroom behavior becomes an issue, the curriculum is often the problem. Keep kids thinking, playing, singing, and moving. They should be working harder than the teacher. There should be a combination of new material and old material in each week so that kids don't get too bored or too overwhelmed."

> "If classroom behavior becomes an issue, the curriculum is often the problem."

New songs, dances, and instruments can be added and removed with the lesson plan staying consistent. Find lesson ideas in NAfME's lesson plan library at nafme.org/lessons. "Having a routine is important, but it needs to be flexible enough that you can fit a variety of activities and lessons with it," Schay says. A little planning goes a long way.

The Record Company Inside a Magnet School

Recording and marketing CDs adds a few modern twists to general music class ■ BY DEBBIE GALANTE BLOCK

A Johns Hill student works on editing audio for the class CD.

Six years ago on short notice, Tom Miller was asked to teach a general music class to a room full of seventh- and eighth-graders with no previous musical experience at Johns Hill Magnet School in Decatur, Illinois. With little time to prepare, he taught the class in a traditional way. "When I realized how boring it was, I stopped doing that," he recalls. "One night I had a grand vision: 'What if my kids could be taught to run a business and involve music in that business as well?'"

Miller decided to teach his class to play guitar using chord charts and tablature. After each student learned a song—mostly folk songs in the public domain—he asked them to record, edit, and produce their songs to release as an album. (For songs not in the public domain, find licensing information on NAfME's Copyright Center: nafme.org/resources/view/copyright-center.) "The primary goals," he explains, "were for the students to understand the techniques of recording using Audacity [audio software] and publishing a recorded work." The students visited a local recording studio to see how engineers manipulate sounds and eliminate glitches. Then they applied what they'd learned to their own recordings. "I would record the other instruments [besides guitar and voice], but the students were entirely in charge of making sure it all lined up and sounded good," Miller says.

Once the finished product—a CD with a case and a label—was complete, the business part of the class commenced. Miller's students had to figure out how much it would cost to buy a stack of CDs, print a certain number of covers, and engage in marketing and advertising: "We had a team of students in charge of finance and contracts, figuring out how much we were spending versus how much we were making."

Miller charged the students for every piece of paper that came out of his printer "just like real life. If they wanted to make a morning announcement, I charged them just as if they went to a radio station with a commercial. They paid for everything out of startup money that I gave them. I asked the principal if it would be okay to sell the CDs to the student body, which was an incentive for them to do work. However, before they earned a dime, they had to pay me back." The first class that completed this project ended up selling 100 CDs, and students went home with $15 to $20 each.

Six years later, Miller's program is still going strong. No one knows yet whether it will turn out any future record producers, but he says it has most certainly inspired his students to continue working with Audacity: "Some of my students have done some cool mash-ups. One started making his own ringtones and downloading them to his phone." Ultimately, Miller says his class is a success because it "gives students a different outlook and understanding of how music is made."

> "What if my kids could be taught to run a business and involve music in that business as well?"

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOM MILLER

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You Got an Interview! So Now What?

For preservice music teachers in search of their first job, preparation is key ■ BY MAC RANDALL

It takes years of training to be a music educator. But in order to apply that training, you've got to get in the door somewhere—and most music education courses naturally aren't going to focus on how to handle that first, potentially nerve-wracking job interview. Jill Sullivan, associate professor of instrumental music education at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, decided to do something about this. She's made interview preparation a standard part of her student teaching seminars, and she's also conducted interviewing workshops under the auspices of NAfME. A helpful multi-page handout and PowerPoint document relating to those workshops can be found on her website, public.asu.edu/~jmsulli (go to the "Resources" section).

"There can be as many as three stages of interviewing," Sullivan notes. "The first is a screening interview, consisting of basic educational questions. The next stage will usually be with a person or committee of people who have music knowledge; you'll discuss teaching philosophy, techniques, and job specifics. The final stage, if the district is seriously considering you, could be with the principal or superintendent. Their questions will again be more general. Keep in mind that these stages don't always follow in the same sequence. It's important to know who's going to be in the room interviewing you. Some principals may have been ensemble directors themselves. Be prepared for both musical and non-musical questions."

> "Know who's going to be interviewing you. Some principals may have been ensemble directors themselves."

Sullivan recommends practicing possible responses to questions in front of either a mirror or another person. "Don't do it like you're cramming for an exam," she adds. "It should be distributive practice done over time, just like you'd do in preparing for a music performance."

Once you're in the interview room, if you get a question that throws you off, don't jump right in and try to answer it; instead, think about it for a few seconds. "Your interviewers may appreciate it when you take a step back to formulate a cogent response," Sullivan says. "Remember that they invited you for the interview, so they want you to do well."

It's fairly common for interviewers to ask job candidates what they feel are their weaknesses. If asked, you may want to give the most obvious answer: Like all preservice teachers, you don't have years of classroom experience behind you. "This is not the time to be forthright about things you're working on in your life," Sullivan advises. "It's an interview, not a confessional. And don't be too self-deprecating."

Sullivan has her students do mock interviews every semester. They have to prepare résumés, practice their responses as noted above, and dress appropriately. But there's a catch: Although the interviews are mock, the interviewers are real—music supervisors and principals who volunteer their time in exchange for a look at young teachers who may soon be searching for an actual position. "It's a win-win," Sullivan notes. "The interviewees get to experience what an interview is like, and the interviewers get to know who'll be entering the job market."

A mirror can be a handy assistant when preparing for an interview.

PHOTO: GOODSHOOT/THINKSTOCK

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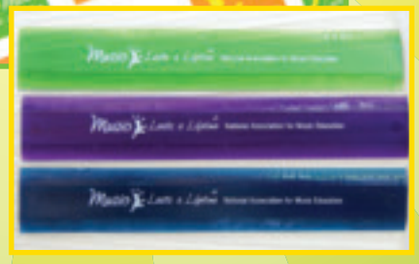

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resources

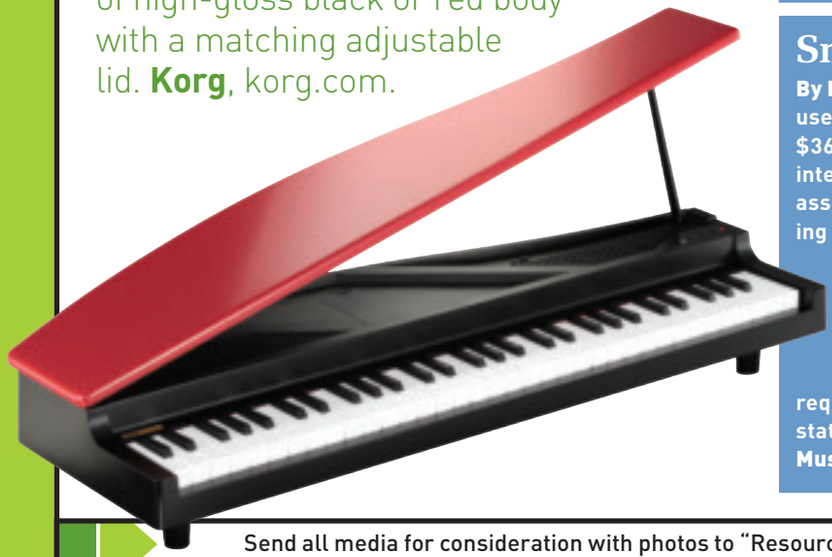
Accessories

Chromatics Music Playing Cards

By Knowledge of Music ($6.95, $9.95 for two decks). Music has its own alphabet, and this deck of playing cards is designed to aid students in their musical "spelling." The complete deck represents the four central octaves on a piano. Each card face features the name and frequency of a tone, along with a correlating major or minor scale and chord—black suits are major, red suits are minor. Chromatics encourage students to play familiar card games while training their minds to understand the 12 unique tones in Western music and the variety of ways in which those tones can be combined. **Knowledge of Music**, knowledgeofmusic.com.

microPIANO

By Korg ($499). Featuring 61 keys, built-in speakers, and optional battery power, the Korg microPIANO is as portable as an electronic piano can be, and well suited to classroom use. Its 60 built-in digital sounds include a convincing grand piano tone. Beginners will appreciate the 25 musical phrases that can be triggered with one touch, while the responsive "natural touch" keyboard should be attractive to more experienced players. Available in a choice of high-gloss black or red body with a matching adjustable lid. **Korg**, korg.com.



Apps

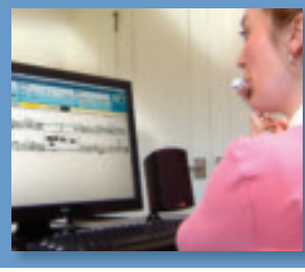
Rhythm Repeat

By Apalon (99 cents). This colorful game application for iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad can help to sharpen musical memory and rhythm skills. First, choose your instrument (piano, guitar, or drums); then follow the sequence of buttons representing a rhythm and try to repeat it in the same order. When you miss a note, you lose a "life," and if you lose all your lives, the game is over. The game's level of difficulty increases as it progresses, and more than 300 rhythms are featured. **Apalon,** apalon.com.

Software

SmartMusic 2012

By MakeMusic (free download for current SmartMusic users; new subscriptions $140 per year for educators and $36 per year for students). The latest version of this interactive music software allows educators to guide and assess instrumental sight-reading and vocal sight-singing with warm-ups, exercises, and études from 39 different method books. Repertoire includes 2,000 of the most requested vocal solos on state contest lists. **Make Music,** makemusic.com.



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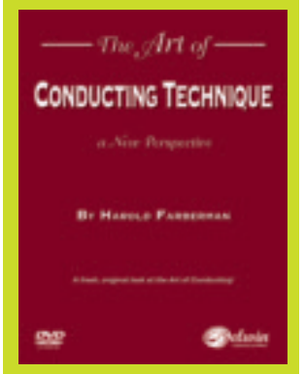
DVDs

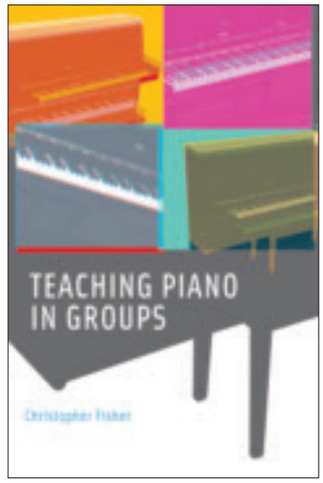


The Art of Conducting Technique: A New Perspective

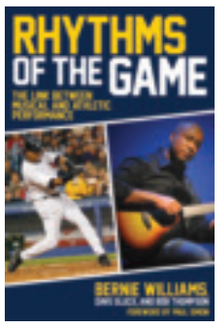
By Harold Farberman (2009, 90 minutes, $24.95). If this month's cover story has you thinking about the state of your own conducting skills, you may want to track down this DVD, which can be viewed by itself or as a companion to the book of the same name. Farberman, founder of the Conductors Guild, focuses on the basics of body and baton technique and discusses a three-dimensional system for charting baton movement called "the Pattern Cube." Belwin, alfred.com.

Books

Teaching Piano in Groups



By Christopher Fisher (2010, paperback, 264 pp., $24.95). As group piano teaching becomes more common, it's important for instructors to have a practical system with which they can work. This book addresses specific considerations for pre-college teaching scenarios, the public school group piano classroom, and college-level group piano programs for both music and non-music majors. There's also a chapter on the application of cooperative learning theory to group piano teaching. The book's companion website features a multi-format listing of resources, as well as interviews with several group piano pedagogues. **Oxford University Press,** oup.com.

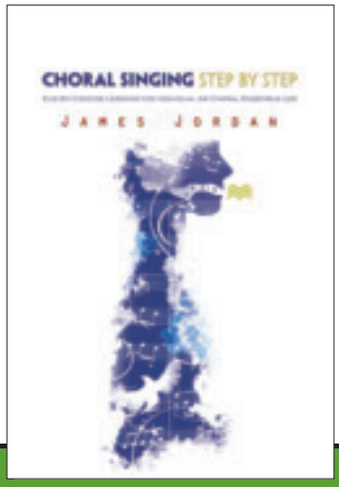


Rhythms of the Game: The Link Between Musical and Athletic Performance

By Bernie Williams, Dave Gluck, and Bob Thompson (2011, hardcover, 208 pp., $24.99). Former New York Yankee Bernie Williams, also an outstanding guitarist, feels that his ability to play major league baseball at a high level was directly influenced by his musical training. He and coauthors Gluck and Thompson examine how the concept of rhythm translates from one discipline to another, and they offer tips to both musicians and athletes looking to improve their performance on the stage and on the field. **Hal Leonard,** halleonard.com.

Choral Singing Step by Step

By James Jordan (2011, paperback, 86 pp., $12.95). This guidebook distills the essentials of good choral vocal technique into 11 concise lessons. Topics include strategies for good intonation and tuning; breathing (inhalation, exhalation, and support); resonance; vowel colors; leaps; range extension, diction, and alignment (using Alexander Technique and Body Mapping principles); use of the sigh for diagnosing vocal problems; and the challenges of maintaining rhythm and consistent tempo. The exercises contained in the book provide a sequential, self-paced program that extends beyond the rehearsal, encouraging both individual practice and study. **GIA Publications**, giamusic.com.



Rhymeplay: Playing with Children and Mother Goose

By Peggy D. Bennet (2010, paperback, 96 pp., $24.95). The distinctive lilt of Mother Goose rhymes can contribute a lot to young children's sense of literacy—and musicality. This book, meant for the early childhood classroom, includes numerous imaginative activities based on these rhymes that focus on building children's organizational, expressive, and memory skills. The accompanying picture cards of fingerplay movements are reproducible for classroom use. **Alfred**, alfred.com.

books, continued ...

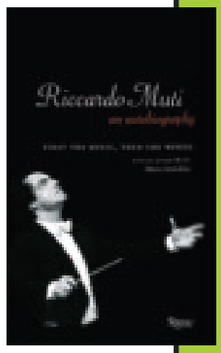
resources

The Evolution of Jazz Drumming

By Danny Gottlieb (2011, paperback with DVD and MP3 audio disc, 220 pp., $29.99). Designed to be used during a 16-week college semester, this guide and workbook anlyzes the work of jazz's most important drummers, including Baby Dodds, Sid Catlett, Dave Tough, Max Roach, Buddy Rich, Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, and Mel Lewis; a new drummer is studied each week. The DVD features classic video clips of many of the drummers, while the MP3 disc contains exercises from the book recorded at various speeds that can be looped for analysis and practice. **Hudson Music,** hudsonmusic.com.

Riccardo Muti: An Autobiography

By Riccardo Muti (2011, hardcover, 244 pp., $29.95). After 50 years on the podium (most notably in the U.S. as music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra), Muti retraces the path that led him to become one of the world's greatest orchestral and operatic conductors. Much of the book is naturally concerned with the maestro's personal life story, but Muti also takes the time to discuss his musical development, first in his native Italy and then around the globe, enlightening readers along the way with insights about key works and composers. Rizzoli, rizzoliusa.com.



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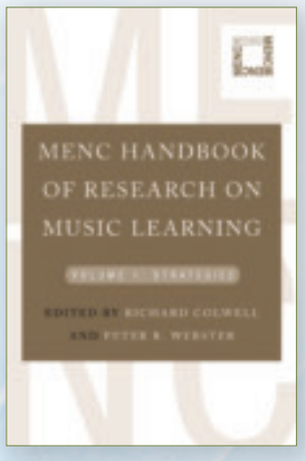

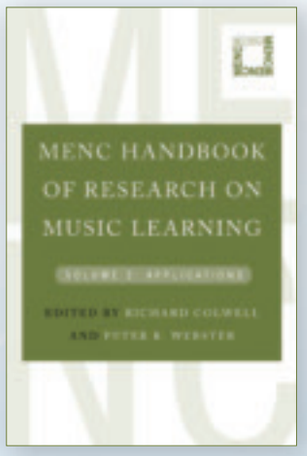

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The Oklahoma Ambassadors concert band performs in the town square of Rothenburg, Germany.

Trans-Europe Express

Oklahoma Ambassadors take their music across the Continent

Every other year since 1997, a group of the top high school and college musicians in the state of Oklahoma has traveled to Europe for a late-spring concert tour. They call themselves the Oklahoma Ambassadors, and their biennial journey is truly a matter of state—after being nominated by their teachers, the student performers receive their trip invitations from the governor's office. The Ambassadors' most recent tour took place from June 6 to June 21, 2011, making stops in England, France, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Germany, and Italy. It featured 160 musicians in three groups: concert band, concert choir, and jazz ensemble.

Joe Wilhelm, director of bands at Grove High School in Grove, Oklahoma, and president of the Oklahoma Music Educators Association, has been involved with the Ambassadors for the last six European trips. This past year, he assisted the concert band and led the jazz ensemble. "We started recruiting for this trip in the spring of 2010," he says. "That gives students time to decide whether they're going, and to raise funds. It's easier when several students are picked from one school, because then they can work out fundraising ideas together. By November, they need to give us a down payment, and at that point they're committed to the trip."

At the beginning of June, the young musicians met for final preparations. "We don't practice while we're on tour," Wilhelm explains, "but we have a four-day camp on a college campus before we fly out. It's pretty intense rehearsal." From there, it was on to London, where the choir sang in Wesley's Chapel and the concert and jazz bands performed in the Victoria Embankment Gardens. In Paris, the choir appeared at St. Séverin Church and the bands played in the Luxembourg Gardens. Among the other concert locales on the itinerary were Crans-Montana, Switzerland; Seefeld, Austria; and Rothenburg, Germany. The sojourn ended in Venice with a visit to the glass factory in Murano, gondola rides, and a quick choral performance in Piazza San Marco.

"I was amazed at the musicianship and great character of citizenship displayed in our concerts," Wilhelm says. "Also, it was awesome to see audience members waving the American flag in London and in Switzerland. The students really enjoyed that, and they enjoyed seeing that music is truly an international language."—*Mac Randall*

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