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JANUARY 2023



SBO+ Welcomes Choral Teachers and Students to the Family!

What's Inside?

- Music Technology Focus
- What Can ACDA Do for You?
- Two Great Modern Band Articles
- Visit *SBO+*'s Jazz Club and Choral Corner



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Some product options are not available in the catalog but can be purchased at your group's Online Store when inventory is available.

These items are not discontinued!

WHY? Like other manufacturers, Rada Cutlery is experiencing unusual supply disruptions. To reduce the possibility of backorders, supporters can purchase products not shown in the catalog from your group's Online Store. To sign up for Online Fundraising, visit **www.RadaCutlery.com/go**.

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Mindful Minutes

Have you ever heard the term **mindfulness**? Do you know what being **mindful** is? Did you know that you can easily practice being mindful anytime, anywhere? Did you know that practicing mindfulness can make you less stressed and anxious, improve your focus, and even help you think more clearly? It's true! Being mindful simply means that you take a moment to really focus on the world around you and the way it makes you feel. It means slowing down and taking your time to really pay attention to yourself and to relax. It means that you are really noticing what is happening, and not multi-tasking and rushing around.

There are LOTS of ways to practice being mindful. Your teacher will share ideas with you and provide links to websites that explain mindfulness and podcasts that help kids become more mindful. You will do some research using these resources to help you create and produce your own, short podcast that focus on one mindfulness activity to help your fellow students and listeners become more mindful. You can compose some relaxing music to help your listeners focus using the *Soundtrap* loop library. Relax, be mindful, and be sure to include all the elements of your podcast listed below:

Project Requirements:

- Your podcast should be 1-2 minutes in length – no more than 5 minutes.
- Your podcast should focus on one mindful activity provided by the teacher and explain how listeners can practice that activity to help them become more mindful.
- Write a script using the Draft>Edit>Revise process with your teacher.
- Once your script is approved, record your podcast in *Soundtrap*.
- Compose music using the Loop Library to add background music to help your listeners relax while listening.
- If your mindful activity requires physical movement, be as detailed as possible on how to perform that movement.

When you have completed your podcast, submit it to your teacher for assessment and distribution.

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A step-by-step guide to establishing a successful mariachi program. Are you intimidated because you're not a mariachi expert? This article is for you!

UpClose 12

You Want Me to Teach What!? How to Thrive as a Choral Teacher

The executive director of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) is guess what? A band teacher! Learn how she came to teach choir (with a lot of help from her friends) and how ACDA can help all of us be better music teachers.

Modern Band 14

Two highly relevant articles. Dr. Sarah Gulish shares part 1 in a series on how to guide students to compose their own songs. Then, *SBO+* shares a successful approach on teaching class guitar, something many band, orchestra, and choral teachers are currently doing.

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SBO+ solicited articles from a wide range of music tech companies to share what their latest innovations were. Here are just a few. We also offer a solution to state music education associations on how they can offer cutting edge sessions on music technology by using the experts at the non-profit Technology in Music Education (TI:ME).

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Not Your Grandparents' Choral Concert

SBO+ is thrilled to be partnering with American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) to bring you articles from the choral world. This article, which originally appeared in *Chor-Teach*, one of ACDA's publications, challenges us to rethink our approach to programming.

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Directing Kids

SBO+'s expert on kid's musical theater shares tips for successfully directing kids and casting your productions.

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BAND, ORCHESTRA, CHORAL, THEATER AND MORE!

Coming in the February issue of *SBO+*

- A focus on strings and orchestra
- *SBO+* welcomes ASTA and previews their convention
- The Sin of Unconvincing Dynamics by Robert Floyd
- America's Musician features a member of the "President's Own" U.S. Marine Band

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Perspective



A New Year and a New *SBO+*

As we look back at 2022 and ahead to 2023, it's hard to underestimate the changes *SBO+* has gone through. Our long-time editor, Mike Lawson, became owner and publisher. Soon after, I was "voluntold" (one of my favorite Army words), I'd be moving from a monthly columnist to editor, and just a few months after that, we made the decision to transition *SBO* to *SBO+* and include all types of school music. Because *SBO+* is a print magazine, a digital magazine, and has many web and email versions, the number of places we needed to revise on the fly was daunting. If we err and leave out some members of the now expanded *SBO+* family by referring to "band directors" instead of including all teachers of music, please know we are working on it!

This month's issue features content contributed by the American Choral Directors Association. ACDA is now partnering with *SBO+* to bring you insights and advice on all things choral, especially for instrumental specialists who are now teaching choir. Robert W. Smith and his composers will be bringing you singing tips as well as playing tips in future issues. This month we also include articles on musical theater and modern band.

If we weren't using music technology in our classrooms and rehearsals prior to COVID, we're certainly relying more on it now. *SBO+* reached out to many innovators in the music technology world and asked them to share what they're working on to better serve you, the music educator. Just to be clear, *SBO+* is not endorsing any of these products but wanted you to hear what's new.

We've also announced our annual essay contest with generous prizes for ten student essayists and their music teachers. Last year we asked why students joined and stayed in band or orchestra. This year, we focus on their teachers by asking them to tell us about a music teacher who has changed their life. What was it about them that had an impact on them? How did their teaching, personality, or actions differ from other good teachers?

I'd like to give a shout-out to our sister publication, *Musical Merchandise Review* (*MMR*magazine.com). *MMR* was established in 1879 and is the oldest publication dedicated to the music industry. As I was reading their latest issue, it occurred to me *MMR* would be a terrific (and free) resource for educators to stay on top of what music products are coming out.

I'm finishing this column after returning from the Midwest Clinic where I got to meet many of our "50 Directors Who Make a Difference." What a treat! Several *SBO+* contributors made presentations, there was tons of great music and many frank discussions about how we can do a better job of reaching under-served communities. I attended a powerful presentation about women conductors and was able to introduce *SBO+* to hundreds of educators. Thanks to the storms, I also spent a delightful two days in Chicago O'Hare airport enjoying \$20 sandwiches!

Here's wishing our nearly 40,000 monthly readers a wonderful 2023!

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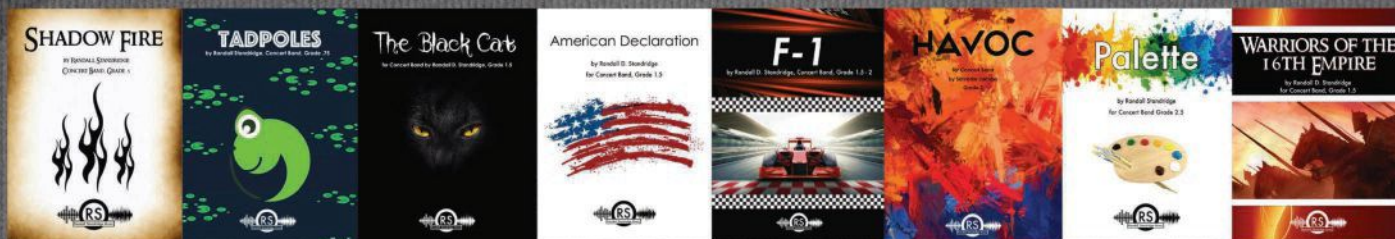
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- YAY-TUDES! (melodic etudes for all instruments, vol 1-3)
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Check out our exciting 2022-2023 New Concert Band Releases!

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The unBroken Project (a musical initiative about mental health)



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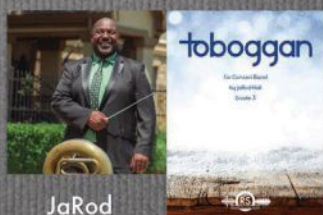
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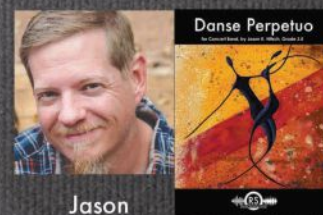
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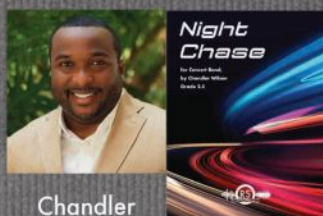
Jennifer E. Rose



Jason Nitsch



Jorge Vargas



Chandler Wilson



Salvador Jacobo



Erin Keeton-Howard

Alfred Music to Be Exclusive Distributor of FJH Music

"This alliance is a dream come true," says Brian Balmages, director of MakeMusic Publications and Digital Education for Alfred Music and MakeMusic. "Everyone knows how passionate I have been about the FJH catalog over the last two decades, and to see their popular instrumental, piano, and guitar catalogs joining forces with Alfred Music represents a huge win for music teachers, dealers, students, and the wonderful composers represented by both companies. The addition of this respected catalog is a natural fit across all our product offerings, and we are proud to be their exclusive distributor going forward."

The FJH Music Company agreements are twofold. First, effective January 1, 2023, the FJH catalog will be exclusively distributed by Alfred Music in both print and digital forms. In addition, FJH's educational catalogs will be exclusively available for interactive practice on MakeMusic Cloud, formerly SmartMusic, the reference online platform for music practice from MakeMusic.

Kevin and Kyle Hackinson, vice presidents of The FJH Music Company Inc. stated, "Everyone at FJH is excited about this collaboration and the opportunity it provides to further grow the FJH catalog in both print and digital formats. For over 20 of FJH's storied 35-year history, we have worked alongside Brian Balmages to build one of the world's most exciting instrumental catalogs, paralleling our success in piano and guitar. This relationship builds on the FJH legacy in new and exciting ways, expanding the reach of our existing catalog more broadly throughout the world with an eye on developing new innovative publications and growth for the future."

Alfred.com FJHmusic.com

United Sound Launches Composer Project

United Sound, a not-for-profit organization that provides students with disabilities equal access to the musical performing arts, has launched a bold, new initiative designed to break down barriers school music programs face in performing works by composers from minoritized communities.

The Composer Project actively assists emerging composers of classical and jazz music and related genres who are not represented equitably in published and performed literature. To accomplish this, United Sound has assembled a team of mentors who will provide these aspiring individuals with free masterclasses and recording partners who will work with them to refine and ultimately record their music. In addition, The Composer Project will make recordings and sheet music more accessible to educators than ever, providing them with lists of music by underrepresented composers, recordings of new music, and free music for lower-income schools.

"I didn't have any spare time when I was teaching, so the only new music I heard was what I could listen to on my drive to and from work," said Julie Duty, United Sound's founder and executive director. "Our goal with The Composer Project is to help emerging composers gain the vital information and connections needed to launch their careers faster. At the same time, we will enable educators to search for music by composers from historically minoritized communities as easily as listening to the radio."

Brian Balmages, a member of The



United Sound founder Julie Duty and composer Omar Thomas, Composer Project Advisory Board, said, "This project is an incredible opportunity to give back and inspire a new generation of composers interested in writing music for all levels. To be a part of a team that is so visionary, talented, and passionate is as exciting for me as it may be for the young composers who will participate in the workshops and masterclasses. We hope to help foster a musical landscape that celebrates composers of all backgrounds and helps inspire a new group of composers as unique and diverse as the people in this beautiful world of ours."

Omar Thomas, famed composer and Composer Project Advisory Board member, said, "Our ultimate goal is to create a system that puts a wider range of musical styles, written by more varied composers, in front of younger students to push back against any implicit biases that may arise from a less diverse musical repertoire."

Duty stresses that this new initiative amplifies United Sound's peer mentoring program for students with disabilities, for which the organization is best known.

UnitedSound.org

Bands of America Crowns Champions

Congratulations to the new Bands of America Grand National Champion, Carmel High School, Carmel, Indiana, and the national class champions:

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- Class AA – Tarpon Springs High School, Florida
- Class AAA – Dobyns-Bennett High School, Tennessee
- Class AAAA – Carmel High School, Indiana

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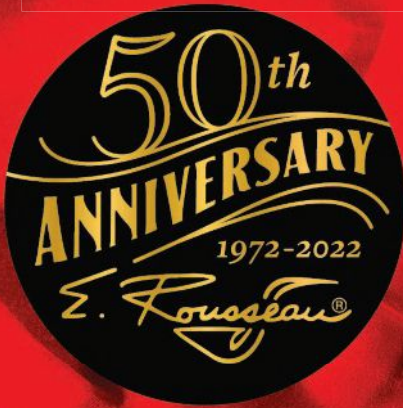
ACDA Offers Free Access to ChorTeach for SBO+ Readers

The American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) is now a collaborating partner with SBO+ to share great content on teaching choir. They are offering the latest issue of ChorTeach to SBO+ readers. Go to their website, click on publications, and then ChorTeach.

ACDA.org

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Dr. Kenneth Tse
Professor of Saxophone
University of Iowa



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THE JAZZ SAXOPHONIST

An Introduction to the Altissimo Register

By Tracy Heavner

The ability to play notes in the altissimo register is a highly desirable skill for most jazz saxophonists. This skill allows performers to play more exciting, expressive solos by extending the upper range of saxophone by one octave or more. However, learning this skill can be very frustrating since many saxophonists simply look up the fingerings for altissimo notes in a fingering chart and attempt to play them with no idea of what changes are necessary in the tongue position and air stream. When this strategy does not work, some saxophonists give up never realizing that there are exercises, when properly practiced, that will develop the skills necessary to play in the altissimo register.

Overtone Exercise for Developing the Altissimo Register

One exercise that will develop the altissimo register requires the playing of overtones. Overtones are harmonic notes that are played over a low fundamental note by adjusting the tongue position and air stream instead of using different fingerings. Learning to play different pitches by only changing the tongue position and air stream are precisely the skills needed to play in the altissimo register. To begin the altissimo overtone exercise, the saxophonist first plays a low B $\flat$ below the staff. Then the B $\flat$ an octave above located on the third line of the staff is played using the same fingering as low B $\flat$. The new note is played only by adjusting the back of the tongue to a higher position in the oral cavity. This tongue adjustment will feel like saying the word "he" or "her". Each note should also be started with a breath attack and not tongued since this will cause additional movement of the tongue. Next, the

F on the fifth line of the staff is played only by moving the tongue to a higher position. This process continues playing the entire overtone series by adjusting the tongue to a higher position but using the low B $\flat$ fingering.

Overtone Exercise #1 Use Low B $\flat$ Fingering for All Notes



This exercise should also be performed with low B and low C as fundamental notes. By playing additional overtones based on low B and low C, the saxophonist will cover a greater range of altissimo notes developing greater control and flexibility.

Overtone Exercise #2 Use Low B Fingering for All Notes



Overtone Exercise #3 Use Low C Fingering for All Notes



By learning to play the above overtone exercises, the saxophonist will discover how to manipulate the tongue and throat position, which is the fundamental requirement for playing the altissimo register. Once these exercises have been mastered, it will be relatively easy for the jazz saxophonist to play in the altissimo register.

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I Want to Add Mariachi to My School's Music Program. Where Do I Start?

By Jaimie L. Abney-Giraldo

SBO+: This is the first in a series of articles about how to start a mariachi program from scratch, especially for educators with no background in the genre.

You've seen the research, you've read the anecdotes and success stories, and you've analyzed your school's demographic trends and student interest. You even have the support of your administration! You know that adding a mariachi offering at your school will be a big hit, but you don't have a background in the genre and aren't sure how to get it off the ground. Where do you start? Where can you find instruments? Literature? Uniforms? How do you learn how to teach it?

Pause. Breathe. Congratulations! You have just made a decision that will change your life and the lives of the students at your school. I am so excited for you and am looking forward to the journey you are about to embark on! Knowing how and where to start can be overwhelming, but I hope I can give you some resources and ideas to get your planning underway.

STEP 1 – What Will This Look Like? – 1-2 Years Pre-Implementation

To prepare a financial proposal for your school district, you first need to have an idea of what format you want your program to have. Do you want this to be curricular or extracurricular? Do you want this to be guitars only, a full mariachi ensemble, or a morph of the two? What grade level do you want to start with, and which grade levels will be included? What will the roll-out look like – all grades at once, or will it roll out over several years? All these factors will have different scheduling and financing implications, so it is important that you have thought through what you want it to be.

This may also vary based on what level of school you are in. Starting a mariachi program will look very different at an elementary school than it will at a high school. Though there is no one-size-fits-all, I can share what worked in our school district in case it is something you think might work for you as well.

School District U-46 (Elgin, IL) is a preK-12 unit school district serving ~36,000 students across 57 school sites about an hour northwest of Chicago. We first forayed into mariachi in 2009, and though our journey has morphed and adapted, we are still going strong! In U-46, we currently offer mariachi as an extracurricular ensemble for any students who are interested, starting in middle school. We focus on guitar and singing with all students for the first 1-2 years, inviting individual students to transition to vihuela or guitarron based on their interest or success with the guitar, and offering students the opportunity to learn trumpet or violin once they reach 8th grade. We do have some students we share with band and orchestra, but many of our students are not otherwise involved in music education. Our high school mariachi is also extra-curricular; however, they have all parts represented (except harp). We are working to implement mariachi as a curricular course starting in 2024 (pending Board approval). Once curricular, our format will change significantly! Mariachi will be offered and recruited alongside band and orchestra, with 5th grade students selecting the



instrument that is right for them among the three ensemble offerings. Daily instruction will mirror what we have in place for band and orchestra in 5th through 12th grades.

STEP 2 – Show Me the Money – 1-2 Years Pre-Implementation

Starting any new program is going to cost money, and this is no different, especially if you want to do it right. This conversation needs to happen very early in the process, before anything is announced to the school or the community, as the financing available for this project may determine what your roll-out will be like. Now that you know what format you want your program to take, you will need to consider all the resources and support needed to make it happen. Make sure you have thought through quantities that will make sense to support your specific school and anticipated program enrollment as put together a financial proposal for your administration.

There are many things you need to remember here. These are some of the key considerations, as well as some of my recommendations based on what has worked well for our school district:

Instruments

Guitar

- Candelas – The Official Mariachi Guitar with Hard Case
- Yamaha - CG122MCH – Will need to order a hard case separately

Vihuela

- Candelas – Standard with Hard Case
- La Tradicion – Estudiante with Hard Case

Guitarron

- Candelas – Standard with Hard Case (Machine Pegs)

- La Tradicion – Herencia with Hard Case (Machine Pegs)

Trumpet

- Yamaha - YTR-5330MRC Mariachi Series Bb Trumpet (HS)
- Yamaha - YTR-2330 Standard Bb Trumpet (MS)

Violin

- Jose Hernandez - Cocula Series Violin Outfit 304291 (HS)
- Strobel - ML-80 Student Series 4/4 Size Violin Outfit (MS)

Harp – We do not currently offer harp, but are looking at the following once we become curricular:

- Dusty Strings - Serrana 34 Lever Harp Outfit w/ Pick-Up 306376

Instrument Storage

- Guitar/Vihuela - Wenger (or similar) Guitar storage racks or instrument lockers
- Guitarron - Wenger (or similar) Tuba storage racks or instrument lockers
- Trumpet/Violin – Wenger (or similar) Violin storage racks or instrument lockers

Sound Equipment – for use in the classroom and in performance

Portable PA

- Fender Passport Venue Series 2 600W Portable PA System
- Peavey Escort 6000 600W Portable PA System

Microphones

- Trumpet, Guitar/Vihuela – Shure SM57
- Guitarron – Shure SM57 OR Beyer Dynamic M88 TG
- Violins - Shure SM58

Other

- XLR Cables – 50' recommended
- Mic Stands (booms recommended)
- Speaker Stands
- Rolling Hardware Case(s) – speaker and mic stands
- Rolling Case(s) – mics, cables, etc.
- 100' extension cord
- Several rolls of black gaff tape

Music – Much mariachi sheet music is self-made transcriptions or arrangements; however we are starting to see more arrangements that are published.

- Method Books
- ¡Simplemente Mariachi!
- Libro Acompañante Musical de ¡Simplemente Mariachi!

- *Mariachi Mastery*
- Mariachi Mastery Songbook
- Sheet Music
- RBD Publications
- Hal Leonard
- Mariachi Unlimited
- Mariachi Education Press

Training

- National Mariachi Workshops for Educators
- Elgin Mariachi Education Workshop

Uniforms – We started with basic black

pants, a white dress shirt, and gave the students a simple *moño* (floppy bow tie). Once your program is more established, you can order the full uniforms (*traje* – suit).

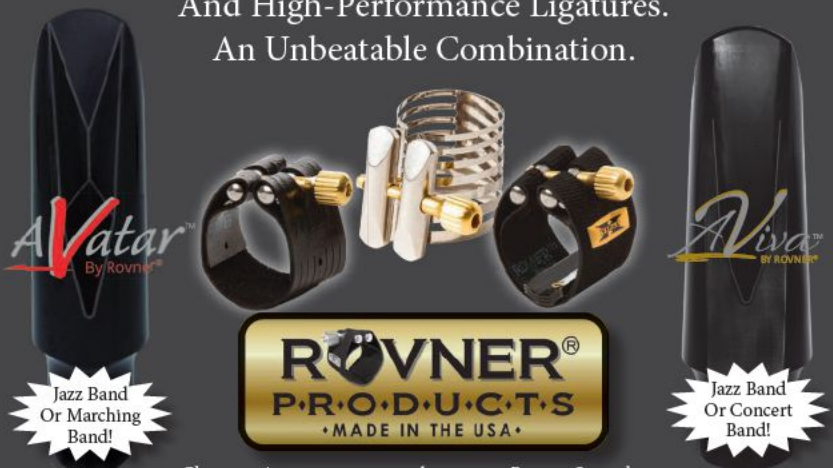
- RGV Mariachi Warehouse
- The Mariachi Connection

Instructional Accessories (straps, picks, tuners, etc.)

Once your budget is approved and funding is secured, I would strongly recommend ordering your resources right away. With the supply chain issues, it might take a year for everything to arrive.



Rovner's NEW Deep-V™ Mouthpiece Collection
And High-Performance Ligatures.
An Unbeatable Combination.





How to Thrive as a Choral Teacher

By Robyn Hilger, Executive Director of the American Choral Directors Association

All I ever wanted to be was a band director. From the first day of 6th grade band class, I knew I would be doing this for the rest of my life. Fast forward to my first teaching opportunity...a brand-new school, a principal who was a true fine arts supporter, and a budget. But there was a catch. If this was going to be a full-time position, I needed to teach band and strings. Strings? Strings! What did I know about strings beyond *String Methods* and *Essential Elements* page 20? My degree said I could teach strings. My teaching certificate said I could teach strings. Could this band director really teach strings?

The answer was YES! Fortunately, I had a network of friends and support to draw from. Two people in particular, David and Kara Koehn, literally saved my first year of teaching. After four years of college and student teaching together, we had all moved into the same apartment complex. I spent almost every day after school in their apartment learning how to teach strings. All I knew was I simply needed to be one page ahead of my 6th grade classes in the method book. You would be amazed at the miracle that paper towel tubes are when trying to learn finger patterns! These friends spent countless hours tutoring me in finger patterns and shifting, bow placement and string changes, how to determine bowings, how to change strings, and even how to reset a sound post. We spent hours discussing the nuances of tuning simply based on whether your string was in tune to start and then the slightest placement of your finger a little too far forward or backwards which is an entirely new concept when one comes from a system of fixed fingerings (I am a classically trained clarinetist).

They encouraged me to join the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) and I went to as many professional development sessions in strings as I could when our music educators association conferences happened. I had the distinct advantage of work-

ing with beginning students because the school was new. I could be just ahead of my students and not worry about it impacting their overall learning and performance outcomes. I might go so far as to say that an additional advantage was that I was experiencing beginning strings just as they were. I was keenly aware of the things that were uncomfortable physically or challenging to accomplish when trying to coordinate my fingers and my bow. I had to practice as hard as they were! And over time, I gained confidence and competence. I established myself as an excellent music educator in band and strings. I will be forever indebted to the community of colleagues who invested in me so that I could meet the needs of the students in my classroom.

Fast forward to today. After several years in the non-profit sector, I now find my early career repeating itself. In September 2021, I became the national executive director of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). That's right. This band teacher turned strings teacher is now the executive director of the largest association of choral professionals in the world. And, once again, I am a beginner. The transition between band and strings was challenging but there are many commonalities in the instrumental world. In no version of my professional future had I ever imagined a choral path. And yet, here I am, and I could not be happier.

This new transition has challenged me beyond anything I could imagine. The choral profession is vastly different from the instrumental profession. One neither better or worse but certainly different. And I wonder how many of my instrumental colleagues find themselves thrust into this choral world without a resource or life-preserver? At least in an instrumental degree, almost everyone experiences some level of methods courses in other instruments. However, my degree program did not contain any work in the choral arts. I suspect many of you did not either. One gradu-

ates and searches for that first job and when the offer comes it is thrilling until you find out that you must teach high school band and high school choir. Or you take a job in a community you love, only to realize you have two sections of strings and must teach 6th grade choir as well. My story is not unusual. Every year around the country, music educators are filling multiple roles within their schools to ensure all students have access to high-quality, sequential music education. This is daunting work but is almost impossible without a community of support. For those of you who are instrumentalists and find yourselves with the opportunity to teach choir as well, I have an invitation for you. Join us in the ACDA and let us be your network and community.

ACDA is uniquely positioned to help you grow as a choral educator. Here are a few ways we can support you:

Networks at Every Level

ACDA is organized in three layers: states, regions, and National. Every state has an ACDA chapter. This makes accessing colleagues and resources easy and often requires little travel or expense. State work is specifically tailored to address the unique needs of choral educators within the state. Need to know how to interpret the state festival rules? Ask your ACDA colleagues! Want a first honor choir experience for your students? Participate with your state ACDA chapter! Regions are organized by unifying states in specific geographic areas. We have six regions. Region organization provides a way for states to share successes and challenges and to network together. Finally, everyone is unified under the national structure. Within ACDA, you can access resources in your backyard, in your area, or even across the country!

Additionally, ACDA is organized into repertoire specific and age/grade level specific areas. From those who serve young children, to K-12, to collegiate ensembles, to music in worship and community choirs, ACDA supports the needs of choral professionals in all these areas. There are specific resource leaders who are at the state, region, and national levels to grow resources, answer questions, and serve as support systems across the country. Regardless of your teaching situation, ACDA is equipped to support you.

Conference & Professional Development

Many states hold in-person conferences in the fall and summer. These gatherings are focused on repertoire, pedagogy, conducting, performances, and experiences for students. Regions hold conferences in even numbered years, providing an opportunity to showcase performances from across the region and professional development sessions that meet the needs within the area. The national conference takes place in odd numbered years and serves as a pinnacle opportunity to experience the very best of the choral profession from across the country and even around the world.

Journals

ACDA actively publishes three professional journals, each designed to meet the specific needs of the choral community. *ChorTeach* is ACDA's online journal focused specifically on the practical needs of music educators in today's classrooms. *ChorTeach* is published quarterly with the goal of the information to be immediately applicable in rehearsals the next day. *ChorTeach* is the perfect companion for the non-choral educator. The *Choral Journal* has been the international journal of ACDA since 1954 and provides members with practical and scholarly information about the choral field. It is published nine times per year and is mailed to every member. The *International Journal for Research in Choral Singing* focuses on studies that apply rigorous, systematically-grounded methodologies, either quantitative or qualitative, to investigate phenomena of potential interest to all who sing in, work with, or are otherwise interested in choral ensembles.

Repertoire and Resources

One of ACDA's primary focuses is providing information and recommendations for choral directors at all levels on repertoire and pedagogical resources. ACDA has appointed repertoire-specific volunteers who cultivate and curate repertoire recommendations for youth & children's choirs, junior high/middle school choirs, high school choirs, music in worship, community choirs, SSAA, SATB, TTBB, world music, vocal jazz, show choir, and contemporary a cappella. If you can sing it, we support it! Members have access to these resources every day of the year, with specific "release" dates on new recommendations and resources.

SBO+ readers can read *ChorTeach* by visiting our website.

I never would have chosen to teach strings if I had not been thrust into that situation early in my career. I also would not have had the chance to work in my incredible school environment if I had turned down this opportunity to grow my skill set. The thing that made all the difference to my success was a support system of knowledgeable professionals who held my hand until I could stand on my own. The American Choral Directors Association

invites you to join our network. Music changes lives. We see it every day. We look forward to supporting you as you do this important work across the country.

ACDA.org



One graduates and searches for that first job and when the offer comes it is thrilling until you find out that you must teach high school band and high school choir.

A native Oklahoman, Robyn Hilger is a classically trained clarinetist. She graduated with high honors in 1999 from Oklahoma City University with a bachelor's degree in instrumental music education. In 2010, she completed her master's degree in school administration from the University of Central Oklahoma. She is currently pursuing her Doctor of Education in administration and leadership at Southern Nazarene University. She is a national board-certified teacher in early adolescence/young adult music with specialization in band.

Modern Band

Group Songwriting Strategies Part I: Building Songs

By Dr. Sarah Gulish



Nothing is more incredible than watching students unlock their creativity and develop their musical voices in your classroom. Watching students write songs for the first time is a type of magic I look forward to every year as a high school teacher. But writing songs can also be incredibly vulnerable. It's one thing to work on perfecting a pre-written song but a completely different experience to make something from scratch.

I often find my students are afraid to dive into songwriting independently, especially those who have been playing music for years with little to no experience creating or improvising. Yet, young children and new music learners are often open to understanding their musicianship through newly generated ideas. So how do we meet students where they are and ease them into this creative craft?

Group songwriting is a great way to collaborate to generate musical ideas in a low-pressure environment. This is a strategy that I use to introduce songwriting in various classes, from my classically trained string orchestra courses to my commercial music classes like music production or beginning guitar. Not only is group songwriting a great way to ease into creative work, but it's also fun.

There are so many ways you can create a song collaboratively within a group, and one of my favorite exercises is what I call "build a song." Of course, you can adjust this process to fit the level and abilities of your specific group. But the main idea behind build-a-song is that each group member is responsible for one small decision that contributes to the overall song. I love this approach because it helps break down the creation of a piece into small, meaningful choices that work together to form a final product.

Getting Started

Before you craft this experience for your students, start with what your students already know. For example, if I do this activity with my beginning guitar students, I'm confident in their ability to play a few basic chords. Or, if I'm working with a choir, I'm confident in their ability to sing a melody. If working with a popular music collective, I know they're used to common popular song forms. Start with the students' comfort zone and move from there.

Scaffolding the Process

Once I have a starting point for my students, I create an order of operations for building a song (think of this as your creative assembly line). In this assembly line, each student will have just one creative choice to make that will contribute to the overall song. This assembly line can be edited to fit the needs of your students,

but the most essential points to consider are the following: 1. Keep it simple, and 2. Keep it fun. Remember, our goal is to demystify the creative process in a supportive, collaborative environment. If students are struggling to make a creative decision, I move on! My goal is to make our first songwriting experience a positive one.

While your song could be constructed in any order, try to think about scaffolding the following elements: melody, harmony, lyric, mood, and rhythm. Start with the familiar and move to the less familiar. In the end, you'll ideally have a good amount of a song with input from each student in the class.

For example, if working with my beginning guitar students, we'll start with harmony (chord selection) before moving on to mood, rhythm, lyrics, and melody. The BAS process might look something like this, with a new student completing each step of the process:

- Select a starting chord (**harmony**)
- Select two other chords to complete a progression
- Select a **mood**
- Develop a strumming pattern to reflect the mood (**rhythm**)
- Pick a topic
- Create one line of lyrics on that topic (**lyrics**) and speak it in rhythm
- Create another line of lyrics (and so on)
- Develop a **melody** for the lyrics that fits with the harmony
- Choose a phrase for a repeating chorus
- Develop a melody for the repeating chorus

It can be especially fun to continue making music throughout the entire song-building process. It takes a bit of practice but involving students in both the decision making and playing of the song helps them feel and hear what fits and what doesn't. I encourage students to have fun and not worry about whether their choice is the "perfect" choice but focus more on what serves the group and the song.

In the end, we have a song. Students can see the process unfold from start to finish and feel more empowered to move into small groups or solo work to create another song using a similar approach. And by exploring creativity in a fun and safe space, students develop creative habits that can become central to their musicianship.

Dr. Sarah Gulish is an educator in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she teaches courses in creativity and popular music. She co-founded the fair pay publishing company F-flat Books and teaches courses and supports educators at www.songwritingforme.com.



and it was exactly what my students needed.

Guitar Ensemble Method is designed to help establish guitar classes that focus on building a solid technical foundation, music-reading skills, and

ensemble-playing experience. Guitar Ensemble Method focuses on music from a broad range of cultural and historical traditions. Since this method is designed specifically for classroom teaching, skills are carefully scaffolded to allow for all students to be successful in their guitar learning.

Guitar Ensemble Method's state-of-the-art online platform pairs directly with the method book to provide digital learning modules for each song in the book. These modules include pre-made lesson plans to help teachers and 5-8 video lesson components for each song. The video lessons are short enough to be interesting and interactive while guiding students' practice and learning. Each video lesson is taught by some of the top names in guitar education - including university guitar professors, Grammy-Award winners, Fulbright Scholars, and winners of major guitar performance competitions. This library of online video lessons is incredibly useful for teachers, especially those who aren't yet confident guitarists. The video lessons include on-screen graphics for supporting students' music-reading and multiple camera angles and close-ups for clear demonstrations of ergonomic playing technique.

I've been using the Guitar Ensemble Method curriculum in my own public-school teaching for over ten years now. My students continue to enjoy their guitar learning because this method is structured in a way that all students can experience success on the instrument. As someone who has primarily taught band, this curriculum offers a clear path to follow amidst all the different directions one can take a guitar class. It has even improved my own technique and pedagogy on the guitar, and my improved confidence pays dividends in the classroom.

GuitarEnsembleMethod.com

Teaching Great Guitar Classes

From Someone Who Has Been There

By Nick Lenio

As a new band director, I quickly learned I was going to need to get comfortable with teaching instruments other than my primary instrument (trombone). I had my basic understanding of other instruments from my college methods courses, but there's nothing quite like your first day standing up to teach a new-to-you instrument to a group of eager students. I am also a self-taught guitarist, but when it came time to lead a guitar class, I soon realized even though I knew how to play, I didn't know what direction to take my students. I knew I wanted my guitar students to learn healthy playing techniques (something I lacked early on as a self-taught guitarist). I also wanted them to learn solid musicianship. In a K-12 setting, guitar has often been regarded as a less "serious" instrument. As a result, school guitar classes often don't push students to learn in the same way our traditional band, choir, or orchestra classes do. I wanted to find a way for my guitar students to learn to play as an ensemble and to set up a foundation for playing that would allow them to pursue any style of guitar-playing in the future, whether that be classical, folk, jazz, rock, bluegrass, hip hop, etc.

The guitar methods I previewed lacked the depth and diversity I had hoped to find. Most materials I found were clearly designed for independent study or one-on-one lessons. I needed a curriculum designed for the public-school classroom - something that would be scaffolded in a way that all students in a class of 30+ could be successful.

After several years of dissatisfying results, I found the Guitar Ensemble Method online learning platform



Create, Perform, Respond, and Connect with



The largest library of performance assessment and composition materials designed to engage students at all levels. Performance assessment technology should be less about assessment and more about student engagement. Hal Leonard's SoundCheck, powered by MatchMySound, engages students by offering a library of over 83,000 titles with a mix of band, orchestra, and choir repertoire as well as thousands of popular songs. All content is also fully editable with Noteflight on any device, allowing infinite possibilities for arranging music and using SoundCheck to learn to play music.



Technology connects our world, so our music technology platforms should connect our students, not isolate them. Students should be able to seamlessly share their music and assessments with others for peer review. Assignments should scaffold, allowing students to compose variations, learn to

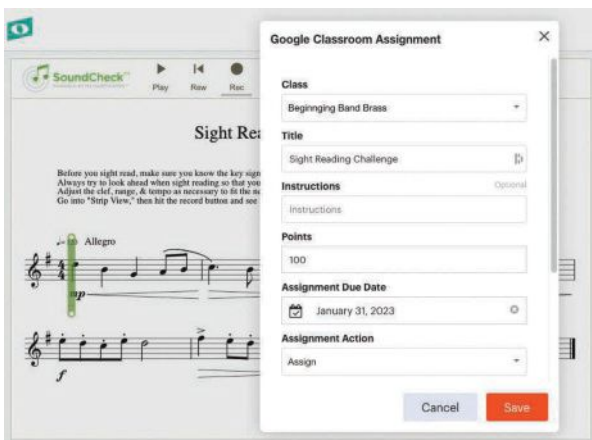
play them with various degrees of difficulty, and share further to create a feedback loop. SoundCheck is fully integrated with Google Classroom, as well as Canvas, Schoology, and all other learning management systems, so students can seamlessly toggle between their music technology tool and their LMS. In addition, the Noteflight Learn platform on which SoundCheck is built offers extended options to share, comment, and even allows students to create assignments for each other!

Learning is a process, not a product, so it is important that music technology focus on the tools needed for students to learn their music. SoundCheck offers Unlocked and Locked Modes for this very reason. Locked mode is for summative assessments, where students cannot adapt the assignment in any way and their teacher is in control of how many attempts they get. But in Unlocked Mode, students can freely slow down, change backing tracks, isolate sections, and learn their music at their own pace. This is the process of learning, and students can share their progress with their peers or teachers at any stage.



Students want to create and play music, not use technology. Hal Leonard has created the world's largest performance assessment and composition library so that students have access to the popular music they love. Every file can be used for performance assessment, but more importantly arranged and edited with Noteflight. This powerful combination of performance assessment and notation, along with the collaboration and feedback tools, creates a cycle of learning where creating, performing, responding, and connecting are interwoven throughout the music learning experience. Where the technology does not get in the way, rather facilitates a culture of engagement around creating and learning music.

NoteFlight.com



Easy Money!
(for students and teachers alike)



Encourage your students to enter the *SBO+* Essay Contest by April 30 for a chance to win a \$1000 student scholarship or free merchandise for teachers. See page 9 or SBOMagazine.com for details.

Sponsored by NAMM, Casio, Hal Leonard, Alfred Music Publishing, MakeMusic, Yamaha Corporation of America, Focusrite and Adam Audio.

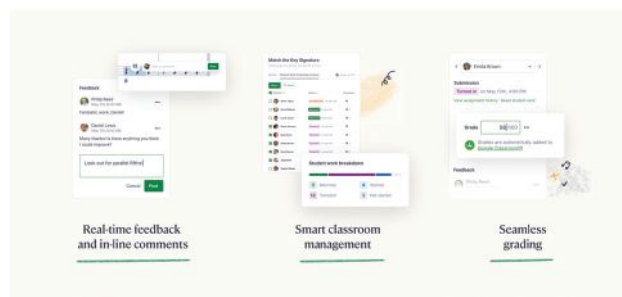
The return to the classroom hasn't meant a return to the pre-COVID world. The digital tools that facilitated remote teaching haven't gone away with the return to the classroom; indeed, the best of them are proving to be a real resource that fits the expectations of teachers and students alike. In many ways, this trend toward leveraging digital tools is proving especially beneficial in the music classroom, where they can create more opportunities to engage students and improve performance via interactive learning and practice. Flat for Education, which began providing its collaborative music learning experience long before the pandemic, is one solution that is uniquely adapted for this new framework.



One reason for Flat for Education's success, trusted by 10,000+ music teachers and used by 2M+ students? Every aspect of the web-based platform has been designed with both teachers and students in mind. For students, there's a full range of collaborative music learning tools, starting with the online music composer that's as easy to use as a Google Doc, and continuing with high-quality instrument playback, recording practice, and fun activities to improve their knowledge of music theory and composition.

While students enjoy the interactive features of Flat for Education, teachers will appreciate several other time-saving benefits. When it comes to classroom instruction and assignments,

Flat for Education offers auto-generated music theory worksheets, easy-to-create composition and performance assignments, and presentation features like Music Snippet, which lets you quickly insert music notes into lecture materials. There are also some special features that are particularly beneficial for music learners, such as a transposition tool, Boomwhackers, and Kodaly notation.



But it doesn't stop with great student-facing features. Flat for Education also integrates seamlessly with your current LMS, allows for real-time comments on student work, and has auto-grading and synchronization that can be lifesavers, especially given the ongoing trend of expanding class sizes. That ability to save time on both preparing and grading assignments is a big boost for busy teachers, giving them breathing room and the opportunity to use their precious time on the more creative aspects of lesson planning.

On the administrative side of things, Flat for Education works on all devices (including Chromebooks and smartphones), and fits all ages/levels, as it is currently being used in classes from elementary school up through university. There's a 3-month free trial to let you and your students try it out and see the benefits for yourselves!

Flat.io/edu



Membership Includes:

- ✓ Access to a community of music technology experts
- ✓ Database of over 400 lesson plans
- ✓ TI:ME level 1 and 2 course eligibility
- ✓ Free subscriptions to Keyboard, Electronic Musician, Mix Magazine, and SBO
- ✓ Monthly webinars and news blasts

Pyware® 3D Mobile Editor

For the past 40 years, Pyware has kept pace with the ever-changing needs of music educators, while continuing to push the envelope of drill design. As the software has advanced, requests for a mobile application to not only view 3D drill files, but edit them as well, have poured in from band directors and drill designers across the map. This highly requested feature is now possible with the Pyware 3D Mobile Editor. This app is revolutionizing the revision stage of drill design for all members of marching band staff — drill writers, band directors, assistants, and visual caption heads. Rather than lugging computers to the football field for rehearsal, the staff can make all the desired changes to the show conveniently from a handheld device. The Mobile Editor proves to serve as the perfect sidekick to make impromptu changes to drill, on the field and on the fly.

A perfect production often relies on teamwork and creative responsibilities distributed among various leaders of the band. This app is an ideal tool for collaboration, as all staff members are invited to participate in revising the show. Using the Design Team feature, multiple designers can work on the same drill at the exact same time. Each designer can have exclusive editing access to their assigned performers, while viewing live updated drill of the other team members' work.

These revisions can also be directly uploaded to the UDB app, the premier student-centered training tool for marching bands. The syncing component provides performers with the most updated drill for maximized rehearsal time. This convenient way to polish a production is another step forward in transforming the drill design process, saving time, and boosting efficiency. Directors are already seeing the results...

"In working directly with the Mobile Editor, I have seen the future of Pyware. Every iteration of Pyware pushes our medium forward, and this is no exception! The ability to edit drill on the fly, upload those changes to UDB, all while holding my iPad is a game changer. When performers have the best and most up-to-date information in their hands, groups will move



more effectively and with more efficiency. The possibilities of the mobile editor are endless," Purdue University's assistant professor of music and associate director of the "All-American" Marching Band, Jonathan Sweet, explained.

Throughout the activity, more designers and directors are often teaching shows while making artistic changes, simultaneously. This current method is what encouraged the developers at Pyware to build a handy, user-oriented app to make those creative adjustments on the spot. Pyware 3D's evolving rewrite and editing features can be accessed instantly from the Mobile Editor.

"The new designing and teaching styles inspired us to bring (3D) tools directly onto the field so changes can be made in real time and sent directly to the students' UDB app," Pyware founder Py Kolb said.

Continually meeting the technological needs of customers is Pyware's top priority. The development team strives to keep moving the needle in music education and the marching arts with advanced applications — the Mobile Editor was designed for just that.

Pyware.com



Membership Includes:

- ✓ Access to a community of music technology experts
- ✓ Database of over 400 lesson plans
- ✓ TI:ME level 1 and 2 course eligibility
- ✓ Free subscriptions to Keyboard, Electronic Musician, Mix Magazine, and SBO
- ✓ Monthly webinars and news blasts



JOIN TI:ME www.TI-ME.org/join

If you're like me, the pace of change and the complexity of today's music tech landscape has me intimidated. I arrange music on Finale and edit video and sound files on Movavi, but that's about it for me.

Luckily, there's a non-profit organization that has developed a comprehensive program addressing all areas of music technology competency. Technology in Music Education (TI:ME) has collected an all-star roster of industry experts as well as curriculum experts to provide us with a free, turn-key curriculum available on their website.

A little bit about its history. TI:ME is a non-profit organization whose mission is to assist music educators in applying technology to improve teaching and learning in music. It was formed in the summer of 1995 to address the following areas: First, there was a need to codify technology into a cohesive set of standards. Next, a certification process was explored to recognize the achievement of in-service music teachers in music technology. Finally, it became clear there was a need for a new organization, national in scope and focused on teacher training in music technology. A national advisory board was established and met in October of 1996, setting in motion the tasks that led to the creation of the TI:ME website, the publication of a book of strategies, the launch of a semi-annual newsletter, *the TI:MEs*, the establishment of criterion for TI:ME membership, and the development of our comprehensive curriculum for in-service teacher training in music technology.



Lately, TI:ME has been partnering with state Music Education Associations (MEA) to present their music tech sessions. Because this is such a fast-evolving field most states don't have the expertise internally to present these sessions.

Each year, TI:ME (a non-profit) produces over 6,000 total individual hours of professional development sessions at the largest and the smallest state MEA shows, as a service, covering only expenses, or sharing revenues on pre-conference day events. When TI:ME helps an MEA produce technology training sessions, their trusted 25-year-old brand attracts the brightest music educators and leading music industry manufacturers to submit session proposals.

A TI:ME event means the MEA's attendees get the best music education technology professional development.

Ti-me.org

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Video Conferencing for Music Comes of Age

By Dr. George Hess

While I'm sure most of you are relieved to no longer be teaching online, music teachers shouldn't dismiss the potential of online learning to enrich our classes. Video conferencing makes the world smaller and provides access to resources you would not otherwise have. Whether it's providing a quality teacher for students in remote locations or having master classes in your class, online learning is something we should continue to use.

When the pandemic began, there were few good video conferencing options for music. Initially designed for business meetings, the focus of the software was on video quality, not audio, and it simply wasn't good enough for music.

The Standard

Zoom was the first program to provide audio suitable for music. While not explicitly designed for music, it's still a viable option. The Original Sound for Musicians option provides stereo audio that is somewhat better than an mp3.

Zoom's feature set has set the standard for video conferencing software. These include sharing screen and computer audio, chat, whiteboard, file sharing, session recording, and waiting rooms.

Zoom is pretty bulletproof. I've not had any technical issues in over three years of using it. Bandwidth requirements are reasonable, and you should be able to use it with just about any broadband connection.

Zoom has a nearly full-featured free version, though calls are now limited to 40 minutes regardless of the number of participants. For longer calls and features like cloud-based recordings, it's \$14.95/month.

Zoom was the only choice for real-time online music teaching for most of the pandemic. But that's all changed. There are now excellent programs available that provide high-quality video, audio, and other features that improve online music teaching.

Zoom.us

New Kids on the Block

In this article, I'll look at four Zoom alternatives: Rock Out Loud, Forte Lessons, Muzie.Live, and Sessionwire Studio. All are specifically designed for music teaching and provide HD video and high-quality stereo audio. Audio is full-duplex, meaning both sides can speak or play at the same time. While latency (delay) is still noticeable, it's as low as possible, and I've managed to accompany my students during lessons without too much difficulty. You will want to check noise cancellation settings or wear headphones to avoid dropouts.

All the programs support chat, screen sharing, file sharing, and waiting rooms. They are all browser-based, so they run on computers, Chromebooks, and tablets. They all have free versions, either limited or trials.

Ready to Rock Out?

RockOutLoud's main feature is Enhanced Audio Recognition (E.A.R.) which provides a wider dynamic range than Zoom. The higher quality audio comes at a price, though, as it requires more

bandwidth, and I've had some difficulty with a 50 MBS connection.

Teachers must use Chrome on computers to host lessons, while students can use a computer or the free app on mobile devices. Accounts are either single or multi-instrument and include some basic resources and repertoire. For example, the guitar version provides basic chord diagrams and songs. You can share PDFs directly to the screen that students can download. The whiteboard is a little awkward, and as with Zoom, I find it easier to use a notation program while sharing the screen and using the annotation tools.

You can have group lessons, but E.A.R. is only available with one-to-one lessons. There is also a Concert Mode for recitals, with one-way audio for as many as 50 in the audience.

RockOutLoud does not support screen recording. Computer audio can only be shared from within a Chrome browser tab and isn't the best quality.

Single instrument accounts are \$9.95 /month and include a custom URL that you can use for all lessons, like Zoom's Personal Meeting Room. Free accounts have a different URL for each session.

RockOutLoud.Live



What's Your Forte?

Forte is the newest of the programs, with new features being introduced regularly. The audio quality is very good, and the interface is clean and easy to understand. It only runs on Chrome on computers or Safari on iPad. Mobile phones are not supported.

Currently, only one-to-one lessons are supported. You can store documents and links to audio and video files in the program, and session recording is built in. Forte does not have a whiteboard or annotation feature but does have a Shared Note-Pad that supports musical notation.

Forte also supports using a mobile phone as a second camera, which is essential in private lessons.

Forte is the only program that is entirely free and will remain so for students you bring to the platform. They intend to provide a service of matching students and teachers in the future, for which they will charge a small fee.

Security is a bit of a concern. All users need to sign up and provide an email address. Students under 13 are supposed to have a parent sign up for them, but there doesn't appear to be any way that is enforced. Forte also states they reserve the right to record lessons for safety purposes, as required by law in some states. The FAQ says that all data is secure and only used for internal purposes but does not mention COPPA compliance.

ForteLessons.com

The other two programs have new versions that should be released by the time this article appears. Here's a sneak peek:



Time to Go Live

Muzie.Live is the most full-featured program, but at \$24/month, it's also the most expensive. Initially designed to manage a private lesson studio, it has evolved to support any music teaching, face-to-face, online, or hybrid. The new version sports a completely redesigned tab-based interface that is much more functional and customizable. It combines live classes with powerful content creation and management.

Up to 50 students are now supported in live classes. A unique feature is the on-screen interactive MIDI keyboard and fretboards.

You organize lessons into Assignments, which can include materials you create in Muzie or resources like PDFs, videos, and audio that you upload. Students can complete worksheets or record and upload them without leaving the program.

The Clips feature is a multi-track video recorder. It's easy to see the potential for this. You can record backing tracks for your students and have them overdub their part, or have multiple students play together. Of course, you can also do virtual ensembles.

Of all the whiteboards, the one found in Muzie is the most functional, with various templates, including music staves, fretboards, and an extensive array of musical symbols. The whiteboards can be saved and shared with students as editable worksheets or tutorials.

Students can now be assigned to one or more groups. You can assign lessons to the entire group or individually and meet them in live sessions. Each group has its own chat and newsfeed that is permanently stored.

There are also tools for managing lessons. The newsfeed keeps track of every event that happens in the program. The History tab lists each student's assignments, videos, and other lesson-related materials.

Muzie.Live



The Next Session

Sessionwire (\$15/month) approached this from a different direction. *SBO* gave it a Best Tools for Schools award at NAMM a few years back. At the time, it was designed to support remote recording sessions. Little did we know a pandemic was on the horizon, and it became an essential tool for my audio recording and production classes during the lockdowns.

In Sessionwire, you connect via video conference, but also connect and sync your Digital Audio Workstation (DAW). The host plays a backing track on their DAW, which is synced to the DAW of the artist who records their part directly into their DAW. Then they drag and drop the file onto the host's video, which imports it into the original project. It might sound complicated, but it's relatively easy and not much different from being live in the studio.

It was apparent then that Sessionwire had the potential for online learning beyond production, but it required a lot of bandwidth and a wired connection and wasn't simple to set up, which made it less suitable for lessons.

The new version, Sessionwire Studio, is now browser-based, requires considerably less bandwidth, and works over Wi-Fi. There is no limit to the number of people in a session. There are two channels for audio: talkback and HQ for music. The host assigns HQ audio to one user while the rest have talkback. DAWs are still linked and drag and drop sharing of audio files also works. You can have students play and record over backing tracks in their program, even free programs like GarageBand or ProTools Intro. You can also share any other type of file.

Sessionwire supports screen sharing but lacks a whiteboard or annotation function. It also does not currently support in-app recording. The Group function will let you create classes and teams.

Sessionwire was originally designed to connect artists with producers and engineers, and other supporting personnel. The Sessionwire Community does that very well, but at present, it is not secure. Students do not need to sign up to attend classes or lessons, but they need to join groups. So, for now, it's appropriate for college students or sessions that are hosted without having students join the community.

Sessionwire.com

Video conferencing for music has come a long way in the last few years, and apps like these make online music education not only possible but desirable. The ability to connect with musicians and educators worldwide is not one to ignore.

Dr. George Hess worked for 30 years as a professor and now owns and operates Jumpstart Jazz Guitar, an online music school. Jumpstart-JazzGuitar.com



Why I Serve With Music SFC Zackery Pride

Many people say they started playing from an early age. They were banging away on the piano, the desk at school, or even pots and pans in the kitchen. Others may have been introduced to

their instrument through their local school band or orchestra. Some might have found a way to express themselves musically without any direct parental or environmental stimuli. All these individuals had one thing in common, the desire to make music.

My story is no different. I may not have banged on pianos or pots and pans, but I always loved music. My mother, a prolific pianist, organist, and vocalist in the church, was my most direct inspiration. At the time, her excellence in expressing herself mind, body, and soul was all I knew.

At the age of six, I listened to my future mentor, Ms. Terry Ferguson, play the violin, viola, and cello beautifully. Her passion came through each passage. Her cello playing was my lure. I was hooked to the lower sounds of the wooden vibrations. I signed up for orchestra the same day.

We were given the opportunity to choose our instruments. I immediately was drawn to the biggest one, the double bass. As quickly as I chose, I was denied. I was too small for it. Ms. Ferguson gave me the violin instead. It was small and fit me perfectly. For eight years, it was my joy. But the bass was always in the back of my mind and as soon as I could, the switch was made.

During my freshmen year in high school, two big things happened. I finally became a bass player, albeit a very clumsy one. Learning a new instrument was like learning a new language.

The second was joining the JROTC program. The instructor taught us the importance of service by duty and sacrifice. This got through to me easily. Practicing my instrument for hours was a duty and a sacrifice for a kid who wanted to play with his friends.

He later suggested I join a military band, but my goal was to be in an orchestra. I ended up getting a wonderful education from my high school in Atlanta and a scholarship to Oberlin College in Ohio. I left my JROTC hopes of joining the military behind for now.

After college, I left for New York City. The year was 2000. I was enjoying great success as a freelance musician in the city until the following year when the entire world changed. On the morning of September 11, 2001, I woke up to a phone call from my best friend and drummer, Jason Brown. He told me a plane had hit the tower downtown. In my drowsy state, I couldn't comprehend his

meaning. My imagination went to the biplanes of WWI. I thought a lone person in an Orville and Wilbur Wright style plane mistakenly flew into the extremely large building. My sympathy was with the unfortunate pilot, until I looked outside of my window and saw the black plumes flowing from the structure. I wondered how on earth did that small vehicle cause that much smoke to emit? That was until I saw a commercial plane flying into view from my peripheral. Slowly, as it dove towards the second tower, everything was starting to become clear as I quickly awoke to the reality of the day.

I went outside and did something no one ever does in New York, speak to their neighbors. Everyone was scared, distraught, and confused. We couldn't communicate with the outside world and only had ourselves for theories. We thought we were at war and the airplane attacks were just the beginning. Thankfully, that was not the case.

When the television resumed its reception, we learned we had been attacked by terrorists. I knew instantly I wanted to serve and help protect our country. I didn't see how playing music could help at that moment. I later realized I couldn't have been more wrong.

It took several years after the towers falling for me to join the Army Band. During that time, I performed with a new sense of purpose as a civilian. Music meant so much more than having fun. I wanted to inspire people and make a difference.

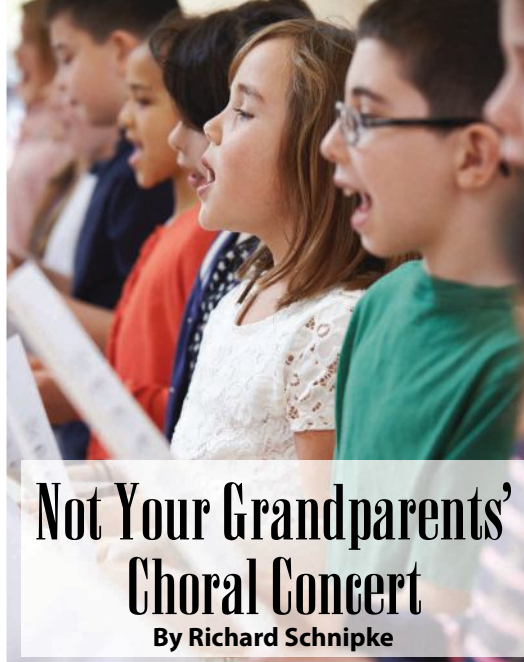
After the attacks, I decided to go home to my family in Georgia and became a graduate student at Georgia State University. I had the good fortune of hearing a recording featuring the U.S. Army Field Band's Jazz Ambassadors. I was enamored by their precision, beauty, and power. One of my classmates was a retired Army bandsman. He suggested I try out for one of the bands in Washington, D.C.

I did and was fortunate to be accepted into the The U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own." One of my first assignments was to play for a USO show hosted by the Sergeant Major of the Army. We performed during the Christmas holidays in Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The service members were overjoyed to have a bit of home on their long deployments. While I was there, I remembered 9/11 and that question of what I could do to serve.

The ancient Romans stated the purpose of military music was, "To fire up attacking troops and to uphold their spirits while they endure privations and fatigue." I have seen and felt it repeatedly since I joined over 15 years ago. Over the years, the messaging has changed, but the purpose has not. We are here for the service members, their families, the heads of state, senior leaders, and most importantly, the American people. That is why I proudly serve.

USArmyBand.com

For decades, choral directors have followed standard concert and programming models. Many arrange choirs on risers in a standard formation and have them sing varied programs spanning periods and styles. Some programs work in chronological order, starting with an up-tempo baroque or classical work and moving through various selections to demonstrate the choir's ability to interpret music in the most accurate, historically correct, and expressive manner. They often conclude with a spiritual or world music that is rhythmically interesting and energetic. While educationally sound, I wonder if this model engages contemporary singers and audiences in a meaningful and relevant way. In our digital world, people are exposed to images and sounds at an unbelievable rate. Conductors must create programs that are not only sung beautifully but keep our singers and audiences excited about our art. The following are practical ideas to consider when planning your next concert or season.



Program Order

When something is predictable, it is less engaging to listeners. Think about watching a movie and coming to realize the plot is a version of a story you have seen dozens of times. Attending a traditionally programmed concert can feel similar. Breaking this mold takes planning and creative thinking. A good place to start is by asking the following questions:

- Do we always need to end with a spiritual, or could it go elsewhere in the program?
- Can non-traditional sets be created that include multiple tempi and style periods?
- If multiple choirs perform on the same concert, can they be incorporated throughout the program instead of having each choir come to the risers, sing a set, and leave?

Visual Interest

Creating a visually interesting concert experience can help engage attendees and enhance the music making, allowing the program to have a greater aesthetic impact. Performances can be enhanced visually in several ways. First, consider your venue and how you might use the entire space. Singers can be placed in various locations to provide audiences with a variety of visual and sonic experiences during the program. Using not only the main stage area but aisles, balconies, a catwalk, the lobby, the back of the house, the orchestra pit, etc. can be helpful. Having the choir(s) use multiple formations can add visual appeal. All of us have attended concerts when choirs changed from a section formation to a mixed arrangement. Consider ways to make these changes practical to make the program more artistic and interesting. Thinking about the historical or cultural context of a musical work can also provide inspiration for choral staging. For example, imagine the possibilities when considering the differences in the original performances of a Baroque double choir anthem, an English madrigal, an African folk song, or an Indian raga. Let the music be your guide and let the choir's for-

mations help provide the most authentic and expressive performance possible. With access to technology in most modern performance venues, the option of using digital imagery is a reality. Collaborating with art, digital media, film, and/or theater programs can help your concerts become more visually appealing and allow for cross curricular partnerships.

Themes

Designing thematic concerts can help engage audiences while providing a rewarding and creative outlet for conductors. Themes can be based on whatever inspires you. A theme gives you the creative flexibility to program together

musically disparate works for textual reasons and to build interesting musical and emotional arcs. These types of concerts can help you attract new audience members who may be interested in the specific theme of the concert.

Tying it All Together

One of the keys and biggest challenges to creating programs that are artistically and musically engaging is the logistics involved. Structuring concerts in a manner that provides the audience with a feeling they are part of an artistic event (not just attending a choir concert) is of utmost importance. Few people enjoy the portions of a traditional concert that have to do with watching people and equipment move around the stage. One challenge we face is minimizing these aspects and/or incorporating them into the overall flow of the concert. Considering musical key relationships can allow you to move seamlessly from one work to the next without applause or interruption; incorporating narration between selections or groups of works can provide the audience with crucial information while covering logistical changes of personnel or equipment. Using instrumentalists helps provide variety in both musical timbre and the visual picture. Creating instrumental interludes can offer another opportunity for covering logistical changes or for a musical transition to prepare an audience for the key or style of the next choral work. While rewarding for an audience, the musicians, and the conductor, putting all these items together does require planning. Designing concert "flow charts" that give the performers logistical information about performance order, staging directions, and transitions (both musical and logistical) is crucial. Also, making extra time to rehearse all the logistics is an absolute necessity. While we may have all these items worked out in our minds, it does take time for the students to understand and internalize our vision. During rehearsals, students often find solutions or offer suggestions for problems that were not anticipated in the original planning. Creating this type of programming takes time and energy, but the effort to provide more artistic, meaningful, and engaging concert experiences for both our students and audiences is a worthy endeavor.

Used with permission of the Ohio ACDA newsletter and ACDA Chor-teach. This article is the first of many to be provided by the American Choral Directors Association and reflects SBO+'s commitment to helping music teachers of all genres.

NewProducts

PRINT & DIGITAL

The Reimagine Initiative and FJH Flex

Designed to address the needs of small ensembles with exceptional instrumentation challenges, The Reimagine Initiative is a series that not only offers great, functional music for ensembles of all sizes and instrumentation, but also includes a wealth of additional teaching opportunities that extend beyond performance.

Adaptable Parts – All musicians have access to ALL parts of every piece. Playable with any four instruments!

Alternate Parts – In addition to adaptable parts, tenor sax and horn have alternate parts putting them in an ideal range.

Accompaniment – An easy piano part is provided for additional support. When appropriate, chords are included for guitar players.

Play Along – Downloadable mp3 tracks are included for students to practice with and even use in performance or at home.

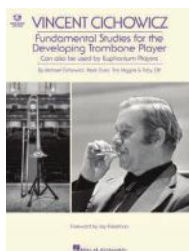
Percussion – In addition to adaptable mallet parts, separate percussion parts are also provided.

Teaching Opportunities Far Beyond Performance – Let students make choices about orchestration, flip your band so bass voices always have the melody, teach the same musical line to everyone at the same time.... endless possibilities!

FJHmusic.com

Vincent Cichowicz: Fundamental Studies for the Trombone

Hal Leonard has published *Vincent Cichowicz: Fundamental Studies for the Developing Trombone Player*. The new collection by Michael Cichowicz (Vincent's son), Mark Dulin, Tim Higgins, and Toby Oft features studies that represent the core principles of Cichowicz's teaching.



Vincent Cichowicz (1927-2006) was a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1952-1974 and a faculty member at Northwestern University from 1959-1998. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential brass pedagogues of the 20th century. His book *Fundamental Studies for the Developing Trumpet Player* is a standard of brass publications.

The studies in *Fundamental Studies for the Developing Trombone Player* represent the core principles of Cichowicz's teaching adapted for trombone and euphonium players. Each study has been professionally recorded by Tim Higgins (principal trombone, San Francisco Symphony) and Toby Oft (principal trombone, Boston Symphony Orchestra). The price of the book includes access to the demonstration audio tracks online for download or streaming. The tracks include PLAYBACK+, a multi-functional audio player that allows players to slow down audio without changing pitch, set loop points, change keys, and pan left or right.

The book is split into four sections: long tone studies, flow studies, lyrical studies, and articulation studies with information and instruction for each. It features a foreword by Jay Friedman, principal trombone, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, as well as additional content from the authors about Cichowicz's teachings and how to best use them to become a better player. It also features photos and maxims by Cichowicz and other brass players to round out the collection.

Price: \$14.99.

HalLeonard.com

Complete Warm-Up for Band

Excelcia Music Publishing is thrilled to announce the release of *The Complete Warm-Up for Band, A Modular Approach to Fundamental Development*, written by prominent composers, clinicians and music educators, Carol Brittin Chambers and Tyler Arcari. A new everyday book to be used in middle school and high school band classes of any length, it provides well-rounded fundamental warm-ups that can be used by ensembles in short increments or in longer, more intensive rehearsals. Using a modular structure, *The Complete Warm-Up for Band* offers flexible options and a thorough approach, regardless of class length, to develop tone, technique, and musicianship for the concert band.



It is structured using six modules: body, tone, scale, technical, rhythmic and ensemble modules. On the spot, band directors can pick one or more exercises in each of the modules to lead their ensembles in a comprehensive warm-up designed by educators who have been exactly in their shoes. Whether the director has 5 minutes or 25 minutes, each warm-up will include thoughtful exercises in breathing, stretching, long tones, scales, technical etudes, and rhythmic studies, plus 40 chorales for use in ensemble development.

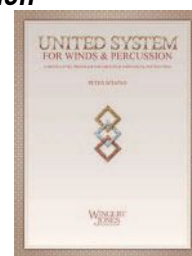
"As a music educator, I have always strongly believed in establishing fundamental concepts that can transfer easily from the warm-up to the music. *The Complete Warm-Up for Band* is just that...complete! Directors can start as simply as they like, with their younger, less-advanced ensembles, then progressively add on exercises as their groups mature. The extensive content means the book will never be outgrown!" states Brittin Chambers. "And Tyler's experience and perspectives made him the perfect partner in creating this book."

The Complete Warm-Up for Band is available from music retailers everywhere and from the publisher at \$8.99 per student book and \$39.99 for teacher edition.

ExcelciaMusic.com

United System for Winds & Percussion

Wingert-Jones Publications is excited to announce the new release of *United System for Winds & Percussion, A Mixed-Level Program* for groups and Individuals. An innovative solution for middle school directors presented with mixed instrumentation and varying ability levels, *United System* provides a versatile and practical approach for students to successfully play together while reinforcing fundamentals.



Developed and written by full-time public school music educator & popular composer Peter Sciaino, *United System's* units and lessons are presented in three different levels - bronze (.5-1), silver (1-1.5), and gold (1.5-2+) - all of which can be played together within one book. Essentially containing three books in one, *United System* unites students, both literally and conceptually, onto the same page.

"Born from my own public school instrumental music program, *United System* answers the pressing question on how to fully engage students of mixed instrumentation at varying ability levels in a united environment, with a plug-and-play system for reinforcing fundamentals in a more progressive manner within a limited allotment of time," explains Sciaino. "I'm thrilled that band directors and music educators will benefit from this easy-to-use tool to enhance student success!"

Thoughtfully laid-out, progressive in nature, and a ready-to-go tool, *United System* reinforces fundamentals in a progressive manner. Students can jump in at their appropriate level, and *United System* guides students to advance progressively as their skills improve. For example, it allows a student to read from the easier bronze line, while playing the same study alongside more advanced students reading from the silver or gold level line of music, motivating and engaging young musicians and bringing flexibility to the next level. The book contains original exercises, scales, etudes and warm-ups, including thoughtful writing specifically for percussion instruments.

United System is ideal for both differentiated full-band instruction and for use in lesson groups, including those in smaller band programs and those with scheduling issues or “pull-out” instruction styles, resulting in significant progress with a variety of students in a limited amount of time. The new book is also a great asset for private lesson teachers as well as all band directors with young or mixed-level ensembles.

United System is available from music retailers everywhere and from the publisher at \$9.99 per student book and \$34.99 for teacher edition.

ExcelciaMusic.com

ACCESSORIES

New Snark Air Rechargeable Clip-On Tuner

Snark are renowned as innovative pioneers within the world of clip-on tuners and...they've done it again...with the rechargeable Snark Air tuner, a new design with a host of exciting features.

With no buttons or switches, navigating though the Snark Air's tuner features is a one-handed operation.

For a totally easy-to-read display when attached to the front or hidden behind the instrument's headstock, Snark Air revolves a full 360 degrees. Tap the plane on the top to change the orientation of the display to work well on the back of headstock.

It is extremely light, compact and robust, looking ultra-cool and incorporates fast and flawless tuning software...tuning is sweeter than ever. It includes USB charging cable. Tunes electric, bass and acoustic guitars, ukuleles, banjos and more, lasting for weeks to months of regular use on one charge.

Features

- Superb lightning-fast technology ensures fast accurate tuning.
- One touch operation to navigate.
- No buttons or switches – Easily operate with one hand.
- Zero Turbulence technology for rock solid tuning.
- Rechargeable – Never buy batteries again.
- Hides behind the headstock.
- Rotates a full 360°.
- Includes travel bag and USB charge cable.

SnarkAir.com



INSTRUMENTS

Millenium Drums Introduce the Rookie E-Drum Set

Children love drums! No other instrument can so perfectly combine the natural urge to move and the development of musicality and sense of rhythm. With the Millenium Rookie E-Drum Set with low-noise mesh head pads, even the youngest can enjoy this great instrument and learn the necessary basics without strain-

ing their parents' ears too much. Headphones and a stool are already included in the package, so it can start immediately.

Technical Specifications

- 1x 7" snare drum mesh head pad
- 3x 7" tom mesh head pads
- 3x 8" cymbal pads
- 1x hi-hat controller
- 1x bass drum pedal
- 1/4" stereo jack line output
- 1/8" stereo jack headphones output
- 1/8" stereo jack aux in
- USB-MIDI
- USB-C power supply (100-240V) and therefore also connectable with a standard power bank
- Bass Drum Pedal
- Cabling
- Drumrack
- Hi-hat controller
- Power supply unit

MilleniumDrums.com



New Electric Drum Pad from Donner

Donner has rolled out the new DED-20 Electric Drum Pad. An innovative practice device for drummers on-the-go, the high-performance DED-20 features a built-in speaker that boasts high-quality sound source samples taken from real acoustic drums. Featuring seven drum sounds — including one snare, one crash, one ride, one hi-hat and three toms — the DED-20 also offers 12 demonstration songs and nine accompaniments set up to accommodate the needs of live performance.

The DED-20's two stereo speakers deliver powerful, impactful sound that reach the volume level of an electric drum kit and can be adjusted to nine different volume levels, so drummers can easily adjust accordingly to their current volume setting.

Crafted from high-quality, soft silicone, players can roll up the pad and carry it with them in a backpack to practice wherever, whenever. The soft silicone construction also reduces noise when drumming. For even quieter practice, the DED-20 supports a 3.5-mm headphone output, so players can practice with headphones.

Additionally, a 3-minute-long (180-second) recording function can capture a drummer's moment of inspiration, enhancing their creative potential.

Available standard with a MIDI-out jack and USB MIDI-out jack, drummers can connect the DED-20 to their computer to produce music or play games, as well as connect external speakers for live entertainment.

The DED-20 comes complete with one electronic drum pad with mobile power charging support, one power adapter, one USB data cable, one 3.5-mm audio cable, a pair of drumsticks and two drum pedals. With all these accessories included, the DED-20 also makes a great starter pack for kids or adults wanting to learn how to play the drums.

DED-20 Key Features:

- Built-in speaker boasting high-quality sound source samples taken from a real drum source.



NewProducts

- Two stereo speakers delivering the powerful sound that reaches the volume of an electric drum kit and can be adjusted to nine different volume levels.
- 3-minute-long recording function to capture in-the-moment musical inspiration.
- High-quality soft silicone construction so the pad can be easily rolled up and transported.
- 3.5-mm headphone output.
- Comes complete with one power adapter, one USB data cable, a pair of drumsticks and two drum pedals.
- Free 40 Drum Lessons by Melodics

DonnerMusic.com

AMPLIFIER

Roland Announces JC-120 Jazz Chorus 50th Anniversary Limited Edition Guitar Amplifier

Roland has announced the JC-120 Jazz Chorus Roland 50th Anniversary Limited Edition, a commemorative version of the iconic JC-120 guitar amplifier. Offered in a one-time production run of 350 units, Roland presents this special model to close out the company's 50th anniversary celebration and express gratitude to generations of loyal customers around the world. The JC-120 Jazz Chorus Roland 50th Anniversary Limited Edition comes in a natural cherry wood finish and features a dark gray grille cloth and a badge with a hand-engraved serial number.

A true legend in music history, the JC-120 has been in continuous production since 1975 and is Roland's longest-running product. Affectionately known as "the king of clean," the amplifier has been a stage and studio mainstay for nearly five decades. Trendsetting rock, pop, and jazz guitarists have used the JC-120 on the most influential songs in music history. And when leading producers look to drive tracks with killer clean tones, the amp is always the top choice.

Roland.com



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"It gives me the opportunity to play in tune in any situation. The tone is beautiful and its durable construction seems like it will last a lifetime."
Sherman Ikey
Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra

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Leadership Tips “Don’t wait...bring it.”

By Dr. Matthew Arau

The new year is here and with that comes a new semester. Possibly “snow days,” contest/festival season preparation, and the realization you are halfway through the school year and still have so much to do!

If we are feeling a tiny bit more stress, so are our students. The good news is there is a solution. JOY. Wouldn't you like to have more genuine joy in your classes? If the answer is yes, here are five tips to empower your students to bring joy into their music classes this new year.

1. In the middle of a rehearsal, stop and ask your students to turn to the students on either side of them and share what they have enjoyed about the other students' playing or singing and the progress they are making. You will be amazed at the number of smiles and energetic exchanges that take place. Afterwards, ask students to share what they noticed to the full group. The motivation to play at a higher level always increases after this short activity.

2. Invite one or two students up to the front of the room to listen to a section of rehearsal and give comments to the group on what they noticed, felt, visualized, or observed. Encourage them to share

at least one positive. Students will be excited to have an audience and the students who are asked to come up front will enjoy the opportunity. The bonus is they may hear something differently and offer a new, fresh suggestion.

3. After rehearsing part of a piece, ask the students to get in trios or quartets and share ideas for what went well and what could be improved. Then, ask students to share their ideas. Rehearse the section again, trying out some of the ideas.

4. Select and rehearse music that brings you joy and openly share those feelings with your students. Encourage your students to write in their music how the music makes them feel. Have a class discussion about the emotions and feelings in the music and what can be done technically to communicate those feelings.

5. Joy in music making is a group effort. Encourage students not to wait for someone else to make music class fun and joyous. All it takes is one student to bring the joy through their attitude, laughter, passion, service, or musical excellence and it can spread like holiday cheer. Don't wait...bring it.

UpbeatGlobal.com

DIRECTING KIDS



by Mary Gray

Directing kids (actors under sixteen) is an art that differs from directing an adult cast. You are a teacher in addition to a director. You may have some kids who are naturals and need very little coaching and others who need to have the basics of stagecraft constantly reiterated. Here are some suggestions:

Audition carefully – What you see at the audition will for the most part be what you get as a final performance. Every actor improves as he or she gets more experience and good direction, but because a performance is a high-pressure event, they may revert to any bad habits they showed at the audition, for instance, speaking softly, or not making eye contact with fellow actors.

Prepare thoroughly – Kids don't have a lot of patience. You need to know before a rehearsal where you want everyone to stand and how you want them to say the lines. You can't be making these decisions on the fly. If the kids feel you aren't sure about a scene, they won't bother to remember where you told them to stand, when to enter, and such.

Constantly reinforce basic rules of acting – You will have to tell kids many times to "cheat out," to stand straight, to use gestures with their lines, to look at and listen to the other actors, to use appropriate emotional expression with their lines, to react to what's happening on stage, and most importantly to speak loudly, slowly, and clearly.

Don't be afraid to say, "Do it this way" – With adult actors, directors generally let the actor make their own "choice" as to how to interpret a character. And sometimes kids can be very ingenious about their character interpretations. The good news is they don't take it personally if you tell them, "This is how I want you to say this line." Usually it is necessary to give each actor quite a bit of input as to how their character should be played. For the first couple of rehearsals, let them experiment with their character. After that, start working with each actor to improve their characterizations.

Teach them how to memorize lines – Kids need to be taught how to memorize lines. Tell them to get a parent, sibling, or friend to help them to work on lines every day, even on days when they have a show. First, read over all your lines. Then have your helper read the two or three lines before your line, and then you say the line. If you can't remember it, they should give you the first couple of words. If you still can't remember the line, they should read the line, and you then repeat it.

Teach your actors how to "cover" – It is inevitable that kids will forget lines during a performance. All the actors need to learn how

Musical Theater

to "cover" for one another by either saying the other actor's line if that makes sense or by skipping over the missed line and going to their line, assuming the missed line was their cue. Encourage them to cover during rehearsals, but then go back and do the same scene correctly.

Director's notes – It's good to give your cast director's notes after a rehearsal, but make sure that for every critical remark there is also a complimentary remark, even if it's "You guys were a lot better this week than last week." Make sure your cast knows you are trying to teach them how to be better actors, and they should see it as a helpful hint, not a put-down. Also, speak one on one with actors for whom you have a very personal critique, like "Jamie, you are hitting a lot of wrong notes." And again, back that up with a compliment.

One thing a director always has to balance is what will make the best show versus the feelings of the actors. If you have to cut a line or a song from the show, try to make it as easy on the affected actors as possible with an apology and a kind explanation of why the cut is necessary.

Casting – In one area, a director should try not to consider feelings, and that is the casting. Before casting the show, remind the auditioners there are many things to be considered when casting – height, gender, age, vocal range, acting style, etc. – and that every show is different. Just because they weren't right for a big role in this show doesn't mean they won't be perfect for the next show. Then cast the show strictly on who is the best person for that role.

It can be very challenging for a first-time director, but also very rewarding, especially when your fledglings grow up to be wonderful adult actors.

Mary Gray is the director of Easton Children's Theatre, publisher of SpotlightMusicals.com, and author of the blog, YouthTheatreTips.com



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For musical theater repertoire, encourage your students to have active smiles while singing. This will help to achieve the signature forward placement of Broadway performers and brighten up the timbre. For classical repertoire, encourage students to impersonate the mouth shape of the singer Cher. This will help to contain spreading of the corners of the mouth and encourage a vertical, warm timbre.

Brenda Jean Hamilton
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