The graphic below was developed by music educator Susan Cherry. Read her article, beginning on Page 8, for an explanation of this chart.

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Do you have an artist in your music class? Would they enjoy having their work published?

Music-related drawings, paintings, and other artwork are desired for the front and/or back cover of *The Vermont Music Educator*.

Artwork can be in color or black & white, with dimensions up to 7.5” wide x 10” tall for the back cover or up to 7.5” wide x 6” tall for the front cover. (Smaller size black and white drawings are welcome also, since filler graphics are often needed for inside pages.)

Please send submissions to the editor at the address printed below. The editor reserves the right to make decisions about publication and placement. Submissions should include the artist’s name and school (for publication credit) and mailing address (so artwork can be returned).

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[vacant]
Contact a board member if you are interested in filling this role.

State Manager
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(802) 343-6282

Treasurer
PAUL RONDINONE
p_a_r@vermontel.net
(802) 228-4721

Secretary
CINDY HALL
cynthia.m.hall@valley.net
(802) 222-5214

Journal Editor
DENIS LAMBERT
vmeanews@yahoo.com
(802) 763-8289

Director

Committee Chairs

General Music ............ SUSAN CHERRY
scherry@stjsd.org
(802) 748-8912
(St. Johnsbury Public Schools)

Choral Music .............[vacant] - Contact a board member if you are interested in filling this role.

Instrumental Music .. [vacant] - Contact a board member if you are interested in filling this role.

Collegiate ............... RONALD SHERWIN
ronald.sherwin@castleton.edu
(802) 468-1322
(Castleton State College)

All State .................. STEFFEY PARKER
statemanager@vmea.org
(802) 862-6521
(Rice Memorial High School)

Conference .............. ALLYSON LEDOUX
allysings@yahoo.com
(802) 425-2771
(Charlotte Central School)

Technology ............. SANDI MACLEOD
sandi@vtmidi.org
(802) 879-0065
(University of Vermont)

Research ................. PATRICIA RILEY
priley@uvm.edu
(802) 656-7770
(University of Vermont)

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(802) 868-4920
(Swatton Elementary School)

District II ............. ANNE HAMILTON
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(North Country High School)

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(Harwood Union High School)

District V .......... BETH WINTER
beth.winter@mail.rswsu.org
(802) 287-5212
(Poulnty Elementary School)

District VI .......... CONNIE WILCOX
wilcox@brhsms.org
(802) 228-4721
(Black River Middle/High School)
The Vermont Music Educator, official publication of the Vermont Music Educators Association, is published four times a year, in September, December, March, and June. Copies are distributed to all VMEA members.

Submission of pertinent articles is encouraged. VMEA assumes no responsibility for the individual opinions expressed in this publication. Please note that submissions may be edited for grammar, clarity, and length. Send manuscripts to:

The Vermont Music Educator
Denis Lambert, editor
P.O. Box 178
Tunbridge, VT 05077
vmeanews@yahoo.com

DEADLINES
July 15 for September issue
October 15 for December issue
January 15 for March issue
April 15 for June issue

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Editor's Note
In the November issue of the Music Educators Journal, MENC President Lynn Brinckmeyer quoted part of a speech given at the funeral for the Queen of England. The issue arrived at my house just days after hearing of the untimely death of a Vermont music educator, who is remembered on the inside of the back cover of this issue. Here is that quote once again, for the benefit of anyone who may have overlooked it the first time… with pronouns changed from “she” to “he”. It is a quote worth remembering.

You can shed tears that he is gone or you can smile because he has lived.
You can close your eyes and hope that he’ll come back, or you can open your eyes and see all he’s left.

Recognize and appreciate your colleagues today because no one knows what tomorrow may bring.

DECEMBER 2007

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President's Message

Back in the Saddle, Looking Forward

by Gary Moreau

Fellow Music Educators:

Surprise, surprise, surprise! I believe it was Gomer Pyle who coined this phrase. Don't worry if you don't know who Gomer Pyle is. You would have to be over 40 to remember him from TV. Either that or you would have to watch TV Land on cable. Who he is isn't that relevant to this message. For many of you this will be old news. I'm sure you were expecting another message here from President Tom Heintzelman. Unfortunately, as many of you are aware, Tom has relocated to New York State to continue his teaching career.

As such, he had to resign his position as President of the VMEA effective in August. The VMEA Executive Board met on October 2 for their fall meeting and in their deliberations asked if I would consider continuing as President for the next year or two. I am humbled by their request and continued support of me, and I have gladly accepted the challenge. Leadership positions in the organization are continuously coming available and we are currently seeking help with this. I will be talking more about this later in my message.

What an amazing conference we just completed! It was great to see so many of you there and to network with you about VMEA happenings. I hope that you had as nice a time as I did and took the opportunity to attend sessions of interest to you, and that you had a chance to share ideas and thoughts with music colleagues from around the state.

I want to congratulate Allyson Ledoux, our conference chair, for yet another quality conference. Along with her committee members and the members of the VMEA Executive Board, she once again provided us with an exceptional day of professional development. I know that Allyson herself spent many hours in preparation for that day, and that was very evident from the sessions provided and the exhibitors present. As is always the case, we would love to have more teachers participate in the annual conference. Having the support of our colleagues through their attendance (and thereby, financial support) gives us the opportunity to bring clinicians who are leaders in their fields to share their expertise and experiences with all of us. We are also able to showcase the talents of some of our students, which is the main reason that we do what we do for children. The vendors’ area was filled with opportunities to peruse the resources available to us as teachers. I hope many of you took advantage of some of their offers and that you will remember to use their services in the future, as we depend on their support and they depend on our patronage. As is so often the case, the members of your association pitched in where needed to see that everything went off well. I would offer a particular ‘thank you’ to Steffen Parker for his continued service to all of us through his countless hours of work. Conferences like this don't just occur. With the support of the Executive Board, Conference Committee, clinicians and vendors, and – of course – our members, we continue to be able to offer these types of experiences to the teachers of Vermont. Of course the real winners in all of this are our students and programs.

At the recent conference I had the opportunity to speak to all those present. I shared with them several areas in which they can and will play an important role in our association in the future. I would like to share a brief synopsis of some of those areas in which the Executive Board could use your input and assistance.

We are currently without a President-Elect for the next cycle, 2007-2009. As a result of Tom’s departure to New York and my subsequent move back into the office of President, I have asked Bear Irwin to step back into his role as Past President. In doing so, Bear continues on the Board, where he has served since the 1980s. I admire his professionalism and expertise but also respect his desire to return to teaching without the added responsibility of serving on the Board. I appreciate his work and would like to thank him very much for his support as we work through our current leadership crisis.

For now, we are seeking candidates for nomination as President-Elect of the VMEA. This is a six-year position, with two years each as President-Elect, President, and Past President. The qualifications are that potential nominees be members of MENC/VMEA and have a desire to serve the music educators throughout Vermont with their ideas and initiatives. In addition, they are responsible for representing our state at division and national conferences to share our visions and needs with other leaders from around the country. We need the support of these individuals now more than ever. In an attempt to improve the quality of education for all students, NCLB legislation has caused many arts programs around the country to be reduced and, in some instances, cut completely. We must continue to advocate for our programs at the local, state, and national levels. I hope that the VMEA and its members can find ways to assist each other in this endeavor. We must let the public know what music education is all about and why students must have the opportunities that we offer in our schools. We must "toot our own horns."

Another area that we are addressing right now is the All State fees and a requirement of VMEA membership for participating teachers. We have been one of only two states in the country that have not required membership in the state association in order to have students participate in the All State Festival. This is now changing and MENC/VMEA membership will be required of all teachers with students auditioning (and subsequently performing) in All State. This requirement will take effect in September 2008. MENC has given us access to membership records, so that the policy can be fairly and accurately enforced. This membership requirement will go into effect along with a new four-tiered participation fee structure (based on total school population) that has been established.

The MENC National Conference will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 9-13. I hope that some of you will try to attend this conference and represent the state of Vermont in doing so. The small states like Vermont need to be heard at national events. I will be attending the National Assembly on April 8 and 9 and will report.

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Around the State

News, Opportunities, and Information of Interest

FLYNN CENTER WELCOMES KENNEDY CENTER TEACHING ARTIST
Submitted by Tracey Gilbert

At the Flynn Center on Tuesday, January 8, you’ll find Kennedy Center Teaching Artist Stuart Stotts guiding teachers of grades K-3 in the use of music to teach and encourage reading. Participating teachers will learn songs, writing techniques, and music methods that improve reading, decoding, and comprehension skills in elementary-aged readers.

Also of benefit to music educators, reading specialists, and special education teachers, the workshop was developed in association with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and is partially underwritten by the U.S. Department of Education; the National Committee for the Performing Arts; the Kennedy Center Corporate Fund; and the Bank of America Charitable Foundation.

When: Tues., January 8, 2008, 12:00-3:00 pm
Where: Flynn Center for the Performing Arts in Burlington
Cost: $30 (only $20 for CVEDC-ESA members - staff of public schools in Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle Counties)


FLYNNARTS JAZZ PROGRAM NURTURES YOUNG MUSICIANS
Submitted by Tracey Gilbert

The FlynnArts Jazz Program, which starts up again the week of January 14, offers young musicians in grades 5-12 the opportunity to study with working professional jazz artist/educators and the artistic growth born of playing in small combos. These richly rewarding classes are enhanced by Summertime Jazz intensive studies; public performances at FlynnSpace, First Night Burlington, and the Discover Jazz Festival; and class trips to concerts by jazz greats.

Scholarships toward the $210 tuition are available to students demonstrating need and are supported by the Flynn Jazz Endowment, which was raised over the past five years, initiated by a challenge grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and matched by generous support from the community. Classes are led by George Voland and Shane Hardiman, and are held on Tuesdays at 3:45-5:15 pm (section A), 5:20-6:50 pm (section B), & 7-8:30 pm (section C).

Know a student who would benefit? Pass along the info above, call (802) 652-4537, or email <flynnarts@flynncenter.org>.

President’s Message
Continued from Page 4

to the National Executive Board regarding what is happening in music education throughout our state. If you have information you would like me to share or questions you would like answered, send them to me in advance and I will bring them up in that forum. I am very interested in getting our message to the other states with regard to leadership issues, advocacy needs, and legislation needed to ensure that students continue to receive instruction in music education here and around the country. More information regarding this conference may be obtained by visiting the MENC website at <www.menc.org>.

Lastly, there are so many ways that we need your support and ideas. Perhaps you could volunteer to be an adjudicator at All State auditions or get involved in one of the committees preparing for the fall conference. Maybe you could simply share your expertise with all of us through an article in this publication or better yet, offer to take a leadership role in the association. There are many needs we have, and you are the people to whom we turn for help and guidance. Please get involved in our association!

Gary Moreau teaches music at Albert D. Lawton School in Essex Junction.

DISTRICT VI FALL FESTIVAL REVIEW
Submitted by Connie Wilcox

The Connecticut Valley Music Festival Association, otherwise known as District VI, held its Fall Music Festival on November 16-17 at Springfield High School. Four ensembles performed for a large audience at the Saturday afternoon concert.

The Fall Music Festival was the first of two annual festivals held in District VI during the 2007-2008 school year. The festival showcased four performing groups: Middle School Jazz Band, Middle School Chorus, High School Concert Band, and High School Jazz Choir. The Winter Music Festival, which will be held in early February, will feature Middle School Band, High School Chorus, and High School Jazz Band. This type of festival format gives students who are in both band and chorus the opportunity to audition and participate in both the Fall and Winter Music Festivals.

Here is a sampling of the programs that were selected by the guest conductors:

Middle School District Jazz Band
Mr. David Sporny, Conductor
"The Grand Avenue Groove" by Doug Beach
"Contessa" by Lennie Niehaus
"Just A Minor Thing" by Mike Steinel
"Slowly and Quietly, Please" by Don Sebesky
"Clean Slate" by Ray Brown

High School District Jazz Choir
Mr. Rob Westerberg, Conductor
"Tuxedo Junction"
"All About The Blues" by Carl Strommen
"You Made Me Love You" arr. Kirby Shaw
"Nightingale" arr. Gene Puerling
"Birdland" arr. by Jerry Nowak

Middle School Chorus
Francois Clemmons, Conductor
"This Little Light of Mine" arr. Peter Nilsson
"Ah Wanna Be Ready" arr. Francois Clemmons
"Balm In Gilead" as performed by the Harlem Spiritual Ensemble
"Ev'ry Time Ah Feel Duh Spirit" arr. Francois Clemmons
"We Shall Overcome" harmonized by J. Jefferson Cleveland

The Vermont Music Educator
December 2007
A New Approach to Integrating the Arts

by Susan Cherry

What do you think of when you hear the words Integrated Arts? Is it singing Canadian songs when the classes are studying Canada or whaling songs during a study of the oceans? I think it is much more than that. In my 25+ years of teaching general classroom music and theater I have become interested in what makes students think creatively. In 2002, I did 5 case studies with students in a 5th grade class. I studied how they reacted to creative stimuli and analyzed their creativity, learning styles, and areas of interest and strength with their regular classroom teacher, parents, and the students themselves. After observation, note-taking, and data analysis, I came to the conclusion that there were some similarities and patterns I could document. I am now fully convinced that patterns of creativity can be molded and shaped in every subject area, and that students can be directed creatively in areas which may surprise the student and teacher alike.

The figure above [shown larger and in color on the front cover of this publication] is one I developed after this research. I grouped learning styles and areas of strength with dominant domains. These all fit together somewhat like a color wheel. The learning styles are taken from the work of Bernice McCarthy1, the multiple intelligences are from the work of Howard Gardner2, the Cognitive Domain outlined by Bloom, et al.,3 the Affective Domain by Krathwohl et. al., the Psychomotor Domain from Simpson’s4 work, and the Curiosity Domain as outlined in my work.5 These domains are summarized in the table shown on the next page. The taxonomies in this table show an increasing value as they descend.

As you look at the figure, the first objective is to find where the student’s strengths lie. In other words, how does the student learn, and in what areas are the student’s general interests? This approach is being considered by some educational institutions as they begin to create an individual learning plan (ILP) for each student. Sometimes tests are given, but generally it is done by observation. On the practical front, we are really talking about a moving target, since students grow and create at different paces. This placement is temporary, and should be done regularly.

Once the teacher has located the student’s spot on the wheel, he should then look at the opposite side of the spectrum. This opposite intelligence and domain, as well as learning style, would be the place where the student displays the most curiosity, leading to creative thought. A musical student is more curious about the mathematical nature of music, and generally enjoys theory and analysis. A mathematical student may enjoy music, but not from an analysis point of view. His view would be to enjoy music just for its own sake. My father-in-law, a physicist by profession, enjoyed going to concerts outside and watching the children dance. He had no desire to analyze it and figure out chord progressions. My son, however, who is very musical, loves to analyze and figure out how the music is put together.

I believe that this principle can be used for all subject areas. Students who score high in verbal and/or mathematical subject areas most likely function dominantly in the cognitive domain. According to this theory, they are primarily analytic learners. These learners exhibit their most creative thinking when they become curious in an opposite field. For instance, the mathematical learner may do well to have music playing in order to promote the questions most associated with a dynamic learner: “What if...?” His curiosity and most creative experiences may be putting together a play list on his MP3 player. The verbal student may have the most creative experience redecorating his room. How do you promote this type of innate curiosity in all subject areas with all students? The simplest educational response is to give opportunity for exploration in all fields. The more complicated administrative response concerns scheduling, curriculum, and unit testing. Students who are strong in their cognitive domain would generally enjoy spending time on a problem and come to evaluative conclusions (through all of the steps in the cognitive taxonomy). Their creativity would be piqued when given Affective Domain opportunities. They would be trained on how to receive affective (emotional) information, how to respond to it, value it, organize it, and in characterizing its value would come to a creative solution. The teacher would encourage this learning by asking

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Integrating the Arts

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“What if...?” at varying stages. Practically speaking, this may occur most for our mathematical fellow during a music class. The music teacher would be cued to promote curiosity in varying ways to the different learners in class. If the teacher were to follow the guidelines for development of curiosity and creativity, she may prompt the mathematical student with questions in the Affective Domain and prompt the musical student with questions in the Cognitive Domain. This obviously requires individual knowledge of students by all teachers. Collaboration is integral to the success of this program.

Also integral is the establishment of a creative time for the students to work on a project of their own choosing, in whichever field promotes the most creativity for their learning style. This may require students to work with other teachers around the building, thus a need for “Flow” time across several grade levels.

Businesses are beginning to recognize that people who can think creatively are an important asset to their company’s growth. I believe it is also time for our educational systems to recognize the importance of creativity in every subject area. Math and science, as well as literature and grammar, have traditionally been taught by rote and regurgitating fact. This is great for the cognitive learner, but even that learner has potential for creativity if only the right questions could be asked to pique his curiosity in a way that is opposite from his natural way of thinking. Let’s say that someone who is quick to memorize facts and figures is prompted to see the relationship between math and music. Perhaps the teacher during a study of fractions could have that math student figure out how to fit various note values together in a rhythmic composition. The musically talented student in class could perform this composition on the drum or other rhythm instrument. Imagine if during a lesson in grammar, the teacher recognizes the student who gets the connection and gets the student to apply it creatively by directing the student to choreograph students in the room to explain the relationship between, say, adjectives and adverbs with their corresponding nouns and verbs. In the same way, students who are strong athletes may have their creativity encouraged by finding out about nature, and asking naturalistic questions. In each class, teachers would be observing student strengths, and encouraging them to be creative on the opposite spectrum of the wheel.

In the next edition, I will spend more time with specific examples and ideas for teachers on implementation of this program.

REFERENCES

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Table: Taxonomies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COGNITIVE</th>
<th>AFFECTIVE</th>
<th>PSYCHOMOTOR</th>
<th>CURIOUSITY</th>
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Notes from Reston

WORLD’S LARGEST CONCERT

MENC: The National Association for Music Education will once again produce the World’s Largest Concert(r) in March 2008. The World’s Largest Concert (WLC) has been the highlight of Music In Our Schools Month (MIOSM) since 1985, with one break in 2007 during which time MENC focused on events commemorating the association’s founding in 1907. As a sing-along concert that linked students around the world through music, the WLC reached an estimated 6 million students, teachers, and music supporters in recent years.

The Hal Leonard Corporation of Milwaukee, WI, will provide the vocal and piano accompaniment sheet music for use with the concert. “Music has an extraordinary power to make us feel joy, courage, energy, and even sadness, but what’s even better is that music has the power to bring people together,” said Emily Crocker, vice president of choral publications for Hal Leonard. “Hal Leonard supports teachers, students, and music education, and we are honored to be part of MENC’s World’s Largest Concert.”

The 2008 WLC will not be televised on broadcast channels in 2008, though some local access channels may carry the show. A DVD of the concert, featuring video recordings of school ensembles from around the world, will be available for purchase from MENC. Teachers are encouraged to play the WLC DVD at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, March 13, 2008, and to invite the rest of their school and members of their communities to attend and sing along.

The concert program (not in final order) is: “The Star Spangled Banner,” “Spirit of America,” “This Little Light of Mine,” “Hallelujah, Get on Board,” “There’s a Song in Me,” “Fanga Alafia,” “Music Rocks!” and “Hala lala layya.” The school ensembles featured in the concert will be announced in January 2008.

A free 2008 Teacher’s Guide, including the WLC vocal and piano music, lesson plans, activities, and more will be available online at <www.menc.org/wlc>. Sibelius Music USA is assisting MENC by providing the music free of charge at <www.sibeliusmusic.com/menc>.

DIGITAL COMPOSITIONS WANTED

MENC and the National School Board Association announce the 2008 Electronic Music Composition Competition. This competition recognizes outstanding compositions and is held annually to help influence school administrators to include or improve music technology in their schools’ curriculum. Winning students will be honored at the NSBA’s 2008 T+L Conference, October 28-30, 2008 in Seattle, Washington, and will receive prizes from Sibelius and MagicScore Music Software. Visit <www.menc.org/interact> for more information. Application deadline: April 14, 2008.

NAMM FOUNDATION FUNDING GRANTS

The NAMM Foundation announced the 2008 Funding Grants for research, non-profit organizations, and schools. There are five initiatives that concentrate on reaching specific segments of potential music makers, with proposal deadlines from November 30 through January 15. For more details about the programs the NAMM Foundation’s initiatives support and how to submit a request for proposal, visit <www.namffoundation.org/Grants/guidelines.html>.

U.S. ARMY ALL-AMERICAN MARCHING BAND

Applications are now being accepted for the 2009 U.S. Army All-American Marching Band <www.menc.org/allamerican>. Students accepted to this ensemble receive an all-expenses-paid trip to San Antonio, TX, in January 2009 to perform at the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

MENC WEB SITE FOCUS GROUP

MENC needs input from members as we seek to update and improve our Web site. If you would be interested in participating in an online focus group, please e-mail Elizabeth Lasko <elizabethl@menc.org>. Participation will be via e-mail only and on your own time.

2008 MIOSM ITEMS

Music In Our Schools Month Awareness items to help you spread the word about the importance of music education are available now! Visit <www.menc.orgguides/miosm/miosmawareness.html> to browse and place your order. Supplies are limited.

Integrating the Arts

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Susan Cherry lives in St. Johnsbury, Vt., and has been teaching general and choral music as well as theater in the St. Johnsbury School District for over twenty five years. She is on sabbatical this year to continue her research in new techniques of integrating the arts into all subject areas. In addition to teaching, she has written children’s musicals; taught voice, piano and guitar privately in her home; directed the Lebanon Community Chorus in New Hampshire; and played the organ for several services each weekend. She is a frequently requested guest conductor at children’s and middle school music festivals around New England. Susan holds a Master of Music Education degree from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, N.J., and has conducted workshops for various music and arts conferences around Vermont and New Hampshire. In addition to her interests in music, Susan volunteers for the American Field Service Intercultural Programs. She has been recognized as UVM Teacher of the Year, Outstanding Music Educator by the Vermont Alliance for Arts Educators, serves as the Repertoire and Standards Chair for Children’s and Middle School Music for the Vermont Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association and is the General Music Chair for the Vermont Music Educator’s Association.

“The discovery of song and the creation of musical instruments both owed their origin to a human impulse which lies much deeper than conscious intention: the need for rhythm in life... the need is a deep one, transcending thought, and disregarded at our peril.”

- Richard Baker
Technology

Do You and Your Students Have Equal Access?

by Sandi MacLeod

... to the computer lab, that is? Music educators should be able to utilize the school computer lab or portable laptop carts for their classes. The trouble is that equal access for a music educator doesn’t look the same as it does for classroom teachers. This is where some education of administration, tech support personnel, and other staff comes in.

Since the inclusion of computers in schools, teachers, administrators, and technologists alike have been exploring ways to use the technology to positively effect learning and teaching. They investigate software and internet applications that will excite students and enhance the curriculum. The educational community has been addressing these issues for a decade now, and according to many researchers, there is a modicum of evidence that increased learning is actually taking place because kids are using computers in schools. Of course, there are some pockets of innovation, and there, learning and teaching are different. But too often students are merely doing the tasks they used to do with paper and pencil or markers and oak tag. Word processing just moves written work to the computer. Of course it’s much easier to edit and certainly much easier to read. But essentially, the task is the same as it was before the students began to use technology. Likewise, students are creating charts and graphs using a spreadsheet application like Excel, but the technology records the information and one click provides a colorful chart.

One technology area that holds great promise for changing the learning environment is in music and technology. We music educators know that. Now we need to convince others. New software allows students to accomplish things that haven’t been possible in the past. The most obvious is composing and arranging. Without computer playback of the work, students struggled with the task. In fact, only those designated gifted and talented were usually encouraged to even try.

Other music applications show the strong technology and music relationship that has existed for years, since musicians first harnessed the power of this new tool for their pleasure and their work. There are a variety of music software programs and internet resources to help you address every single national standard. Some of the standards – composing and arranging for example – are difficult for all students to do successfully without using a technology application. Other tasks such as drill and practice and theory explorations are successful because students can move at their own rate.

One first step for teachers in implementing technology into their classes, especially general music classes, is to get into the school computer lab or checkout the laptop cart. Typically, a schedule for computer lab usage goes out at the beginning of the school year and classroom teachers sign up for a time slot they will keep for the entire year. The schedule is often finalized and seems to be unchangeable, but it’s time to change this paradigm.

This once-a-week computer lab schedule for classroom teachers doesn’t fit the needs of a music educator. I’ve observed two alternatives that some Vermont teachers have tried. One is that the music teacher begs or trades favors with several classroom teachers to use their time slots. This can work for a one-day project, but providing for a three-week unit utilizing the computer requires too much negotiation.

The other arrangement involves advance planning but is the successful model in place in several elementary schools. It works well and addresses the root of the access issue. It sets the tone for the future. First, enlist the principal and tech coordinator’s understanding that you want to utilize the lab and that the current schedule won’t work for what you need to do with children. Get a commitment that you can set a two or three week timeframe when the computer lab is allocated to the music educator for specific periods. Set this time before everyone else signs up and make it crystal clear the weeks you will be in the lab and the time slots you will need it.

Perhaps you select a two or three week period during January when you are ready for your 4th and 5th grade students to use notation software for composition. Perhaps you negotiate for another two-week time in early May for your 2nd and 3rd grade students. In the meantime, you work on the usual music tasks in your own classroom and prepare your students for their experience in the lab or with the cart. If you’ve scheduled this time, make sure you’re ready to begin! Don’t be a no-show and don’t try to get a time change. That may hamper your future access. Select a project that you can accomplish in the amount of time allotted you. With new technology, it’s always best to start small and aim for large success.

It’s helpful to demonstrate to the administrator and tech personnel what you intend to do with students once you’ve gained access. Investigate what you wish to do thoroughly. Talk about a workshop you’ve taken that has you excited about student learning. If you have some money in your budget or can order from the school software budget, then you will have more choices and options available. I’m happy to help individuals think through what they would like to do and what kinds of resources are available. Advocate for access!

“I worry that the person who thought up Muzak may be thinking up something else.”

- Lily Tomlin

Sandi MacLeod is the technology chairperson for VMEA and coordinates the Vermont MIDI Project.
Conference Review

Conference Attendance Is Up

By Allyson Ledoux

Another conference has come and gone. First, a huge “thank you” to all who made this event a success. It surely takes a village.

The drive to St. Johnsbury was absolutely gorgeous. The St. Johnsbury School was the perfect space. Susan Cherry made sure every room had every piece of equipment requested and she never said, “It can’t be done.”

The day began with the exciting sounds of the Mater Christi drum line, under the direction of Barb Heath, greeting us under cloudless skies. It was the energizing beginning we all needed.

In the early hours, attendees mingled, some attended the Castleton State grad course meeting, while others circulated among the 30-plus exhibitors. One could find everything from chocolates to high-end brass instruments to educational software.

The conference was filled with expert clinicians from all over the state and country. Whether you were a general music educator, a college student, or a choral or band person, there were meaningful sessions for everyone.

The award-winning St. Johnsbury lunch crew served a delicious meal, and we were able to chat and visit those great exhibits again at a leisurely pace.

During the keynote portion of the day, the Charlotte Central School Stage Band (Tony Pietricola, director) showed us what great things kids are capable of, and Walter Parker spoke from the heart about why “Music is Not a Luxury”.

The conference numbers continue to grow. At first glance, this year’s attendance was 132 strong. If you were not able to attend this year, we hope that the 2008 Conference will find you there.

Allyson Ledoux

Conference quotes:

“I greatly enjoy the opportunity to network, learn from and with my colleagues.”

“It was great to meet some other teachers in the area and gain some refreshing insights for teaching.”

“Lamar Robertson was a fantastic clinician and everything was incredibly efficient.”

“I am very happy that I was introduced to Don Collins and his music for Cambiata voices.”

“I will use every activity I learned in my workshops.”

“Refreshing, renewing, inspiring.”

“I loved the general music session.”

“Each year I look forward to the VMEA Conference and the things I can take back to my students.”

Allyson Ledoux serves as VMEA Conference Chair. She teaches in Charlotte.
Your Attention, Please!

by Robert F. Swift

It came as a complete shock, worse than if one had been zapped in handling defective electric wires. In that case there’s a sudden jolt, but then it’s over. In this instance the report as given in both print and broadcast media was initially upsetting, and it still is.

A summary of what occurred now follows. If the reader wishes just to “have a good day” and go about happy business (marking scores, changing reeds, correcting papers), stop reading here. Move on to the ads.

As reported in the Washington Post in a lengthy article dated April 8, 2007, the newspaper arranged for “an experiment in context, perception, and priorities… as well as an unblinking assessment of public taste.” On the morning of Friday, January 12, 2007, Joshua Bell took his violin and played for 43 minutes at the L’Enfant Plaza station in Washington D.C. That location is close to the hub of federal Washington. The acoustics were “surprisingly kind.”

He performed six selections from the classical repertoire. They included the Chaconne from Bach’s Partita #2 for Unaccompanied Violin, the Schubert “Ave Maria,” Manuel Ponce’s “Estrellita,” an unspecified Jules Massenet selection (possibly the Meditation from Thais), and two other J.S. Bach works.

Joshua Bell is considered one of the world’s finest violinists. In the Washington Post article Gene Weingarten writes:

A one-time child prodigy, at 39 Joshua Bell has arrived as an internationally acclaimed virtuoso. Three days before he appeared at the Metro station, Bell had filled Boston’s stately Symphony Hall, where merely pretty good seats went for $100. … He’s soloed with the finest orchestras here and abroad, but he’s also appeared on “Sesame Street,” done late-night talk TV, and performed in feature films. That was Bell playing the soundtrack in the 1998 movie “The Red Violin.” As composer John Corigliano accepted the Oscar for Best Original Dramatic Score, he credited Bell, who, he said, “plays like a god.”

The violin on which Joshua Bell performs is also given warranted attention in the article. It is one of the later ones made by Antonio Stradivari, in 1713. Bell acquired it a few years ago. “The price tag was reported to be about $3.5 million.”

What were the results of this marvelous experiment planned and carried out by the Washington Post? Some exquisitely beautiful music was performed on one of the finest musical instruments ever handcrafted, and by one of the greatest performers of our time! Oh, to have been there… but I wasn’t! (I keep a daily journal, and the entry for 1/12/07 includes reference to a dinner of stuffed pork chops in Campton, N.H.)

What did occur in the station?

The article reports that in the 43-minute performance (which was secretly videotaped), 1,097 people passed by. A more correct verb would be hurried by. Finally, after three minutes, one man showed some interest by slowing down slightly. Thirty seconds later, the first donation was tossed into the open violin case. At six minutes someone finally leaned against the wall to listen.

In the near 45 minutes there were seven people (of the 1,097) who stopped to pay attention. A total of 27 people provided money – a total of $52.17, including $20.00 from the one person who recognized Bell. “That leaves the 1070 people who hurried by, oblivious, many only three feet away, few even turning to look.”

The videotape recorded one incident that needs to be noted for this article. It was of one individual who wanted to stay and would have but for circumstances beyond his control. It was a child, age 3, whose hand was firmly held by his mother, and who was being whisked off to an appointment. He evidently was drawn to the music but was separated from it by a stronger force.

That’s a summary of what occurred. Is there a lesson from it? What implications might there be for professional music educators?

One challenge it posed for this reader was its direct assault on a professional conviction developed in 45 years of teaching. “Good music” is absolutely basic – and essential for the “pursuit of happiness.” Everyone has an inherent right to experience “high quality music,” whether through activity of creating or performing or listening to it. It is more than a right; it’s a basic need. And the need is there even when the individual does not (yet) realize it. Our responsibility as music educators is to provide opportunities for our students to fill that basic need.

I’ve also believed, perhaps naively, that excellence in works of music and art, even if not completely understood (by any of us!), is nonetheless recognized and appreciated. Excellence is what may give us pause when hearing or observing a masterwork in music, painting, sculpture, or architecture. My wife and I attended a funeral in a rural church in upstate New York last July. We arrived an hour early and waited in the church. Each of us separately was moved by the simplicity and beauty of the stained glass windows - though neither of us has much understanding of the creative process behind them. They caught our attention and held it for a time, like finding little jewels of inspiration in an unexpected location.

It would seem, however, that what occurred on that January morning during rush hour in that busy station in Washington demonstrates that recognition is not always the case. The Post article offers possible explanations as to the widespread ignorance of the passers-by. They were preoccupied and on tight schedules. The location was a major factor; one hardly would expect to find “great art” in such a public place. Perhaps a bigger problem is societal. We become increasingly anesthetized so that appreciation of beauty is becoming atrophied through disuse. Reference is made to John Lane’s book, Timeless Beauty: In the Arts and Everyday Life.

A common thread that runs through each of those explanations is suggested.

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Your Attention, Please

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by the title of this brief piece. It’s a challenge well known to every teacher. One has to have the attention of students before learning can occur. We know this from personal experience “on both sides of the lectern.” How easy it is to have the mind wander. I said, how easy it is to have the mind wander.

The challenge is particularly evident in non-performance classes, but it also occurs in ensemble rehearsals and, less so, in private studio teaching. Why is it that instructions have to be repeated? And then repeated again? Think of the time that could be saved (and devoted to other matters) if concepts and lessons were more quickly learned in the first place! When the teacher has the class’s attention, more learning takes place.

The story is told of a farmer who had a mule to sell. He advertised it as being a very intelligent animal, and it was indeed. Commanded to close the barn door, it obeyed; commanded to fetch a bucket of water, it did; commanded even to tap its age with its right foot, it succeeded! The farmer demonstrated this to a customer, who then paid $1,000 for the mule, took it home, and commanded it to close the barn door. Nothing happened. He commanded it to fetch the water bucket; the animal just stood there. As for tapping its age, not even a twitch. Angrily the man returned to the farmer to complain… who then returned with him, took a 2x4, gave the animal a swat, and then asked that the tasks be done. They were. “I don’t understand, said the incredulous customer. “It’s simple,” replied the farmer. “You first have to get his attention.”

We need to have strategies to recapture the attention of our students. Two-by-fours should only be used as a last resort.

First off, ca va sans dire, there should be conviction of the importance of what we’re saying! Don’t waste time with non-essentials!

Then consider the following. Change the vocal tone or inflection. (Sing?) Change the speaking tempo, (Slower is generally more effective than faster.) Launch into a foreign language (real or imitation). Use a visual aid of some sort. Move around. Repeat a statement slowly, verbatim. In giving an explanation, use the phrase, “Are you with me?” Be silent. Change the lighting. Appear to be about to write something (on the board or paper), but then don’t. Walk to the door as if someone knocked. Take a brief break. Remove a shoe. Suddenly stop in mid-sentence as if interrupted by something you’ve just seen out the window.

In summary, be creative and do something unexpected… within reason. It should recapture attention. And attention is the sine qua non of effective teaching.

Of the 1,097 people who may have been aware of the violinist playing in L’Enfant station, only 27 of them actually gave him their attention, to greater or lesser degree. That works out to about 2%.

If a virtuoso like Joshua Bell had that kind of minimal success in gaining attention in a public arena, shouldn’t we ourselves be able to do a litter better in the hallowed halls of academe?

Dr. Robert Swift is Professor of Music at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire.
Changing and Tuning a Concert Snare Drum Head

by David Ratliff

This article originally appeared in the May 2006 issue of Kentucky’s Bluegrass Music News. Reprinted with permission.

Before You Begin

Understanding the various characteristics of the instrument, including shell composition and depth, will help you achieve the desired sound from your concert snare drum. Generally speaking, drums with metal shells will most often produce a brighter sound, while drums with wooden shells will generally yield a warmer, darker sound. Also, the greater the drum’s depth, the warmer and fuller the sound will be. (Five inches is the standard depth.) Drums that are less than five inches in depth are called “piccolo” snare drums, and will generally produce a very bright and crisp sound. Drums that are deeper than five inches will produce a much deeper and fuller sound, and are appropriate to use if the music calls for a “field drum”.

You should know the difference in drum heads and the different sounds each will produce. For my taste, a great concert snare top head is the Evans Orchestral Staccato snare head (model number B14GCSS). For a concert snare bottom head, I suggest the Evans Orchestral 300 snare side head (model number S14GEN30).

Get some white lithium grease at a hardware store for use when you change the heads on any of your drums. This is an inexpensive way (about three dollars for a tube that will last for years) to keep the lugs well greased and in proper working order on all of your drums, as well as to enable smoother tuning.

Tuning the Batter (Top) Head

* After removing the old head, clean the bearing edge (the wooden edge of the drum on which the head sits) with a clean dry cloth to remove any dirt or debris. If there is an accumulation of foreign material on or around the bearing edge, dampen your cloth with lukewarm water. Allow the bearing edge to air dry completely before proceeding.

* Place the new head on the drum, taking care to ensure that the head is centered over the shell.

* Dip the tip of each lug (also called the “tension rod”) into the white lithium grease before placing it through the rim and into the lug casing. You only need to use a little grease on the tip, as the grease will spread across the entire lug as it is tightened.

* Using your fingers, tighten each lug until snug.

* Once each lug has been finger-tightened, use a drum key to tighten each lug one full turn using the “crisscross” method. This is the practice of tightening the lugs one at a time, moving across the drumhead in a “crisscross” pattern. The diagrams below show the order in which to tighten the lugs on both a drum with 10 lugs and a drum with 12 lugs. These are the most common configurations you will find today.

* Tighten the lugs until you reach a pitch of C or D. Double-check each lug to make sure the pitch is the same across the head by gently tapping the head with a snare drum stick approximately two inches in from each lug. Be sure to tap in a spot the same distance toward the center from each lug.

* Place your fingers in the center of the head and press down for 8 - 10 seconds. This helps the head stretch and get “seated” on the bearing edge. You may hear some crackling sounds, but don’t worry. This is just the glue “settling in”.

* Take your drum key and return to the “crisscross” pattern of tightening the lugs until the pitch of the head reaches the pitch G. There is a range of usable pitches, but I think that G works best for concert snare drums, as it allows for the most snare response at all dynamic levels.

Tuning the Snare (Bottom) Head

* Follow the same procedure as for the batter head. Don’t forget to grease the lugs!

* The major difference between tuning the batter and snare heads involves the tension of the head. The greater the tension on the head, the higher the pitch will be and the longer the snare response you will hear. Conversely, the looser the head, the lower the pitch and the longer the resulting snare response. Tighter snare heads are most commonly used for concert snare drums while looser snare heads are most commonly used for field drums.

Proper Tuning Technique for Snare Strainer

* Most concert drums come with a mechanism that allows for adjustment of the wire or gut snares that touch the bottom head.

* You want to make sure that the snares are touching the snare head all the way across the head, but particularly at either end of the snares. If your drum has a mechanism on both sides of the drum, this task will be easier, but it is also practicable with only one mechanism.

* With the drum on a snare drum stand, look up at the snares to see that they are touching the bottom head on each side. By tapping the snares while they are touching the bottom head, you can tell if the snares are actually touching the head, or if there is a slight space between the

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Concert Snare Drum Heads

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snares and the bottom head. The snares will make a popping sound if there is space but will remain quiet if there is not a space. If there is a slight space, adjust the snare strainer until the space is gone and the snares are in contact with the bottom head at all points.

Why Bother?

Proper maintenance and care for the drum heads, lugs and snares on your concert snare drum can make quite a difference in the quality of sound produced by the instrument. As with reeds and bows, drum heads will lose their resonance over a time and will need to be replaced. You should not wait until a drum head gets a hole in it or is broken to replace it. If the head on your drum is two or three years old, the chances are that the sound quality would be improved by a change of heads. You will be amazed at the difference that properly greased lugs and a high-quality, correctly tuned set of heads will make for your snare drum, and in turn for your band or orchestra.

The author teaches at Madison Middle School in Madison, Kentucky. You can contact him via e-mail at <david.ratliff@madison.kyschools.us>.

VSO Green Room Program Connects Professional Musicians with Students

by Kathy Archer

The Vermont Symphony Orchestra's Green Room Program was the brainchild of an ex-staff member, Diane Magras, and the ball she started rolling over four years ago is gathering momentum. Whereas many of the VSO’s SymphonyKids offerings are geared toward young students, the Green Room Program is designed for grades 8-12.

Once a school has been selected, the music teacher picks a limited number of students who are interested in going to a VSO concert. These students receive advance materials about the performance and performers, including a CD and free tickets. Then on the day of the concert, they have a meal beforehand at an area restaurant with musician mentors and have a chance to chat informally about all sorts of things, from what it’s like to be a professional musician to what bassoon solos to listen for. When feasible, the students get a backstage tour. Afterwards, they are asked to write a short "review" of their experience.

The student comments we got the first few times we did this program were so amazing, we knew we wanted to continue doing it. Here’s a sampling:

“I realize now that no recording can match the expression and energy of a live performance.”

“Talking with VSO members made me feel connected with the orchestra.”

“It may sound corny, but the Green Room Program made me want to do better in band and make as big of a contribution as I possibly can.”

This year for the first time we linked the Green Room Program with five of our “Made in Vermont” concerts. Students from Vergennes UHS, North Country UHS, Lake Region UHS, Woodstock HS, Randolph UHS, and Lyndon Institute were involved. One of the really special things about doing Green Room in conjunction with “Made in Vermont” was that the composer of our world premiere commission, Sara Doncaster, joined the students in several of the locations to talk about her new piece, “Rush Patrick’s Vision.” One of the participants commented, “She made it come alive before we even heard it.”

The VSO will present the Green Room Program for two sets of Burlington students this season as well; Hunt Middle School students will attend the December 1 Masterworks concert, and Edmunds Middle School students will attend the March 8 Masterworks concert. Funding for the Burlington portion of the 2007/2008 G.R.P. is provided by the Physicians’ Computer Company; funding for the “Made in Vermont” portion was provided by the Turrell Fund, Attorney Robert Chimileski, and the Warebrook Contemporary Music Festival. Many thanks to all of our generous sponsors for realizing that the future of live classical music lies with our young people!

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Student Self-Assessment

by Patricia Riley

Editor's Note: "Research Resource" is a regular column in this publication. Suggestions for future topics can be sent via e-mail to <Patricia.Riley@uvm.edu>.

Developing skills leading to lifelong music making has recently become a goal of the music education profession (Hewitt, 2005). According to Elliott, “an essential part of our [music educators] task is to teach students how to continue developing their musicianship in the future” (1995, p. 261). Goolsby states that “one of the primary goals of music education in general is musical independence... this goal in part translates to self-assessment” (1999, p. 34).

According to Barefield, “self-analysis is a basic component of artistic development” (2006, p. 50). Darrow, Johnson, Miller, and Williamson write that student “self-evaluation offers students an opportunity to put themselves at the center of the learning experience” (2002, p. 8). Burrack states that:

assessing student progress in terms of attendance and technical skills is important, but other assessment possibilities can provide opportunities to observe students' musical learning in a broader context by focusing on higher-order thinking skills, such as problem solving and creative thinking. Self and group assessments can serve as vehicles for enhancing musical understanding, aesthetic sensitivity, and critical-listening skills. (2002, p. 27)

The use of student self-assessment in music classes is discussed in several recent articles in the MENC publications, Music Educators Journal and Teaching Music. These articles include Asmus (1999), Barefield (2006), Burrack (2002), and Goolsby (1999). Research investigating self-assessment in middle school music-class settings includes Darrow, Johnson, Miller, and Williamson (2002) and Hewitt (2001, 2002); in middle and high school settings includes Hewitt (2005); and at the college undergraduate level includes Bergee (1993, 1997), and Bergee and Ceconi-Roberts (2002). This article summarizes these studies.

Darrow, Johnson, Miller, and Williamson investigated whether there is a “relationship between the musical proficiencies students believe they possess and their performance on achievement tests designed to assess those skills” (2002, p. 9). Participants were seventh-grade choral students. Measures were a written self-report questionnaire, a written music achievement test that evaluated musical knowledge, and a music performance test that evaluated accuracy in singing intervals and melodic patterns. Darrow et al. found a very high correlation between the self-report questionnaires (self-assessments), and the written achievement tests; and a less high correlation between the self-report questionnaires, and the music performance tests. Darrow et al. concluded that “students have a better comprehension of what they know than what they can do. However, it may be that training and practice in self-assessment will ameliorate some of students’ misperceptions and inaccuracies regarding their performance abilities” (2002, p. 10).

Hewitt (2001) studied “the effects that modeling, listening to oneself on audiotape (self-listening), and self-evaluation have on junior high school instrumentalists’ music performance and attitude about practice” (p. 309). The student performances were individually evaluated in the areas of tone, intonation, technique/articulation, melodic accuracy, rhythmic accuracy, tempo, and interpretation by three judges following each practice session. Hewitt’s (2001) study, student performances were individually evaluated in the areas of tone, intonation, technique/articulation, melodic accuracy, rhythmic accuracy, tempo, and interpretation by three judges. An adapted form of this measure, using language more suited to the age of the students, was used by the students for their self-evaluation. During the six-week study, there were two treatment groups: a model group, in which participants listened to a tape-recorded high-quality model of their performance piece before practicing the piece, and then completing the practice questionnaire; A self-listening group that listened to a tape-recorded example of themselves playing the performance piece before practicing the piece, and completing the practice questionnaire; a control group that listened to an unrelated piece before practicing the piece, and completing the practice questionnaire; a model/self-evaluation group that followed the procedures for the model group, but also completed the performance evaluation following each practice session; and a self-listening/self-evaluation group that followed the procedures for the self-listening group but also completed the performance evaluation following each practice session. Hewitt (2001) found no statistically significant differences in the self-evaluation groups than the non self-evaluation groups in performance quality or attitude toward practice. He did find that the model/self-evaluation group did better in the areas of tone, melodic accuracy, rhythmic accuracy, interpretation and overall performance than the model/no self evaluation group; and that the model groups performed better than the self-listening or control groups in the areas of tone, technique/articulation, rhythmic accuracy, tempo, interpretation, and overall performance.

Hewitt (2002) researched “the nature of junior high school instrumental music students’ self-evaluation tendencies over time;” “whether the process of self-evaluation, with or without the use of a model, has an effect on self-evaluation accuracy;” and whether “a relationship exists between self-evaluation accuracy and music performance achievement” (p. 217). As in the Hewitt (2001) study, student performances were individually evaluated in the areas of tone, intonation, technique/articulation, melodic accuracy, rhythmic accuracy, tempo, and interpretation by three judges. An adapted form of this measure, using language more suited to the age of the students, was used by the students for their self-evaluation. During the six-week study, there were two treatment groups: a model group, in which participants listened to a tape-recorded high-quality model of their performance piece before performing the pieces, and completing the self-evaluation; and a non-model group in which participants did not listen to a model, but performed the pieces and completed the self-evaluation. Hewitt
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Student Self-Assessment

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Bergee (1993) studied self-assessment of college-level brass jury performances, and compared these assessments to faculty and peer assessments of the same performances. A researcher-constructed Brass Performance Rating Scale was used to evaluate the performances, with the faculty assessing the students in live performances, and the students assessing their own and peer performances via videotape. Performances were assessed in the areas of interpretation/musical effect, tone quality/intonation, technique, and rhythm/tempo. Bergee found that faculty and peer assessments had a high correlation, but that faculty and peer assessments had a low correlation with the self-assessments. In a second study, Bergee (1997) expanded the scope to examine self-assessments of college-level voice, percussion, woodwind, and brass jury performances, and compared them to faculty and peer assessments of the same performances. As in the 1993 study, the researcher-constructed Brass Performance Rating Scale was used to evaluate the performances, with the faculty assessing the students in live performances, and the students assessing their own and peer performances via videotape; and the performances were assessed in the areas of interpretation/musical effect, tone quality/intonation, technique, and rhythm/tempo. The results in this second study were similar to the earlier study with faculty and peer assessments having a high correlation; and with faculty and peer assessments having a low correlation with the self-assessments. Additionally, Bergee (1997) found no significant differences in self-evaluation between the performance areas (voice, percussion, woodwind, string, brass), or between years of undergraduate experience.

In a two-part study, Bergee and Cecconi-Roberts (2002) examined “the effect of small-group peer interaction combined with peer feedback on undergraduate students’ ability to self-evaluate performance accurately” (part one); and whether “correlations among instructor, peer, and self-evaluations [are] affected by small-group peer interaction combined with peer feedback” (p. 258) (part two). During the first part of the study, in four sessions occurring over a two-week period, the experimental-group participants (brass, woodwind, string, and voice majors) performed solo pieces for a small group of peers, were video-taped, and evaluated themselves and their peers in the areas of interpretation/musical effect, tone quality/intonation, technique, and rhythm/tempo. In each session, after the self-evaluations were completed, the peer evaluations were shared with each participant. The culminating experience were the jury performances, which were self-evaluated and evaluated by expert judges. The control group participants (also brass, woodwind, string, and voice majors), engaged in no special activities, except to perform in their jury and self-evaluate their performance. Bergee and Cecconi-Roberts found that “correlations between self-evaluation and others’ evaluation suggested that the experimental group was able to self-evaluate somewhat more accurately than the control group, with the exception of tone” (2002, p. 260). Both groups most accurately self-assessed in the area of technique. Results for the second part of the study indicated that “a treatment consisting of small-group interaction combined with peer feedback seemed not to have a strong effect on self-evaluation skills” (Bergee and Cecconi-Roberts, 2002, p. 265); and, consistent with Bergee (1993, 1997), “the relationship between others’ evaluation and self-evaluation was not strong” (p. 266).

In conclusion, the summarized research indicates that student self-assessment does not correlate highly with peer and expert evaluation of performance skills at the middle school, high school or college undergraduate levels (Bergee 1993, 1997; Bergee & Cecconi-Roberts 2002; Hewitt 2001, 2002, 2005). At the middle school level, it appears that there is a higher correlation between self-report questionnaires and written music achievement tests, than self-report questionnaires and music performance tests (Darrow, Johnson, Miller, & Williamson, 2002); that students who self-assess and listen to a high-quality model perform better in the areas of tone, melodic accuracy, rhythmic accuracy, interpretation, and overall performance than those who listen to a model, but do not self-assess (Hewitt, 2001); and that student self-assessment scores increase over time (Hewitt 2002, 2005), but that self-assessment...
accuracy does not increase over time (Hewitt 2002). At the high school level, self-assessment scores do not increase over time; but are more accurate than middle school self-assessment scores in the areas of interpretation, intonation, technique/articulation, tempo, and tone (Hewitt, 2005). At both middle school and high school levels, student self-assessment was most accurate in the area of melody, and least accurate in the area of technique/articulation (Hewitt, 2005).

At the college undergraduate level, there was no significant difference in self-assessment between performance area (voice, percussion, woodwind, string, or brass), or between years of undergraduate experience (first year, second year, etc.) (Bergee, 1997); and the effects of small-group peer interaction may have somewhat positively impacted the ability of students to self-assess performance skills, but small-group interaction combined with peer feedback did not have a strong impact on self-assessment skills (Bergee & Cecconi-Roberts, 2002).

REFERENCES


Dr. Patricia Riley is the VMEA Research Chairperson. She is on the music faculty at the University of Vermont.

Notes from Reston

MENC PRESENTS 61ST NATIONAL BIENNIAL IN-SERVICE CONFERENCE

MENC’s 61st National Biennial In-Service Conference will be held April 9-13, 2008, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Renowned musical performers and speakers highlight the conference schedule. The “Milwaukee Showcase” on Wednesday, April 9 will feature the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra directed by Margery Deutsch and the Milwaukee Children’s Choir and Youth Chorale directed by Emily Holt Crocker. The Ahn Trio will bring their elegance and virtuosity to the Thursday, April 10 evening concert and “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band will perform Friday evening, April 11 with an additional performance on Saturday, April 12 with the student winners of the Marine Band Concerto Competition.

Featured General Session speakers include Sarah Jerome, president of the American Association of School Administrators; Colonel Michael J. Colburn, director of “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band; Steven Van Zandt, best known as Silvio Dante on The Sopranos and as guitarist for Bruce Springsteen’s E Street Band; and Andrea Peterson, the 2007 National Teacher of the Year.

In addition, the conference will feature educational sessions, industry workshops, technology labs, student performing groups from around the nation, and music industry exhibits.

Educators who register by February 15 receive the early bird rate and a chance to win free conference registration or two nights lodging. For registration information, call 800-828-0229 or visit <www.menc.org/nationalconference>.

The conference events will occur in downtown Milwaukee Hotel reservations can be made from MENC’s Web site or by calling Connections Housing (MENC’s housing company) at 1-800-262-9974, Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. est. Educators can book Midwest Airlines flights online at midwestairlines.com, by phone at 1-800-452-2022, or through an agent; use promo code CMZ1572 to save up to 12% off airfare. For more information about Milwaukee, visit <www.milwaukee.org>.
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PRESENTED BY DR. ALYN J. HEIM
Historical Perspective

by Glory L. Douglass

“I see my life in terms of music.”  
-Albert Einstein

Throughout the history of music education, advocacy has been a recurring theme due to the age-old question “Why music?” From Lowell Mason to John Dewey, from the Yale Seminar and Tanglewood to the Music Educators National Conference, we have seen a plethora of reasons for the need for advocacy. This paper is an attempt to answer the following questions. Why do music educators see the need to advocate for music education? What are the benefits of advocacy? What are the potential misuses of advocacy? What are some of the tools for advocacy at the state and local level for music educators? In order to understand advocacy, it would behoove music educators to look at past history and some of the types of advocacy that have come about.

One of the earliest and strongest advocates for music education was Lowell Mason (1792-1872), often referred to as the ‘Father of Music Education’. He advocated for vocal music to be a part of the elementary school curriculum in Boston, and in 1838, volunteered to work for one year in the school without a salary. At the end of that year, the school board accepted the idea of music becoming a part of the curriculum based on the following rationale: music is intellectually, morally, and physically good for children.

Mason could not have obtained this goal without the financial help and support of William Channing Woodbridge, a Boston businessman who wrote essays and gave lectures on the importance of music education. The news of Mason and Woodbridge’s work spread, and soon other schools were incorporating music in their curriculums which led to institutions of higher learning opening music programs to train music supervisors.

In the 1920s, John Dewey (1934) advocated for music and arts in the curriculum be taught by ‘trained’ music specialists. His feeling was that students would not achieve aesthetic experiences without the influence of music specialists. Dewey (1934) advocated for the arts to be part of the curriculum by stating: “The production of a work of art probably demands more intelligence than does most of the so-called thinking that goes on among those who pride themselves on being intellectuals” (p. 46). This writer assumes he is referring to all works of art including music performance or composition.

The world was rapidly changing through the twentieth century calling for reform in education. America was immersed in war, politics, the space age, economic and technological growth, and standardized testing that spoke mostly to science and math. Arts education in the public schools was teetering. Several writers, theorists, and philosophers offered up a collection of books and articles on the importance or value of music education. Although they do not always agree on everything, they do agree that music study should be made available in all schools, and taken as seriously as any other subject. But when did formal advocacy efforts begin and by whom?

During the 1960’s, formal advocacy efforts began with the Yale Seminar advocating for federal support for arts education development conferences and curricular changes, such as the inclusion of twentieth century music in elementary general music class. Around that time, The Tanglewood Symposium also advocated for curricular changes, such as the expansion of repertoire to include World Music, and the inclusion of composition, improvisation and technology in order for music education to stay viable in the public schools. The Music Educators National Conference was immersed in public relations.

Since then, MENC has emerged as a powerful organization that has continuously advocated for music education. Some of its contributions include the writing and endorsement of the National Standards and assessments of those standards, and their lobbying efforts at the national level for inclusion of the arts in any legislation. The National Standards are written to enable music educators around the country to design their programs in such a way that benefits all children.

Bennett Reimer (2005) points out that it is “the fundamental responsibility of education – to enable lives to be as full as they can possibly be” (p. 140). Music educators know that music is intrinsic and that the study of music encourages things like creativity, problem solving, teamwork, and self-discipline to name a few. Due to globalization and cross-civilization communication, some writers have advocated for the importance of music in cultural diversity. In the May 2007 issue of NEA Today, Wynton Marsalis states, “It's more important than ever that we have a sense of our identity. We need a generation of diplomats who understand and take pride in our culture and can share it with others” (p. 27). The music education community is clearly aware of the importance of advocacy, particularly when budget cuts occur. So, what are some of the misuses or dangers of advocacy for music education?

Reimer (2005) goes on to say that “advocacy efforts have a way of replacing self-examination” (p. 140). In other words, music educators need to examine their own beliefs. They need to ask whether they are doing what they do to obtain what they are advertising. Reimer suggests that music educators are insecure. He advises them to ‘look inward’ and examine themselves. He argues that if music educators examine what they are teaching and align it with what cultures need and expect, there will be less need for advocacy. Wayne Bowman (2005) states, “The need for advocacy often stems from educational failings” (p. 125). He reminds us that “advocacy is a political undertaking, not a philosophical one” (Bowman, 2005, p. 126). Promises are made that are not kept. While the value of music is important, he reminds the reader that it is the educational value that is more important. That is to say, the meaning of music and the meaning it has in people’s lives is the key issue. Information put in the wrong hands could ‘mis-educate’.

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Advocacy

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Another misuse or danger is when a study is put forth to the public that misleads by way of misconstrued data, such as the study referred to as The Mozart Effect. Reimer (1999) warns music educators to stop justifying music education with research of this nature and get back to the real meaning of music. He goes on to say, “We have learned that musical doing, thinking, and feeling are essential ways in which humans make contact with, internalize, express, critique, and influence their cultural contexts” (Reimer, 1999, p. 43).

Constance Gee (2002) reminds music educators that they “do not teach music to raise SAT scores” (p. 18). Elliot Eisner (1998) also warns educators to advocate for what is ‘truly distinctive’ about the arts. He goes on to say, “We do the arts no service when we try to make their case by touting their contributions to other fields” (Eisner, 1998, p. 15). Music educators and their advocates should not misinform the public. Therefore, it is important for them to ‘do their homework’.

As much good as MENC has done for music education, this writer feels they, too, must be careful of how they use their research and their slogans. Hopefully they will continue their quest to advocate for music educators and to continue their research in order to well-educate the public, particularly the “powerful” public. Michael Mark (2005) claims that “we cannot expect our policymakers, at least not all of them, to understand why the work that we do as music educators is important to our students, our communities, our nation, and to civilization” (p. 95). He goes on to say, “public policy is formulated on the basis of accurate knowledge and informed judgment” (Mark, 2005, p. 95).

‘No Child Left Behind’ is a document that boasts every child will have equal access and equal opportunity to learn and become a well-rounded citizen. Hence, the assumption is made that the arts will be part of any curriculum and equal access and opportunity will be given to all students. The good news is American education has included music in the curriculum for many years. Music educators must be complacent until they are faced with budget cuts. Then they turn to music advocacy to save their programs and their jobs. Music advocacy must be a continuing process through communication rather than a justification for its existence in the school curriculum.

Estelle Jorgensen (2003) stresses the importance of an institution like MENC, but reminds educators to improve their skills as politicians. This writer would advocate that educators understand what needs to be advocated and the best approach to advocate. More importantly, music educators should develop their own philosophy of music education, and be sure curriculum and methods of teaching follow it. Develop a community dialogue of what is ‘unique’ about music and what the ‘value’ of a music education is. And, if the political sense of advocacy is too intimidating to the educator, he/she might find a more articulate advocate within the community.

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Advocacy

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Gee (2002) states, “The number one critical success factor is: The Community – broadly defined as parents and families, artists, arts organizations, businesses, local civic and cultural leaders and institutions” (p. 10). Charles Fowler (1995) makes a strong statement through his book titled Strong Arts Make For Strong Schools. If a school is strong through a strong arts program, there will be no need for advocacy. While this sounds great, advocacy still needs to be tended to. No one can predict the financial future of a community.

Arts programs are still being cut, and education mandates are still being passed down. The May 2007 issue of NEA Today presents views from various business people, educators, and professional artists. They each have their own view of the future of education. Some still talk about economics and technology. Others talk about the importance of the arts, lifelong learning, cultural diversity, and the fostering of the democratic spirit. Al Gore (2007) states, “We must repair the systemic decay of the public forum and create new ways to engage in a genuine conversation about our future” (p. 27).

In the present and the future, music educators should look at advocacy as a critical element of any music program in public education rather than just in times of crisis. They must develop strong alliances with their community and know the viable research that can support the question, “Why music?” They must return to the days of Lowell Mason who advocated music education through his own teaching, with the help and support of William Channing Woodbridge, a powerful ally.

REFERENCES


Noteworthy on the Web

Grants and More

by Sandi MacLeod

Teachers often ask me where they can find grant money to support technology for the music room. Here are three online resources that keep you abreast of the news and provide grant listings. Two are educational technology focused and the other is our Vermont Arts Council’s ARTMAIL. Subscriptions to all three are free and easy to obtain.

Edutopia is a magazine available in print copy or on the web. Both are free. Subscribe at <www.edutopia.org/edutopia/enews>. The e-newsletter comes in three specific areas: Edutopia News, Project-Based Learning, and Technology in Education. You can subscribe to one, two, or all three. The e-newsletters arrive in your inbox once a week. The print copy is monthly. While the focus is not specifically music related, it’s fascinating to read about highlighted projects. The topics are varied, interesting, and relevant. In the past week, I read about a multimedia rich elementary school, etiquette for school e-mail, organizing and filtering your e-mail, online calendars, and a project in Boston where schools broadcast their events with support from cable access TV. The grants listing is near the bottom of the page. Edutopia is published by GLEF, the George Lucas Educational Foundation.

www.eSchoolNews.com is another general educational technology resource with grant information. While they attempt to get you to subscribe – for a fee – to the huge funding database, the articles about how to seek and write grants are most valuable. They list a few current grant opportunities. Like Edutopia, this newsletter is for educational technology at a broad level, but the topics are fascinating. Recent issues featured: teaching effectively with computers, enriching education through digital sharing, and new technology tools for schools. There are several featured video clips each issue and a wide listing of businesses with an educational tech focus. Hint: this newsletter is delivered daily, so you might not want to subscribe for delivery, but rather check in at times when you have an interest or need. If you want to begin with one resource, go for Edutopia. It’s easier to view and only arrives twice a month.

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Executive Board Minutes from May 10 and June 12, 2007

by Cindy Hall

VMEA EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES
MAY 10, 2007
EAST SIDE RESTAURANT - NEWPORT

Present: Gary Moreau, Patricia Riley, Matt Tatro, Allyson Ledoux, Glory Douglass, Bear Irwin, Cindy Hall, Tom Heintzelman, Chris Rivers, Steffen Parker, Susan Cherry

Meeting called to order at 5:15 PM

Welcome and Introductions

Gary thanked the Board for everything they have done during his tenure as President. He introduced Research Chair Pat Riley from UVM.

Secretary's Report

Motion to accept January minutes as printed: Matt Tatro. Second: Tom Heintzelman. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report

Gary read Paul's report sent via email.

Paul reported that he is very impressed with Denis's work on the journal and his achievement of getting the Journal budget so far in the black.

Current balance including $6,947.89 magazine funds: $12,647.61. Current VMEA balance without magazine funds: $5,699.72.

Motion to pay music librarian's stipend: Matt Tatro. Second: Glory Douglass. Motion approved.

Motion to accept treasurer's report: Matt Tatro. Second: Chris Rivers. Motion approved.

President Elect report

Tom reported that people have asked for advocacy materials to help out at budget time. MENC has some great resources on all topics. Tom asked the Board if it would be appropriate to make that announcement at the All State meeting. The Board agreed that it was.

Briefly discussed the tiered fee system soon to come for All State. It will be voluntary for the 2007/2008 and required starting the next year.

Editor's report

Gary read Denis's submitted report.

June issue is 52 pages and contains 13 articles on literature.

Journal made a net profit of roughly $2000 for the year.

Ad rates will stay the same. Contact Denis if you know of other ad sources.

Denis needs a proofreader; contact him if interested.

Deadline for September issue is July 15. Denis will need an updated teacher directory by August 1.

Look at yahoo group and bring feedback to next meeting. <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/vtmea>

Feels January to May too long to go without a meeting and it would be good to schedule all of next year's meetings now.

District III Report

Allyson reported that the district had successful MS and HS festivals in February.

District IV Report

Chris reported that District IV had a good year. They are currently in the process of making a decision about the jazz festival location, as they are being priced out of Chandler Hall.

District V Report

Matt reported that his district had successful festivals. He is finished with his District Chair role this year. Marc Whitman is moving to the Intermediate School.

District VI Report

Tom reported that the festivals went well and they are balancing the checkbook.

Technology Chair Report

Gary read Sandi's submitted report.

Thursday June 21 is the Spring Technology Workshop at Hartford HS. Sandi asked for publicity and for Board members to talk it up.

The Music and Multimedia Summer Institute will happen at Castleton.

A new column for the journal is in the works - websites of interest.

Research Chair Report

Pat reported that she will be bringing two research people to the conference in two different areas.

She will also be doing a “Research Resource” column for the journal.

Conference Chair Report

Allyson gave a detailed update on the conference.

The St. J venue will be great. Wonderful space.

Still concerned about people making the trek to St. J and asked the Board to talk it up.

Tables will be available at no expense to VMEA.

Lunch has been planned and will be excellent.

Rooms have been set aside at the Comfort Inn for clinicians.

Working with the Chamber of Commerce to offer discounted rates on St. J attractions such as the Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium.

Betzi is looking for directors to loan arrangements of good music for the reading session.

No children's choir - conference attendees will be the audience for the reading session. Christina Toner will conduct it.

Still no string sessions

Asked if putting info in neighboring state's journals was worthwhile - Board decided it's not.

Allyson has a lot of material for the website.

St. Michael's is interested in holding the Conference there. It could bounce around between St. Mike's, Castleton and UVM in the future.

Board checked the new registration form, and stipend/expenses sheet.

Looked at schedule of sessions.

Matt suggested sending flyers to MusiCraft in addition to Ellis. He also asked if we can request certain topics be covered for the Dept. of Ed session.

Advocacy was suggested as a good roundtable discussion - Steffen will moderate.

Matt asked why we weren't doing the children's choir this year - too many cumbersome logistics to make it feasible and worthwhile.

Matt suggested we ask Troy Peters to do a presentation on the VYO trip to China. Perhaps he would also like to do another presentation and/or bring a small chamber group to perform.

Chris requested that Allyson send an attachment about the Conference to District Chairs to send out to their memberships.

The Board thanked Allyson for her work.

All State Director's Report

Steffen reported that finding enough adjudicators remained a problem, as is correct and timely filing of paperwork by music teachers. Of the

Advocacy

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Glory Douglass teaches vocal music at Essex High School.

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2008 Music Festivals

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2008 INVITATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVALS
60 schools sending students to auditions 5 sent in complete forms on time. There are a few small financial issues due to a lack of communication.

The VMEA participation requirement will be a big issue at the meeting.

May stick to the one-concert format even if festival is in a central location.

Steffen spoke a bit about wearing the same people out every year. Asked the Board to take a more hands-on approach with policy dictation.

The choral committee had discussed a recommendation that every teacher has to adjudicate at least once every three years. Susan asked about getting elementary teachers to adjudicate if they were comfortable. Steffen added that we already do that in several cases.

Gary added that the VMEA membership requirement will help a lot with communication, as everyone will get the journal.

Matt suggested Steffen send a list of schools/teachers not doing what they need to and have the Board deal with it.

Gary suggested a special meeting where Steffen can elaborate on details as to how we can help with the All State process.

MATT spoke about discussions he has heard regarding lack of attendance (the public) at All State parades. Some communities turn out better than others.

Past President’s Report
Bear reported a positive response to his T.O.Y email. In the past, nominations have been hard to come by. The email generated 15 responses.

Chris and Allyson asked about the email leaving out the VMEA membership requirement. Bear responded that it was deliberate - we can get back to nominees and suggest membership.

Susan asked if the nomination requests go to principals. It would be a good way for them to have an opportunity to participate in the process.

President’s Report
Gary asked that we update the music teacher roster. District chairs should get all changes into Cindy Hall ASAP.

VAAE received the grant for which we partnered with them. Anne Taylor would like us to contribute some funds to help out with the advocacy poster that was created as part of the grant. Matt cautioned that we are having trouble funding scholarships as it is. Do we have money to support this? We are on the poster as a partner.

It is. Do we have money to support this? We are on that we are having trouble funding scholarships as that was created as part of the grant. Matt cautioned some funds to help out with the advocacy poster Cindy Hall ASAP.

roster. District chairs should get all changes into an opportunity to participate in the process.

principals. It would be a good way for them to have responded that it was deliberate - we can get back by teacher who signs off.

VMEA EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES JUNE 12, 2007 HARWOOD UHS

Meeting began at 2:10.

Members present: Allyson Ledoux, Glory Douglass, Chris Rivers, Gary Moreau, Paul Rondinone, Steffen Parker, Matt Tatro, Ron Sherwin, Bear Irwin, Tom Heinzelman, Cindy Hall, Susan Cherry Conference Chair Report
Allyson reported that Troy Peters will do a string workshop.

Allyson inquired about website - Steffen will work on update. Allyson would like schedule grid and bullet for exhibitors.

Treasurer’s Report
Current VMEA Balance: $6,193.27.

Paul suggested using Journal money if we need it. Matt announced that Beth Winter is new District V president. Matt is sitting in on this meeting for her.

Connie Wilcox - District VI president.

Presidents Report
1. Gary - Denis put together the “Sonata Fund.” Gary passed around a proposal bulletin to look at.

2. Gary has just been elected as a full member of the VAAE Board. He has resigned his position on the advisory council. Allyson is willing to take over the advisory council position.

3. All paperwork for new All State fees (letters/database) has just been finished. It will go out next week. Gary will email everyone a copy of letter - it goes to all principals and to at least one but usually all music teachers at each school. It will be a lot of bookkeeping. Invoices are needed. Follow-up is needed. He is looking for someone to take that over.

Chris asked how VPA goes about collecting school fees. They send invoice around July 15.

Glory proposed that Gary, as past president, do it with Glory’s assistance. Gary agreed. The primary reason to do this is for Festival Director’s stipend.

Paul reminded the Board that our total income for year can be $25,000 before we have to change our status with IRS.

Paul suggested the fee cover all festivals. Matt is not for it. It adds one more fee for MS to participate in a festival.

Participation means “ability/opportunity to apply.”

Gary reminded the Board that we are one of two states in country that don’t require state association membership to participate in All State, districts, etc.

Chris felt we should make all of this happen all at the same time and not keep “stirring the pot.”

Paul wondered if the home-school association could pay the fee and all home-school kids go through that. We could also have a very low participation fee for home-schoolers.

Glory asked if home-schoolers could go through the local public school. Steffen added that we did that for several years but many public school teachers don’t want to be responsible for kids they don’t know.

Steffen feels the system works fine for home-schoolers now, but we have to be equitable with the fee and membership. They should find an MENC member who will sign off for the student. Transportation/chaperoning would not be required by teacher who signs off.

Paul felt we should leave it the way it is now except also charge a small participation fee. Don’t require MENC membership.

Motion to charge home-schoolers a $10 participation fee for All State participation: Paul Rondinone. Second: Matt Tatro. Motion passed.

Motion that with the mailing we include information on required billing for each school, and a clearly worded mandate that all teachers sending students to All State be MENC members: Chris Rivers. Second: Paul Rondinone. Motion passed.

Matt would be very uncomfortable including district participation in this.

Steffen asked at what point in the calendar does the teacher have to be a member?

Gary mentioned that New Hampshire does all of their renewals the same month for everyone. They have a deal through MENC where dues are paid to the association. The executive board does the paperwork. We have time to consider doing that.

“Music is moonlight in the gloomy night of life.” - Jean Paul Richter

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Glory agreed with Matt that this should just be an All State thing.

Gary will update the letter and send it out to the Executive Board. He asked that the Board reply quickly.

Allyson suggested including a hard copy of the MENC application in the envelope to teachers.

Tom clarified that the letter will say “as of July 1 2008” for both fee and membership.

4. Sandi sent a flyer about the Hartford MIDI workshop.

ALL STATE DISCUSSION

Gary reiterated that he has always operated under the idea that our Board was ready to help when Steffen needed it. Now is the time.

Steffen is asking for help or input on the following:

DEADLINES

INFORMATION (how much to collect and penalties for missing or late info)

FUNDING

HELP (getting a broader spectrum of teachers to help with the process)

Steffen has the impression that the open door policy we have for forms, etc is frustrating for people involved.

If there will be deadlines, there needs to be clearly enforceable deadlines. That might result in students not participating, which will lead to litigation.

Right now there is a late fee for missing a deadline, but no other penalty. Teachers can add students anytime. Not knowing how many will show up at the door is stressful.

Gary stated that we won’t continue to have problems long, once penalties start being assessed.

At the All State meeting, Gisele made a motion that there be a one week window between an email from Steffen and a firm deadline.

Tom suggested having an agreement letter accompany the participation fee, stating that they will adhere to deadlines and dealing with any ramifications of not doing so is their responsibility.

Matt is leery of that because some parents will bypass the teacher and go right to the top. Some teachers won’t send kids because of the risk of being sued.

Tom suggested that the Executive Board could make calls - divvy up schools. Tell them that they have 3 days to postmark missing stuff.

Steffen has been reluctant to call principals because he is calling as a colleague.

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Steffen has been reluctant to call principals because he is calling as a colleague.

Chris agreed that we should divvy up calls. Call both the teacher AND the principal. It would be a duty we would share as Executive Board.

Is there a drop-dead point?

Cindy suggested that there should be a log of when calls were made and to whom.

VPA used to pay for lawyers. Their lawyer became more involved in our handbook writing. It cut way down on litigation.

To Steffen, sending incomplete forms means didn’t make the deadline.

Who makes the decisions - the All State meeting body or Executive Board? Under VPA guidelines it was Friday morning group. VPA didn’t want to dictate details - which scales, etc.

Now that All State is under VMEA, a participatory Executive Board makes it different. Steffen would hate to take the process away from the Friday morning group.

Gary feels their work should be advisory.

Matt asked whether if one form incomplete, does that cancel out other forms so no one can participate.

What info do we really need on forms?

We have it down to bare minimum.

Compensation for conductors:

One conductor won’t come for the $1000. He asks $1500. We can’t pay the band conductor differently from other conductors, and once it goes to $1500, we can’t go back.

$1500 is the national standard. To do this it would cost $2250 more. Based on the last few years, that would put us in the red.

Motion to raise both the audition fee and the student participation fee by $5: Chris Rivers. Second: Bear Irwin. Motion passed.

Motion to take $1 from each audition fee and designate it to scholarship fund: Steffen Parker. Second: Matt Tatro. Motion passed.

That would generate $1300.

How to get broader spectrum of teachers to help with process:

Gary - when all teachers are required to be members, they may feel it is important to be part of it.

Paul inquired about having just one adjudicator in rooms. We need two for equity and bias issues.

At the All State meeting we said we’d collect the student fee has been $20 the last few years.

Amendment: Students be assessed an additional $5 for jazz or scholarship auditions, and festival fees for all participants be increased by $5: Chris Rivers. Second: Bear Irwin. Motion passed.

Motion to take $1 from each audition fee and designate it to scholarship fund: Steffen Parker. Second: Matt Tatro. Motion passed.

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Paul inquired about having just one adjudicator in rooms. We need two for equity and bias issues.

At the All State meeting we said we’d collect names and create a database.

Who sets policy for All State?

Matt - The Executive Board should because we meet more regularly. We take recommendations from the bigger group.

Anything that involves direct policy should come back to the Executive Board for a vote.


The Board thanked Gary Moreau for his service.

Cindy Hall is VMEA Secretary. She teaches music at Oxbow High School.
Performance Practice

by Jerry Tyson

This article originally appeared in the spring 2006 issue of Pennsylvania’s PMEA News. Reprinted with permission.

For nearly 40 years I have had the privilege of recording county, district, regional and All-State festival concerts and I have thoroughly enjoyed seeing the level of music quality go up consistently. In that time I have seen two, and now the beginning of a third generation of musicians go through the program. It is a real kick to hear a director say: “You were recording these concerts when I was in high school.” Actually, it is more like a kick in the head when I realize that much time has gone by!

We have seen incredible changes in that time. We don’t record on open reel tape and we don’t make LP records or 8-track tapes any more. Most of today’s young musicians wouldn’t know what to do with them if we did! The music played and sung has had a completely different repertoire added to what we heard back then, using different techniques, electronics and every innovation imaginable to create today’s concerts.

Unfortunately, we have seen another thing in more recent years that I find very troubling. Being at a loss to do anything about it personally, I am going to the only place I know in hopes of getting a few ears to listen, or in this case, eyes to read and make a difference. I know this is “preaching to the choir” to a large degree, but here goes.

The type of music performed at most school, college, church and community band, orchestra, and chorus “formal” concerts is a far cry from what is listened to at home, in the car or in the headphone zone of today’s music consumer. Today’s music listener/buyer far too often is listening to noise bellowed by a “vocalist” who seems to be trying to vent the pain of appendicitis more than the words of a singable song. The popular culture has given us rap that usually has no musical content, but can incite to riot. Rock bands play to filled stadiums and create an “event” frequently devoid of legitimate music, at least not the kind you could hum or for which there is a recognizable melody. Music, good or bad, played on Musak in restaurants seems designed only to mask the belching. Untrained audiences have forgotten that they are at your concert to listen respectfully.

At your school concert, “fans” scream, hoot and yell as a friend enters the stage; then while you are working hard to present your concert, they create a secondary program in the audience that makes it hard for others to hear. They show little or no respect for the efforts of the performers. It is no different than a football game or a rock concert in a stadium and the problem has spread to such august venues as Carnegie Hall.

Several concerts we have recently recorded have been totally ruined by parents who bring small children who cannot sit still or be quiet for two hours. An infant cannot be expected to be quiet that long when tympani crash and trumpets blare. Then, just when the music begins to soothe Junior’s nerves, the audience applauds. Again the infant is traumatized, and with it, the whole audience is subjected to its fussing or worse. I do not blame the child. I blame the parent who should have gotten a baby sitter!

So, teachers of music, what can you do? What is the purpose of this ranting?

This: Teachers of music need to rise to a new challenge and add another dimension to the curriculum. I am suggesting you actively educate your audiences. Oh, I know, you have had the page added to the program that tells the audience about good concert etiquette. That is great. Keep it up. There are still a few people in your audience who can read, so someone will learn something and maybe even act upon it.

I am afraid you will need to take it to a higher level if we hope to have anything salvageable in a few years. My suggestions are these: Prepare your students by teaching what is proper concert decorum. Help them understand why their obnoxious friends are just that.

Have students do an exercise in deciding what people should do or know about a concert before they come. Instead of being a classroom assignment, make it a homework assignment. Maybe their parents may be brought into the discussion and may learn something. If you have had a bad concert experience, use it as a springboard for teaching and discussion.

For district, regional, county and state festival concerts, add comments about what is expected of the audience in the introductory info and music packet that would normally go home with the participating students.

Firmly ask parents to get baby sitters. Some will still bring their little ones. Make a comment like, “Please take your child out the moment he begins to fuss. He will not remember missing the concert, but those who purchase the recording will never forget he was here.”

Mention your expectations at the beginning of the concert. A student announcer may be the most effective in this respect.

Adapt your conducting style to hold the audience at bay at the end of movements and the end of the piece. We can only hope this will curb their desire to clap at the first quarter note rest.

Don’t hesitate to stop conducting when people are destroying your concert. Wait for them to get the message. If they are “slow” to catch on, turn around and glare at them. They may as well be embarrassed. They have already embarrassed themselves, but they just don’t know it.

If you are recording your concert and there is an audience problem, a musical “derailment,” a fire siren, or some other serious problem that would affect the quality of your recording, go back and do that piece as an encore. Explain why you are doing this to the audience and they will probably applaud your decision!

Do I have to mention cell phones, beepers and pagers? Some may innocently forget about them. Others don’t care. Either one can ruin the delicate part of the concert you worked hardest.

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Keene State College is a comprehensive public liberal arts college offering 36 major programs of study. Of the 5,127 full- and part-time students, more than 110 major or minor in music. The College is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the prestigious National Association of Schools of Music.

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Vitalize Your Vibrato

By Margaret Baldridge

This article originally appeared in the January 2006 issue of Cadenza, Montana’s music education journal. Reprinted with permission.

Every year when the University of Montana hosts the UM High School Orchestra Festival, I present hour-long sessions throughout the day with the violin and viola students who attend. This year I saw more than 400 of the 700-plus students who came to the festival, and the topic of my sessions was vibrato. I had never attempted to teach vibrato to groups of sixty or more students at a time. I guessed that some of the more advanced students might feel their vibrato was great and find the session less than valuable. However, I knew that I would have their undivided attention for the better part of an hour and felt it was important for all the students to hear and learn more about vibrato.

The word vitalize means “to make confident, to encourage, to bolster, to animate”. These are all great words for expressing what vibrato should do to the music, and how it should sound. I polled each class as they came in to what they thought about their own vibrato. Most of the students in attendance those two festival days had no vibrato, and some hadn’t thought about using vibrato. To my surprise, even the most advanced students were not satisfied with their vibrato, which helped confirm my topic choice was probably correct.

Before we expect our students to add vibrato to their palette of technique, there are some basic principles of vibrato that our students need to know and remember:

- If not used regularly, vibrato will not improve. Even the most elemental vibrato needs to be used so that students get used to thinking about it and incorporating it into their whole technique.
- The motion of vibrato is backwards (toward the nut), from the written note to a lower pitch.
- The knuckle closest to the fingertip needs to be flexible to allow for this backward motion.
- The left thumb and first finger base knuckle need to be relaxed and free from squeezing the neck of the violin to facilitate a smooth vibrato motion.

Once the students understand these basic principles, they need to be taught which parts of their arm come into play. Vibrato can come from the arm, the hand or wrist, or the finger. As our students become advanced players we hope they will combine motion from all three areas in their playing, but at the beginning they will need to concentrate on developing the motion in just one area.

We all have our favorite ways of introducing vibrato to our students. I have found that the "Viva Vibrato" method book, by Gerald Fischbach and Robert Frost, applies many of the traditional ways of teaching vibrato through rhythms and the use of a metronome but does so with fun songs and helpful photographs. I used ideas from this book in my sessions with the festival participants. After working the vibrato motion with rhythms on all fingers in third position, both on and off the finger board, those students who had no vibrato motion when they walked into the classroom left with a better understanding of the physical action required for vibrato and some new ways of practicing it.

As our students develop this new skill we must remind them to use it in the following situations:

- Vibrato should be used through shifts. Sometimes students stop vibrating before and after shifts. They may need frequent reminders that their bows need to keep moving through the shift and that the shifting finger needs to release the string as the hand shifts.
- Vibrato needs to be used on short notes such as eighth notes and accented notes. Students need to be convinced that there is time to use vibrato in these situations. The vibrato enhances an accent by giving the note added emphasis.
- Different widths and speeds of vibrato used together with dynamics give music a more expressive quality.

I encourage you to prompt your students to think about vibrato and encourage them to use it, even in the early stages. It will only enhance the sound of your ensembles and help the students to develop as more advanced musicians.

It requires an incredible number of man hours between students and teachers to bring a concert to the stage. There is no reason for people to destroy your efforts. At least not without all of us giving them a good fight!

Jerry Tyson is the owner of AMP Recording & Duplicating Service and a long time sustaining member of PMEA.
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Stories from the Classroom

by David Killam

The following story was included in Mr. Killam’s book. It is reprinted here with permission from the author.

“Do you really think he has the ability?” asked Mrs. Goldman. “Neither his dad nor myself play, you know, although we certainly do lead a cultured lifestyle.” She cocked her head in a way that might have been fetching if she were still twenty-two... but she was plainly not still twenty-two.

“But we both enjoy music,” she continued, “thoroughly embrace it and know the moment we hear a wrong note.”

“Oh, yes, I’m sure he has the ability,” answered Mr. Perk. “He has a quick memory, a good ear, and I note he’s really good with his hands.”

“But I mean musical ability,” persisted the woman, gesturing with her pince-nez. “Of course we know he’s quick and clearly of superior intelligence, but how can you be so sure he’s musical?”

“Well,” responded Mr. Perk, “he certainly sings well and with flawless intonation.”

“And what’s intonation? Is that something important musically, like knowing when there’s a wrong note?”

“Well yes and no, ma’am, it’s just a keen sense of when the note is perfectly in tune, not sharp or flat.”

“Oh well, yes, of course he’d be good at that. He’s certainly sharp enough. As I just said, both his father and I know immediately when we hear a wrong note, and you know some of this modern contemporary stuff is just full of wrong notes.” She cocked her head again.

Mr. Perk put aside his strong inclination to defend dissonance as not necessarily wrong, but out of concern for Andy veered in a different direction.

“Yes, Mrs. Goldman, I’m sure he has the musical ability, but I’m sure you’re a better judge of his self-discipline and work habits than I. Does he follow through on tasks at home? Does he generally finish what he starts? Does he keep at it even when the going gets tough?”

Ability

“His work habits are fine, just fine,” vowed Mrs. Goldman, with perhaps a shade more emphasis than merited, “but of course they’d have to be. We insist on it, especially his father. No sloughing off in our household, we insist on that, so if you’re sure he’s capable and we’re not jeopardizing good money, I guess we’ll rent the instrument for the trial three months anyway. Now do you think an hour and a half a day will be adequate?”

“Actually Mrs. Goldman, that would be pushing a bit much. Initially young lips aren’t up to anywhere near an hour of pressure on a brass mouthpiece. It’s more important at the start to set specific goals and regular routines concentrating on correct procedures. Practice time can be increased as reasonable goals demand it.”

“Oh, we intend to cooperate fully,” expostulated both the woman and her eyebrows. “We certainly will demand it.”

But while all this interchange was taking place, Andy stood mesmerized, gazing at the trumpet. The gleam in his eyes matched the sheen of the new instrument.

“What do you think, Andy,” interposed Mr. Peck, “do you think you’ve got the stick-to-it-iveness?”

“I hope maybe,” responded Andy tentatively, “but how do you make it work? I blew in it and nothin’ happened.”

“No, of course not,” answered the teacher, picking up quickly on this. “It takes more than blowing. Can you purse your lips and buzz them like this?”

Mr. Perk demonstrated.

“Oh, oh my!” exclaimed Mrs. Goldman, “I certainly hope he doesn’t have to make nasty noises like that. In our house we call those bathroom noises, and they’re strictly forbidden.”

“Not to worry, Mrs. Goldman, that’s only at the beginning in order to learn how to produce a tone.”

“Well, I should certainly hope so... and how about that awful spit thing? He doesn’t really have to use that, does he? Can’t he just be careful not to spit into it in the first place? After all, one of the main reasons we’d like to have him learn to play is the way it immediately puts one in a higher class of people, certainly not the kind who spit.”

Again, not to worry,” responded Mr. Perk, involuntarily flinching. “I don’t suppose I’ll ever get the kids to stop calling that a spit valve, but it doesn’t really eject spit at all, and the proper name is ‘water key’. The water released is actually condensation caused merely by warm breath coming in contact with not-so-warm metal. I assure you, Mrs. Goldman, none of us spit in our instruments.”

“And another thing,” the woman cut in, “his dad’s made us really curious about another thing. How do you get all the different notes when there’s only three buttons on top? When I took a couple of piano lessons once, I had way more keys than I could keep track of, but now this looks as if he won’t have enough. For this much money, couldn’t they have put on a couple more?”

“I assure you three are all he’ll ever need,” answered Mr. Perk, inwardly feeling as if he were being asked to impart his entire musical education in this mere introductory session. “The lips and breath get involved too,” he added, “I assure you, with Andy’s keen ear, three valves will be plenty, so we’ll see him Monday for a first lesson,” then aside to Andy, “and until then the more buzzing on the mouthpiece the better, Andy, but maybe you’ll want to choose a spot to do it where you know you won’t be annoying anyone.”

Andy nodded conspiratorially, picked up the instrument, and guided his mother away. She sashayed a bit as she left.

Mr. Perk wiped his brow and crossed his fingers. He wasn’t at all sure of Mr. or particularly Mrs. Goldman’s ability to recognize a wrong note. It seemed as if she’d missed several already.

Three months later, Andy gave up and turned in the trumpet. He still had the ability... but apparently there were times when that wasn’t quite enough.

Retired from over 35 years of teaching, David Killam resides in Columbia, N.H., where he formerly also served as school board member.
In Memorium

Matt Clancy


Matthew was born on Nov. 19, 1970, and was raised in Fanwood, N.J. Matt leaves behind his wife of 15 years, Emily Marie Clancy of Danville, a twelve-year old son, Ryan Edward, and a ten-year old daughter, Shaylyn Marie.

A musician, composer and teacher, Matthew was the instrumental music director for the Danville School since 2005. In 1992, Matthew received his bachelor of music degree in music education from the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio. From 1992 through 1996, he was the instrumental music director for the Blue Mountain Union School, Wells River, and he was instrumental music director for the Waterbury Elementary School in Waterbury, until 1997. From 1997 until 2005, he was the instrumental music director for the Crossett Brook Middle School in Duxbury.

Matthew was an active member in numerous musical associations, including the International Association for Jazz Education (as board member and president), and the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. He was commissioned by the Music Teachers National Association to represent Vermont in the 2005 QuadState Composing Competition, and also composed jazz music for Smart Chart Music. In 2004, Matthew toured Europe with the blues great Mighty Sam McClain, both playing and arranging music. Matthew also played saxophone in many area groups and ensembles, including the Maple Leaf Seven, Generation Sax Quartet, St. Johnsbury Big Band, the Bach Wind Philharmonia, the Jazz Cannibals, the Nouveau Jazz Quartet, and the Danville Town Band.

Matt was a dedicated father and husband, and an avid gardener and cook. He also tried his hand at raising chickens, and enjoyed his several parakeets and dog Ella. Most recently, Matt was sworn in to the armed forces as a recruit for the National Guard, and was scheduled to commence boot camp in Oklahoma this summer, to be followed by the Armed Forces School of Music.

In addition to his wife and children, Matthew leaves behind his parents, Edward and Catherine Clancy of Fanwood, his brother, Thomas Clancy of Manhattan, N.Y., his grandmother, Agnes Gallagher of New Jersey, his mother-in-law Andrea Marie Haynes of Framingham, Mass., his brother-in-law and sister-in-law Nathan Andrew and Suzanne Marie Haynes of Manhattan, and his niece Madeleine Zoe Haynes of Manhattan.

Funeral services were held Monday, Oct. 29, at 2 p.m. in the gymnasium at Danville School.

Reprinted from the Caledonian-Record.
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Best wishes for a happy 2008!

VMEA