Enjoy summer vacation!

PICTURED BELOW: Students, teachers, composer mentors and instrumentalists involved in the Vermont MIDI Project’s Opus 18 performance. (Photo courtesy of Sandi MacLeod)
Barre Schools Music Festival
March 12, 2009

Music Educators
Robert Booth, Peg Mehuron, Vicki Gauthier, Charles Gasque, Sarah Helman, Brent White

Photos courtesy of Sarah Helman
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Editor’s Note

As I travel around Vermont, I’ve been hearing about schools that are “cutting back,” frequently by reducing music programs. Although the notion that an 80% music teacher is better than nothing does bear some degree of truth, there’s no doubt that the reduction negatively impacts students’ opportunity to learn music. Cuts also prove demoralizing to educators who have toiled for years as full-time employees and now are faced with less pay and fewer benefits.

Bad economic situations affect schools of all sizes.

In Tunbridge, where I live, the school has been unable to fill a 20% general music position that opened when a teacher retired. As a result, the position ended up being cut from the budget when the budget was defeated in March. Luckily, citizens of the town voted to restore music before passing the school budget as a whole on the second attempt.

The prospect of a generation without music should indeed be frightening to all, and the possibility is very real. It’s a simple chain, really. Children in grades K-4 who never learn to sing or notate music won’t understand concepts like high/low, loud/quiet, long/brief, or fast/slow. Faced with the task of learning everything about music in addition to the mechanics of playing an instrument or singing, students who later want to participate in band or chorus (assuming those ensembles are offered) are set up for failure. Frustrated and overwhelmed, these students quit making music, and eventually the high school music department suffers, leading to program cuts at that level. Meanwhile, the great musicians of history remain unknown and our culture is diminished.

I don’t know the solution to the challenges we face. All I know is unless we keep seeking solutions while sharing factual evidence about music instruction, each June could be the end of more than just another academic year.

Thanks for the work you do. You truly help to change the world for the better.

Denis Lambert

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Recognizing the People Who Support Us

Gary Moreau

Fellow Music Educators:

As I write this column, I am preparing to take a long overdue trip with my wife to the Caribbean on a cruise. This is the first time for such a venture and I am looking forward to the opportunity. I tell you this because, like so many of you, my greatest support throughout my years of teaching has been my wife, Lynn. She has kept the home fires burning many times while I was away performing, teaching, attending meeting or conferences, and simply participating in this career we call music education. Now, as I prepare to end my term as the president of this association, I want to take time to thank all those many people who have supported my work and added their expertise to the decision-making during my tenure. My wife, Lynn, is the first person on my list. She has listened to my ideas, my complaining about how things were going, and she has often offered suggestions as one outside our profession. She has come to conclusions from a very different and often more meaningful position. She has helped me organize events, and she has been the person who I lean on for added assistance with the many music activities I am involved in. She has helped me without expectation of any sort of repayment. For this and so much more, I thank her. For her love and support, I am truly grateful. I could not have done this job without her support.

To the Executive Board of Past President Bear Irwin, Secretary Cindy Hall, Treasurer Jim Derby, President-Elect Pat Roberts, Editor Denis Lambert, All State Director and State Manager Steffen Parker, and all the district and committee chairs: thank you so much for your hard work and dedication to our members. I know how much time and energy you expend to carry out your various jobs and commitments and you do so unselfishly for the good of our profession. To be a part of this august body of educators is indeed my privilege and honor. I have been very fortunate to work along side of all of you, and I thank you.

During my time in office we have made experienced some changes that I hope have been for the good of our membership. We have increased membership considerably, and that speaks well of our need to join together for the good of our profession. With strong support for what we do, we can make more progress as we face difficult financial times in the future. We all know that the arts are often considered for elimination in difficult times, and we need to continue to advocate for each and every person who wears the title of music educator in their school and community. With a strong membership, we show our solidarity in fighting for an education in music for each and every student in our schools taught by a certified music educator.

We have also instituted an All State participation fee that will allow us to pay a stipend to our All State Festival Director on an annual basis, beginning this year, as well as put some monies into our All State scholarship fund.

Our new website is up and running, and although we need to get more people using it on a regular basis, it is a site that we can all be proud of. It is easy to maneuver and looks aesthetically pleasing. As we continue making it more user-friendly and getting more information onto it, I think we will begin to communicate even better with all of the music professional who access it regularly, both members and non-members. The discussion forums will provide a wonderful avenue for discussion of any topic of interest and the calendar will give everyone around Vermont the opportunity to advertise and communicate their performances and meetings. Our plan was always to make it available to all music organizations — professional and amateur — to help to alleviate the scheduling problems that we all encounter regularly, especially here in Chittenden County. Perhaps it will even get more people to attend the many activities we offer, as they become more accustomed to perusing the site regularly.

We have been able to increase participation at our Fall Conference by offering more varied presentations to meet the needs of the broader music community. With the limited funding we have at our disposal, I think we have done an incredible job providing our members with good professional development opportunities. This work has been done with a group of fellow teachers led by our conference chair Allyson Ledoux and now, Carrie Kohl. Carrie is already planning our Fall Conference for Thursday, October 22 in Woodstock. As of this writing, I can’t report anything regarding offerings, but I can tell you that we have had serious discussions to bring MENC President-Elect Scott Shuler and Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser to conferences within the next few years, and I can assure you that we will continue to attempt to offer the best professional experiences we can to our membership.

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President’s Message
Continued from Page 4

Our state-wide music teacher database is pretty much complete thanks to the efforts of our district chairs and specifically our secretary, Cindy Hall. We will continue to tweak it and update it at the beginning of each year. In addition, we have recently contracted with Constant Contact to provide us with e-mail distribution service and, as a result, will soon be able to communicate more information to all our members about upcoming events and activities. This is another part of our goal to communicate more with all of you.

This association belongs to its members. We will be as strong and vibrant as the members we have and the work they do. Each of you plays a crucial role in the continued success of this association and we depend on you for your ideas, questions, and guidance. We also depend on members stepping forward to assume leadership roles. Any one of us who has served has done so with the support and guidance of those before us. Perhaps you will be one of those future leaders with whom I can work to continue our promotion of music, which each and every one of us finds so important to humanity.

In closing, I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve you these past four years. I hope that my work has assisted you in some way to do your job with more effectiveness and confidence, and that I have supported you in your work as educators in your communities. I am very grateful for your friendship and professionalism. Thank you.

Gary Moreau teaches music at Albert D. Lawton School in Essex Junction. He is director of the Vermont Choral Union and also leads a church choir in Essex. Gary performs regularly as a baritone with the Oriana Singers and the Vermont Mozart Festival. During Gary’s two consecutive terms as VMEA president, beginning in 2005, he has represented Vermont at numerous MENC functions and also has traveled around the state to recognize Vermont’s town bands for their contributions to music education.

Questions about your MENC membership?
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1-800-828-0229
or e-mail mbrserv@menc.org
The fifth annual VMEA Band Festival was held April 7, 2009, at Champlain Valley Union High School. The 2009 adjudicators were Dan D’Addio from Central Connecticut State University, Max Culpepper from Dartmouth College, and Tom Seddon from Central Connecticut State University.

Over 400 students and their teachers participated in the 2009 Festival.

The Festival is an opportunity for Vermont high school bands to share their work with three adjudicators and receive taped and written feedback as well as a clinic immediately following their performance. Each conductor receives a video of their own performance with specific conducting feedback.

Each participating ensemble has 40 minutes of on-stage time (including set-up) and performs three pieces: two chosen from the repertoire list provided and one of the director’s own choosing. Directors can choose to receive either a rating and comments or comments only. Each group receives a recording of their performance.

There is a $250 participation fee. The application and fee are due in December.

For additional information about the VMEA Band Festival, contact Christina Toner at South Burlington High School <ctoner@sbschools.net>.
Rehearsal Strategies

Dale Misenhelter

The following article originally appeared in the February 2006 issue of Segue, the publication of the Arkansas Music Educators Association. Reprinted with permission.

Most music teachers would agree that a primary goal of teaching is independence. We don’t want the student to continue to be dependent on us as teachers. As we teach in our daily routines as well as continuing to prepare concerts and programs, it’s an essential question to ask: Do our own behaviors always lead the students toward independence? A related question that comes from the advocacy side of our world is whether we have done our utmost to communicate these aims and efforts to others. My own experience suggests it’s all too easy for parents and administrators to come to the innocent conclusion that putting on concerts is why we do what we do.

Reading over some notes for a talk to a gymnasium full of parents, a sort of read-aloud version of program notes for a music festival that included some comments on independence, it struck me how little my feelings — and the situation — had changed since I’d written them.

Looking out at all those moms, dads, little brother, sisters, and grandparents, I tried to choose my words carefully, then as now, describing how we had all come together to learn about music in the honor band opportunity (certainly one can substitute other easily recognizable groups of young musicians for the words “honor band” herein). I think it terribly important that they realize we had not traveled far and come together just to put on a concert. Yes — we get to do that, a hundred or more students experiencing things socially and musically that for many of them are quite unique… performing in a large ensemble with good instrumentation, for example. Students seeing for themselves that others their own age are engaged at distant schools in similar worthwhile tasks is another.

But what I sincerely wanted to do on that evening “y’all come concert” was tell those parents — to really convince them — that functioning as young musicians is not an assumed success story. Literacy — reading and counting, listening and making style choices — these are things to be acquired gradually and explored regularly, and the parents need to know we teach this and that they themselves should expect this. In that ensemble, I saw independent young musicians, and I insisted that each and every one read, count, and demonstrably project pulse and style. Not surprisingly, some were more experienced than others.

Parents chuckled a bit as I described how some of the directors in attendance were probably thoroughly irritated with me, as I had actually demanded that the kids work things out, to the extent that I had chased some directors away from the back of the ensemble during the long hours of rehearsals. They (the well-intentioned directors) could no longer stand it, and felt compelled creep up behind the kids, to sing or chant or clap the rhythms for the percussion players. Shoo! Get away! Let them do it!

The analogy of young students learning to read seems an appropriate one. We recognize they have to go through an independent, if slow and imperfect stage, that enables them to function as literate young people. Who would ever deny them that opportunity? How silly it would seem to be forever whispering the “answers” as they learn to read in their primary grades! Are our expectations for the “perfect” concert really that high… or appropriate?

Nobody wants to hear poor performances, and we will continue to do our best to prepare students to do well. But those parents — then and now — need(ed) to know that our efforts, while allowing us to offer the occasional modest performance, are evidence of a much more important process. Show them. Tell them. And for goodness sakes, let the kids do it.

Sooner or later we must let students figure things out. Every time we sing them the rhythm or pitches, etc., we steal that opportunity for our own purposes (always in a hurry), and in that instant the student loses his/her chance to account for steadiness of beat and/or tempo by visual, aural, and cognitive processes. Not only is it taking away their opportunity to learn in our frantic rush to polish yet another performance, but it’s counterproductive as well. Now you need to “give” them the answer next time, too! If not now, when?

FlynnArts Announces Summer Offerings

Suzanne Lowell

The FlynnArts Community Arts Education program provides the following opportunities for children, teens, and families this summer.

Camps for ages 8-18: Broadway from Start to Finish (6/22-26); Jazz Improv for Beginners (7/27-31); Songwriting & Recording (8/3-7)

Latin Jazz Week with UVM (7/27-31, ages 10-25): Jazz Improv for Beginners; Latin Jazz Cultural Immersion; Latin Jazz Music Track; Latin Jazz Percussion Track

Teen & Adult Classes: Acting Through Song w/Bill Reed (6/30/7/23); Songwriting & Recording (7/1-22).

For more detailed information, contact the FlynnArts Coordinator at 802-652-4548, ext. 4, send e-mail to <flynnarts@flynncenter.org> or view the web page at <www.flynncenter.org/flynnarts.html>.
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What Ever Happened To Nursery Rhymes?

Ann Chetwynd M. Ed

Nursery rhymes. Do kids today know them? I recently taught a preschool music class when I was taking an extended maternity leave with my second son. Having taught only elementary school previously, I was unsure of what my curriculum would be for this age group. I decided to center my first of eight lessons on basic nursery rhymes. I was shocked to discover that most of the children didn’t know these simple rhymes and songs! I built a program primarily around teaching nursery rhymes and was then hired to teach my program at a neighborhood preschool. The lead teacher of the school admitted that she had almost forgotten about using nursery rhymes with her students. Something so basic was being overlooked. A light bulb went off in my head that got me thinking about the effect that these simple rhymes and songs may have on the developing child.

After this experience, many questions came to my mind. Do most students know simple nursery rhymes? I don’t think that they do. Of the adults that I asked, most of them thought that the decline in nursery rhymes could be a result of the new politically correct world we live in. The Old Lady who lived in a shoe beat them, Orff them. The possibilities based learning disabilities the students who are having trouble rhyming and reciting the rhymes?

Try incorporating a few nursery rhymes into each lesson. My students loved acting out the stories. We made props and the students spent time in small groups choreographing their rhymes. A few minutes of each lesson could be spent creating take home nursery rhyme books. A fun project is to create a new rhyme specific to your school or a unit of study from the classroom. Sing them, Orff them. The possibilities are endless!

Ann Chetwynd earned an undergraduate music education degree at U-Mass Lowell and a Master of Fine Arts in Education at Fitchburg State College. She taught in Southborough, Mass., until 2001 when her second son was born. She currently teaches pre-school music part-time. Here-mail address is <annchetwynd@comcast.net>.

The VMEA Website... Your Connection to Music Education in Vermont

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**Essential Sounds**

**Editor’s Note:** A key component of music education involves listening to masters of the art. This is a new column designed to share information about musicians and albums that individuals believe students should be exposed to as part of their education. Please consider writing a review of your own for future publications. Send your submissions to the editor.

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**Denis Lambert**

**EVA CASSIDY**

About two months ago, I entered a music classroom and no one was in the room, but beautiful music was playing on the stereo. I sat down and listened for 5 or 10 minutes, wondering who it was. Luckily a CD case sat on the stereo. I wrote down the name and looked it up as soon as I got home. I became a fan instantly.

Eva Cassidy’s voice combines the raw power of Janis Joplin with the sultry calm of Norah Jones and the pure tone of Joan Baez. A true vocalist, Eva was not held back by style. She could sing folk, blues, jazz, gospel, whatever... and make it sound good. (Ironically, this flexibility may have hindered her success by perplexing record producers who were more comfortable marketing easily classifiable singers.) Eva's interpretation makes her stand out. Listen to her recording of “Over the Rainbow” and it’s like you’re hearing the song for the first time. Likewise, her versions of “Fields of Gold” and “Imagine” breathe new life into the words. She could also let loose; energy abounds in “Take Me to the River” and “How Can I Keep from Singing”.

Eva collaborated with Washington D.C. rhythm and blues singer Chuck Brown on his album “The Other Side,” which was released in 1992. In 1996 her solo skills were highlighted with “Live at Blues Alley,” a recording of a show she performed at a D.C. club. (Note: Video of Eva's performance at Blues Alley is available on YouTube.)

But by mid-October of 1996, the 33-year-old singer was dying of cancer. At a benefit organized to help pay for Eva’s health care costs, the fragile but spirited vocalist went on stage and sang “What a Wonderful World.” It was her last public performance. She died less than a month later, on November 2.

Eva was relatively unknown outside of the D.C. area until a British disc jockey began playing her music in England (posthumously) and eventually licensed the rights to distribute her music under the Blix Street Records label. “Eva By Heart,” released in 1997, constitutes Eva’s only complete studio album. Other albums are compilations created from various recordings of her. Thanks to the advent of digital music distribution, Eva’s music is now readily accessible throughout the world, and her fan base continues to grow.

A great deal of information about Eva Cassidy can be found at a website dedicated to her life and music: <www.evacassidy.org>.

The iTunes review of “Eva By Heart” crystallizes why she remains a valid musical figure. It states, “This disc, as with any of her works, and the posthumous fame she achieved but never sought, stand as testimony as to how true artistry, despite whatever circumstances, has the capacity to transcend, and her story should prove inspiring to any truly talented and struggling musician out in the world.”

Listen to this music. It will change your life.

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**Noteworthy on the Web**

**Have an interesting website that others might like to know about? Send a brief description and link to <sandi@vtmidi.org>**.

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**Sandi MacLeod**

**Music in Schools Today**

[http://www.mustcreate.org/global/global5_0.shtml](http://www.mustcreate.org/global/global5_0.shtml)

Advocacy and research for parents, teachers, and administrators. A comprehensive site full of gems to guide anyone interested in advocating for music programs.

**Music Composition Podcast Series**

[http://www.vtmidi.org](http://www.vtmidi.org)

Erik Nielsen has developed a new and growing number of podcasts on various aspects of music composition for the Connecticut Composition Project and the Vermont MIDI Project. Currently available segments are: Creating an Effective Melody, Creating Your Own Melody, Composing Using a Motif, Composing Using a Sequence, Composing Using Repetition, Composing Using Contrast, and Creating an Effective Bassline. These podcasts are engaging 10-12 minute segments focused on specific aspects of music composition appropriate for middle school through high school students and their teachers. His musical examples come from many different styles of music including jazz, folk and pop, classical, and contemporary. Take a listen and see how you might incorporate these in your teaching. Also available are videos of the selecting listening examples, a transcript of the session, and a downloadable mp3 file. Congratulations to Erik and his audio engineer, Rich Wells, Connecticut Composition Project Director, for this wonderful new resource for the growing generation of young composers.

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Eva Cassidy is VMEA technology chair and coordinator of the Vermont MIDI Project.

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*Editor's Note:* A key component of music education involves listening to masters of the art. This is a new column designed to share information about musicians and albums that individuals believe students should be exposed to as part of their education. Please consider writing a review of your own for future publications. Send your submissions to the editor.
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Advocacy

Valuing the Fine Arts in a NCLB World

Steffen Parker

The controversial 2001 federal legislation, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), is aimed at improving the performance and accountability of America’s public education system. It also gives parents more options when choosing the schools their children will attend. While it focuses much of America’s educational energy and resources on just three subjects (originally two, expanded in the 2007 - 2008 school year) -- science, reading and mathematics -- it also brings out two other areas of concern: the assessment of basic student skills and teacher quality. And while most agree that there is room for improvement in our educational system, the controversy comes in whether or not standardized student testing and standardized teacher evaluations/qualifications will help inspire school districts to take the steps necessary to make the locally specific changes needed. Giving each state the authority to individually develop those basic skill assessments has softened the affect of this unfunded mandate to some degree, but still leaves the identified core academic subjects not identified within its policies ‘out in the cold’ when it comes to sharing in the limited resources school budgets have to offer.

So where does that leave the fine arts, subjects not considered core academic in most schools, subjects where student assessment is much more subjective than the objective curriculum taught in math, science and reading classes, subjects where extensive or continued enrollment is not required to graduate? Does the implementation of NCLB’s assessment and evaluation requirements further push fine arts courses to the sideline or completely out of the educational possibilities for most students? Or is this yet another opportunity for the fine arts teacher to provide their colleagues, their school, and their students with additional resources so that all can be successful in not only meeting NCLB’s goals but in reaching them without resorting to ‘teaching to the test’. Just like any other school policy or requirement, the effect of NCLB on an individual school system and its various programs is more determined by the professionals involved than by the specifics in print. The fine arts educator needs to look at this legislation as a chance rather than a condemnation.

That chance has four different dimensions...dimensions that involve the four groups affected most by NCLB. Those four groups are those that have the most to gain by successfully negotiating through the NCLB process: the administration, the teachers, the students, and the parents. And for each, the fine arts educator has something to offer from right within their own curriculum, something that will support their efforts. The key is not only providing that support, but making sure that all involved are aware of its value in the school’s progress towards NCLB completion. Once again, the fine arts educator needs to ‘sell’ their program as an important part of the overall educational picture for the community and its youth.

Within any fine arts curriculum are a plethora of reinforcements for the efforts of others to complete the NCLB requirements. Those reinforcements come in Fine arts classes where students are engaged, active, and often personally motivated. And they are provided within the structure of a non-threatening classroom where the assessment is the last consideration, not the first. Because of these factors, Fine arts curriculums allow students to assimilate the information provided in a more internal manner, connecting it to how they felt, what they saw, how it sounded, how it looked, all ways that provide for easier recall when facing NCLB’s standardized testing. The key is making those connections.

So the first and most important connection that needs to be made is between teachers, finding parallel points between the curriculum paths that the reading, math, science, and fine arts teachers have planned for the students in any particular year. There does not need to be hundreds, but when the fine arts educator is able to relate the historical, cultural, racial, physical or social aspect of a project in their class to an assignment, exercise or project in another class, both courses and the students benefit. Those connections provide students with stronger foundations for using and recalling information and concepts, and reinforce the value of the overall learning. Those connections are easy to make if both teachers are aware of the other’s basic curricula and the scope of their linear learning paths. Yes, a bit of additional work, but the benefit to the students, the school and the community is certainly a fair trade.

The historical connections can also be extended to the physical science and the parallels in math that fine arts courses offer students. But it is the reinforcement of those concepts through the actual class activities that can often be the most valuable to the students and their NCLB success. Playing music, creating artwork, and learning dance movements all provide opportunities for students to not only develop physical skills, but to put scientific and mathematical ideas to use in individual and group situations. A simple mention of how those fine arts concepts relate back to the math taught yesterday or the science project next week allow students to better conceptualize abstract concepts. Allowing students to then share their fine arts experiences in their science or math class gives more students the opportunity to visualize what their classmates do in their other classes and extends the comprehension of those concepts. Students teaching students is a very powerful connection and one that can often help disconnected students learn better, participate more, and make steadier progress.

Connecting to the parents and administrators is an extension of those teacher/teacher, student/student connections. Highlighting those connections in any and all communications becomes easier when those connections happen every day in every class. Eventually the teachers won’t need to be the primary communicators, as the students will share their connections with all who will listen and appreciate. And once established, the students begin

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Valuing the Fine Arts

Continued from Page 14

to generate their own through their exploration of potential relationships between all of their subjects. Being willing to allow that to happen and supporting the sharing that follows is the only teacher requirement.

Every class requires communication and the comprehension, creation, and review of printed material, and all play a major factor in any teaching scenario. And while the NCLB reading assessment evaluates the proper use of the English written word, that comprehension is not singularly the providence of any individual subject area. Every class in a student’s day should reinforce the proper use of the vernacular and fine arts can not only support the efforts of other subjects, but also expose the student to next concepts and words. Fine arts can also provide a more physical environment to develop verbalizations and extend the language concept to other languages. (Music is especially valuable in this way). When words have meaning in every part of a student’s day, when language is valued and proper grammar, spelling, and good penmanship are expected, students develop the skills to meet those needs. When those expectations are daily occurrences, assessments become less stressful opportunities to shine and show others what can be accomplished.

While the value the fine arts educators offers to those involved in this process is similar for each of the four groups, its use, and therefore its description, needs to be adjusted to match the audience. The presentation of these values to the students themselves is subtle, incorporated in their teaching and not noted as a part separate from the learning going on. A discussion of these values to parents takes on a very different form, highlighting the concepts that the students understand but don’t have to acknowledge. Colleagues and administrators understand and appreciate those concepts, but need to be aware of the steps that follow and how they assist them in providing successes for the students within their care. Much like athletics or employment, inclusion, communication, sharing of ideas, working together, and clear goals allow all to contribute, all to be valued, and all to feel successful.

Steffen Parker is VMEA state manager and All State Festival Director. He also holds leadership roles with the New England Music Festival Association, IAJE Vermont, and other music organizations, and serves on the publication committee of “High School Today”.

“...The key to the mystery of a great artist is that for reasons unknown, he will give away his energies and his life just to make sure that one note follows another... and leaves us with the feeling that something is right in the world.”

- Leonard Bernstein
Online Journal Research Options

The journal description of JMTE is as follows:

*Journal of Music Teacher*, an online-only professional development journal published 2x/year, offers philosophical, historical, descriptive, or methodological articles related to music teacher education. Some issues offer media reviews and Perspectives, essays that discuss opinions and viewpoints (http://www.sagepub.com/journalsProdDesc.nav?prodId=Journal201903).

The current issue includes the following articles:

- “Scheduling Accommodations Among Students Who Persist in High School Music Ensembles” by Vicki D. Baker; “Transforming Music Teacher Education Through Service Learning” by Suzanne Burton and Alison Reynolds; “Perspectives on Rural and Urban Music Teaching: Developing Contextual Awareness in Music Education” by Catherine Hunt; “Inside and Outside the Undergraduate Music Education Curriculum: Student Teacher Perceptions of the Value of Skills, Abilities, and Understandings” by Ryan M. Hourigan and John W. Scheib; “Perceived Instructional Needs of Middle School and Senior Citizen Band Members” by Debbie Rohwer; and “Vocal Hygiene Perceptions of Experienced and Preservice Music Teachers” by Rhonda Hackworth.

*Research and Issues in Music Education* (RIME) is published once yearly, and is located at http://www.stthomas.edu/rimeonline/.

The journal description is as follows:

An on-line peer-reviewed journal devoted to thorough research and commentary that advances the practice and pedagogy of music teaching. Our international editorial board, comprised of noted scholar-practitioners is dedicated to these purposes, and has worked diligently to bring this forum to fruition. (http://www.stthomas.edu/rimeonline/)

The following are the current issue offerings:

- Kenneth Phillips of Gordon College and the University of Central Arkansas examines current research, trends and thought on assessment in music education in “Debating Assessment in Music Education;” Dale E. Johanson, Director of Comprehensive Arts, Long Beach Public Schools, Lido Beach, New York, examines music teachers’ needs and concerns in “A Study of the Comparative Perceptions of Non-Tenured and Tenured Music Teachers and Music Supervisors Regarding the Needs and Concerns of the Teacher in Performance Education;” and Patricia E. Riley of the University of Vermont investigates children's composition processes in “A Comparison of Mexican Children’s Music Compositions and Contextual Songs.”

**Visions of Research in Music Education** (VRME), available at <www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme/>, is “a fully refereed critical journal appearing exclusively on the Internet. Its publication is offered as a public service to the profession by the New Jersey Music Educators Association, the state affiliate of MENC: The National Association for Music Education” (http://www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme/).

The feature articles of the current issue are:

- “The Development of Piano Teachers’ Knowledge” Three Case Studies from Brazil” by Rosane Cardoso de Araújo, Regina Antunes Teixeira dos Santos, and Liane Hentschke; “Perceived Versus Actual Practice Strategy Usage by Older Adult Novice Piano Students” by Jennifer A. Bugos and Linda High; “The Role of Multimedia Technology in a Hong Kong Higher Education Music Program” by Wai-Chung Ho; “Composing and Recording Music with Adolescents in Public School: An Action Research” by Graciano Lorenzi; and “Rethinking Music “Appreciation” by Marissa Silverman. An included historical reprint is “The Ethics of Music Teaching as Profession and Praxis” by Thomas A. Regelski.

Hopefully this installment of Research Resource will help Vermont music educators quickly and easily find quality research articles that will help to inform practice.

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Dr. Patricia Riley is an Assistant Professor of Music Education at the University of Vermont. She serves as VMEA's collegiate and research chair. Send suggestions for future article topics by e-mail to <Patricia.Riley@umv.edu>.
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Midwest Clinic Career Center Debuts Online

Kathleen Andersen

The Midwest Clinic: An International Band and Orchestra Conference invites the music education community to visit its new Career Center, available online at <www.midwestclinic.org/careercenter>. While the Midwest Clinic has provided a version of this service at its annual conference for over two decades, the board and staff are pleased to announce its debut as a year-round, international service, available at no charge.

Music educators, school and university administrators, and members of the industry serving music education are welcome to use the Midwest Clinic Career Center to fill or find available jobs. Individuals seeking new opportunities may post their resumes, while organizations with open positions can add them to the growing national and international listings. The Career Center also features a concert and tour exchange for music educators.

The Midwest Clinic Career Center developed in response to a clear need among instrumental music educators. At the former conference career center, attendees could share paper copies of their resumes and job listings with others. The service was appreciated and used heavily during the Midwest Clinic but as Brayer Teague, fine arts chair at Downers Grove North High School (Illinois) and a long-time conference staff member, remembers, “Every year teachers would say, ‘What happens after Midwest is over? Can we get updates about future job postings?’ And those administrators in attendance would ask for access to resumes after the conference.”

The Midwest Clinic is pleased to address these ongoing needs by updating the Career Center, and making it available at all times. The organizers hope that it will eventually develop into a comprehensive and convenient list of the many opportunities available within the music education community. As Teague notes, “Job applicants typically have to troll dozens of county or regional websites to find open positions. The Midwest Clinic Career Center has the potential to fill an enormous void in the music education field.”

The 2009 Midwest Clinic will be held December 15-19, at Chicago’s McCormick Place West. This year’s offerings will include clinics designed for band, orchestra and jazz directors at all levels, clinics for middle school, high school and adult bands, orchestras, jazz ensembles and chamber ensembles, and hundreds of exhibitors from the music industry. For more information, please visit <www.midwestclinic.org>.

Professional Development

Summertime and Vermont’s Only Music and Multimedia Offering

The annual Music and Multimedia Institute at Castleton State College sponsored by the Vermont MIDI Project is the only summer offering in music and technology in the state of Vermont. Teachers who have participated in the past come away with rave reviews:

“The opportunity to bury myself in the content of the course and network with others throughout the week will bring new life to my teaching next fall. I needed to dive into the technology and got great support before, during and after the institute.”

“Our instructor was highly qualified and shared a wealth of information including much to use when the course is over.”

“This is one of the best classes I’ve ever taken. I wish I had come to this institute before now.”

Is this your year to tune up your skills in music and multimedia programs? Is it time to test out strategies for students with music composition, audio recording, or FLIP video photography? Music educators might bring along a classroom teacher or tech support person to take the FLIP video strand or digital audio and develop some collaborative projects for the coming school year.

All participants sign up for one strand, which is their primary focus for the week. Throughout the week other special sessions will be held so that everyone leaves with more expertise many aspects of music and multimedia. An additional option is available for music educators who want to pursue an independent project in some aspect of music. Contact Sandi to discuss your project and the resources needed.

More information and registration is available on the website at <www.vtmidi.org/summerinstitute09> or call Sandi at 802-879-0065.

“Take a music bath once or twice a week for a few seasons, and you will find that it is to the soul what the water bath is to the body.”

- Oliver Wendell Holmes

“I think I should have no other mortal wants, if I could always have plenty of music. It seems to infuse strength into my limbs and ideas into my brain. Life seems to go on without effort, when I am filled with music.”

- George Eliot
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The following article originally appeared in the summer 2006 issue of Pennsylvania’s PMEA News. Reprinted with permission.

The importance of reviewing the IEP of a special learner in your classroom or ensemble cannot be stressed enough. Without the additional knowledge that the IEP provides, many needs of the special learner go unaddressed or worse. The student, his actions and shortcomings can be misinterpreted by the music educator. The student can be perceived as not really being interested, not practicing or not really caring to learn… case in point: the student with dyslexia.

Dyslexia is a condition defined as the brain's inability to process written text and symbols. A simplistic example is the student's difficulty in distinguishing between the letters “b” and “d” or the letters “p” and “q”. Dyslexia manifests itself most commonly in reading and mathematics. As a result, the student's grades often suffer when they are required to read. The teacher interprets this decline in achievement as the student being a slow learner, when in fact the child with dyslexia may be very bright. They simply have trouble processing written information.

Dyslexia affects the student’s ability to process visual information such as text and notation. Dyslexia does not, however, affect the student's pitch recognition. Therefore, if the beginning instrumental student with dyslexia has trouble reading the written music and text, perhaps they might begin their musical experience by playing through imitation. Ultimately, the teacher’s attitude of “it's my way or the highway” does nothing to help ease the frustration levels of those involved. Open-minded creative approaches are needed. Creative solutions are welcome.

Teaching instrumental music in a fashion similar to the Suzuki method of teaching violin could be productive for the musician with dyslexia. But unlike true Suzuki methods, the student with dyslexia should attempt to understand musical notation in time. Also unlike Suzuki musicians beginning at the ages of 2 - 3, formal instrumental music lessons for the child with dyslexia should begin close to the normal classroom ages of 10 - 11. Edwin Gordon and Dalcroze suggest the proper age for beginning an instrument is 9 because of brain functions.

Brass instruments might be the instruments of choice for the child with dyslexia. Fingerings and slide positions of brass instruments can be easily notated beneath the notes if needed. The piano, however, might be a particularly difficult instrument. While the initial lessons might seem to be going well, adding the bass clef creates a real challenge. The bottom line in treble clef is “E” while the bottom line in bass clef is “G”. To the student with dyslexia, they are both “the bottom line” and therefore should both be the same note. The student has a hard time dealing with concepts such as the difference in clefs. Instruments using alternative or multiple clefs are equally as hard to learn.

As the early music student begins to learn notation and fingerings, it is best to make the learning process as multisensory as possible. All too often, we put the instrumental student with dyslexia in a separate music lesson for one-on-one instruction when in fact they might benefit from the aural reinforcement of the group lesson. When the student begins learning the written notation, the first few notes and symbols might come easily. But as more and more notes are added however, the musician with dyslexia will quickly succumb to the same frustrations that they encounter in...
reading, English and math: the difficulty in processing written information.

A simple homemade teaching aid to be used in the learning of musical symbols might be in the form of flash cards, which are not only visual but also tactile. The dyslexic flash card aid consists of glue that is traced over the symbols on the flash card. As it dries, it raises into a hard finish over the surface of the musical symbol. The student’s learning experience is enhanced as the student traces over the symbol, learns its meaning, and feels the tactile reinforcement from the raised cards.

Color might also provide solutions for the dyslexic musician in processing written information in an easier manner. Sometimes a student with dyslexia finds the contrast between black musical symbols on white paper to be too shocking for their concentration level.

The first unidentified instrumental student I encountered in my career was Nate, a ninth grade saxophone player. Nate was a very honest kid with a warm personality. He was a “C” average student in school and was perceived as being a student that just did not catch on as fast as the others.

He was not keeping up with the other junior high saxes, so I moved his lesson time for individualized instruction. (Mistake on my part.) I had pretty much resigned to the fact that either (A) Nate was slowly losing interest in his instrument, (B) He was foolish enough to think that he could pull the wool over my eyes when it came to practicing, or (C) He was being bribed by his parents to learn how to play “Moonlight Serenade” on the saxophone for his grandma before she “cashes in her chips” so he would be rewarded with that new four-wheeler that he had been wanting. At any rate, his lessons were brutal.

The particular day in question, Nate was late for his lesson. As he took his instrument out of his case, he told me proudly that he had practiced an HOUR every evening, just like I had asked him to. I was hopeful. But as we started through the lesson, I could tell it was going to be another one that was less than thrilling, with wrong notes, poor rhythms and long pauses mid-measure throughout. I could feel the blood pumping through my veins at a heightened tempo.

I finally stopped him mid-exercise and said “Nate, you have GOT to practice!” “But I have!” came his very frustrated response. I got out the yellow highlighter. I sat...
Vermont MIDI Project Goes International

Sandi MacLeod

The Haskell Opera House provided the unique setting for the first international Opus concert sponsored by the Vermont MIDI Project. The eight performers on stage were in Stanstead, Quebec and most of the audience was in Derby Line, Vermont. The Haskell sits on the border between Canada and the United States and is a truly unusual experience. Patrons to the theater can enter doors on either side of the border and come together for an event. The international boundary is marked off with a black line across the ground floor of the building.

Opus 18, held on April 29th, featured 24 compositions written by students from grades 5-12. The majority of students attend schools or are home-schooled in Vermont: North Country Union High School, North Country Union Junior High School, Hazen Union School, Champlain Elementary School and Edmunds Middle School in Burlington, Springfield High School, Mt. Abraham Union High School in Bristol, Randolph Union High School, The Grammar School in Putney, Maple Street School in Manchester, Harwood Union School, U-32, Hartford High School in White River Junction, and St. Albans. Some students traveled quite a distance to attend the event. One independent study student flew in from Batesville, Arkansas. Another attends Northfield Mt. Hermon School in Massachusetts, and one more is at Hanover High School in New Hampshire. The scores and complete list of participants is online at <www.vtmidi.org>.

Adding more international flavor to this event was a visit by the project’s newest composer mentor, Alexandra Fol, currently a doctoral candidate at McGill University in Montreal. Alexandra joined the project in January after hearing about the Vermont MIDI Project in a presentation by Anne Hamilton to the McGill Music Department. Ms. Fol is originally from Bulgaria and brings her unique view of composition worldwide to her work. She also conducted three of the larger ensemble works in the concert.

One more international connection ties the Vermont MIDI Project to Canada. Sandi MacLeod, project coordinator, was invited to present four sessions at the New Brunswick province music educator’s conference last May. About fifty New Brunswick music educators reviewed compositions by students in the project and witnessed the power of online mentoring by professional composers. These teachers learned about strategies for music composition in the schools with students at all grade levels. They were introduced to a variety of school settings in Vermont that provide students from grades 3-12 with the opportunity to compose and a goal of live performance for much of the original student work.

New Brunswick teachers were enthusiastic about the Vermont MIDI Project, and two schools — Tantramar Regional High School in Sackville and Fredericton High School — joined as Pilot Project members this year. Sandi was also invited to present sessions at the Ontario Music Educator’s Conference last November and hopes to see more Canadian connections to this internationally recognized project in music composition for students.

A few photos from Opus 18 appear on page 33 of this issue.

The Music Student with Dyslexia

Continued from Page 21

there and highlighted every other line of music on the page. I looked at him and said, “Nate, please play.” He played it perfectly.

The problem was the fact that there was entirely too much information on the page. He was on “musical symbol overload.” By simply highlighting every other line of music on the page, I was able to break down the overload of information for his brain, enabling him to process much easier. Following the lesson, I went to the guidance office. Nate was tested and found to have dyslexia.

Yet another form of colored music enhancement for musicians with dyslexia is to color code various individual notes. C’s can be blue, D’s, can be red, etc. This added visual cue can help the student process the musical information much faster. No time, you say? No problem. Who better to find the problem notes and rhythmic patterns than the child? Many times the student with dyslexia takes on such an assignment as color-cueing their music as an enjoyable challenge. This frees the teacher of yet another task in the day. Product aids are available on the market to help the dyslexic musician as well.

As the student musician matures, jazz improvisation might also become part of the solution. Performance without the boundaries of notated music frees the musician with dyslexia to explore and create. Improvisation or world music might be great avenues for the more mature musician to explore.

If the student with dyslexia is in your music instrumental ensemble, breaking the lesson into shorter concise sections with clear objectives makes the ensemble experience workable. In the choral ensemble, the dyslexic student might be best accommodated by learning from rote. Vocal music not only has the issue of notation, but lyrics as well. It can create a panic atmosphere for the singer with dyslexia. As with the majority of disabilities, the severity of dyslexia and its symptoms occurs across a wide spectrum from person to person. It is with the use of adaptations, accommodations, and assessment strategies that we can open the world of music education to all students.

William Pearce teaches in the Purchase Line School District and is the Special Learners chair for PMEA.
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Artwork created by Valerie Lester.

The Vermont Music Educator

June 2009
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Advocacy

No More Excuses: Pass Out Advocacy at Your Concert

Rob Westerberg

The following article originally appeared in the November 2007 issue of The Bulletin, Maine’s MEA publication. Reprinted with permission.

We are naïve to believe music education is limited to our students and our classrooms. We have a need and an obligation to educate our parents and communities as to what we are doing in our classroom and why it must be considered essential instruction. We — not our administrators, budget limitations, or apathetic parents — WE are at fault if audiences show up to our concerts believing that the product is what we’re all about... “Gosh, that was a nice concert.” That’s an unforgivable sin in the educational climate we exist in right now. Our concert programs - what we pass out at our concerts - remain a largely untapped solution to many misperceptions and problems we confront as we continue our call for more support. Here are five ideas for utilizing the “concert program” as a unique advocacy tool that truly educates and works on our behalf.

1. Program notes are largely looked at as unnecessary because “who’s really going to look at them?” I have utilized program notes for nearly 20 years and I can say without hesitation that they are looked at. But, even more importantly, read or not, merely printing them sends the message that there is something of educational importance in every single concert selection. For some selections, I will allude to specific challenges for the performers, while for others I will mention the historical significance of the composers. I also utilize this as a checklist as I select literature: if I can't say something educational about it, I better not be teaching it. Your community needs to see why you selected what you did for literature. Incidentally, I rarely if ever get questioned anymore on why I pick certain pieces as a result of program notes. I annually perform more sacred pieces than secular, and I've performed Masses and even a Requiem at concerts that are held, ironically enough, in a church. I not only don’t get called on it but I’m applauded for setting the bar so high. The community “gets it.” Show me a music teacher who gets questioned about programming, and I’ll show you a music teacher who doesn’t utilize valid, authentic program notes on a regular basis.

2. A cover page philosophically sets the tone for your own program. For York High School, this was the inside cover of the program for the 2005 Spring Choral Concert:

Selecting... artistic works or repertoire to perform

Analyzing... structure and composition

Interpreting... the expressive intent of the composer

Rehearsing/Evaluating/Refining... all the details and nuances of each selection through independently developed cognitive knowledge and motor skills

Presenting... the selections that are sufficiently prepared to be “brought back to life” for an assembled audience

With this in mind, it is with great pride in these young adult vocalists of YHS that we present tonight’s concert. This is our attempt to showcase their achievements over the past 4 months. We hope you will enjoy this evening’s concert as much as we enjoy performing for you. But above all, please join us in celebrating music education at York High School. As the late choral director Robert Shaw once said,

“To be an amateur artist means, I suppose, to be unwilling or unable to set a price upon the effort and love which attends the creation of beauty. When you get right down to it, to be an artist is to be an amateur. One can no more think of being a professional musician than he can of being a professional person. To be an artist is to arrive at some sort of resolution of the mind and matter struggle. It is a ‘yea’ to the proposition that there are ideal human values lasting beyond one’s own mortal limits, and that it is a necessary part of being human to seek, enjoy and transmit these values. To be an artist is not the privilege of a few but the necessity of us all.”

Scheduling two concerts to accommodate the size of our audiences has become an overwhelming source of pride for us, simply reaffirming the community support that exists for these great young adults standing in front of you. Please accept our deepest gratitude for all you continue to do for the music programs of York. Our audiences increased 400% in less than four years and I attribute this directly to setting an educational agenda the community can understand and see for themselves. If there is anything above that you’d like to use for yourself, feel free to do so.

3. Did you know for mere pennies a copy, MENC has gobs of resources you can purchase and pass out or include with your programs? I did this one year with a tri-fold document that was received with much enthusiasm. Go to menc.org, click on “advocacy”, and feast your eyes on what’s available to you. It’s all there, you just need to get a hold of it, and get it passed out with your program! It’s the greatest investment of a few dollars you will make this year.

4. Committing a page in your program to include an address or letter of support from an administrator or community leader can be a powerful tool. We do this at All State, but it’s poorly located there; it should be in the local concert programs! How cool would it be to get a letter of support in your program from your local legislator, chair of the Education and Cultural Affairs committee in Augusta, a school board member, or selectman? Even better, this is a piece of your program a parent advocate could be put in charge of, and have your students request letters of support themselves. It is ironic that when we are looking for community support, we rarely take this route in a proactive way and almost never have that support published. There is no better place to have it published than in our concert programs.

5. What successes have you and your students experienced since the last concert? Use a page in your program to highlight specific successes and do so in a

Continued on Page 28
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narrative. Not just, “The students with an asterisk made districts.” We have so many success stories that we see every day in our students, so let’s highlight them in a meaningful way! It’s nice to acknowledge them as part of the concert, but it is even better to write it down and have their parents take that home with them. That’s how “the word” really gets out.

Will doing all this require more time? Yes. That’s not the important question - the question is rather, “How can we possibly justify NOT making the time to do this?” If you have an acceptable answer to this, I’d love to hear it because to this point I haven’t ever heard one. Increased cost? Hardly. Budget for more paper and you’re all set. I’ve even watched teachers go to their administration and say, “Sorry I am using this much paper and copier ink. If you’d rather I bring it to Kinko’s, just tell me the account you want it taken out of and I’ll do so.” Needless to say, they get all the support they need for making more photocopies! All this also means planning ahead, however; you won’t be able to print and fold programs the morning of the concert anymore. Plan accordingly and it will be no more a stress than it is now.

For too long we have had a critically narrow view of what we pass out at concerts as, “Gee, these are the kids’ names,” and “This is what you’ll be hearing tonight.” We are fighting an uphill battle - not with our students, but with our communities - and we need to educate them. If 200 people attend your concert, 800 people will be talking about it in the days that follow. Set the agenda for their conversations: fill your concert programs with the “good stuff” in your next concert and get in the habit of making them work as a critical advocacy tool for you!

Rob Westerberg is past president of the Maine Music Educators Association. He teaches at York High School in Maine.
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Woodstock, VT

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The Vermont Music Educators Association invites you to participate in our 2009 Conference.
There are three different ways that you can do this:
  1.  Come to the conference as an exhibitor.
  2.  Send flyers to us. These flyers will be inserted in the folders that are given to each of our attendees.
  3.  Help subsidize a conference expense.
Below, please indicate the way(s) in which you wish to be a part of our event.

___ We plan on attending the conference as an exhibitor.  COST:  $65 per table until July 10, 2009
                               $75 per table from July 11 until October 2, 2009
                               $85 per table from October 2 until October 24, 2009

Number of 8-foot tables: ______  Electricity needed?    Yes    No

Contact person: ________________________________________________________________

Special Requests: ______________________________________________________________________

___ We would like to have a flyer/brochure in the conference participant folder.  COST:  $50

Please send 250 copies of your advertising material by September 4, 2009.

___ We will help subsidize part of the conference.  COST:  variable (see below)


Contributions appreciated by August 15, 2009.  Please indicate which item(s) you are subsidizing.

All information and payments should be returned to:  Allyson Ledoux, 360 Acorn Lane, Shelburne, VT 05482
E-mail correspondence:  allysings@yahoo.com
Vermont Music Educators Conference
Thursday, October 22, 2009

Woodstock Union Middle & High School
496-1 Woodstock Road
Woodstock, Vermont 05091

Woodstock is centrally located along the scenic stretch of Route 4 between Bridgewater and Quechee.

It is approximately 100 miles south on I-89 from Burlington;
75 miles south on I-91 from St. Johnsbury;
82 miles north on Route 7 from Bennington;
and 29 miles east on Route 4 from Rutland.

Please plan to join us for a day of professional development and colleagueship.

Contact the Conference Chairperson with any questions or suggestions.

Carrie Kohl
Whitcomb High School
273 Pleasant Street
Bethel, VT 05032

Phone: (802) 234 – 9966 ext. 229
Fax: (802) 234 – 5779
ckohl@bethelschools.org
Advertising Reservation for 2009-2010 Academic Year

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* A 10% discount will be applied for advertising in at least 3 issues during the academic year.

For pricing on other size ads, please contact the editor.

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<tr>
<th>September 2009</th>
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<th>March 2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline: July 15</td>
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Do you plan to run the same advertising copy in each issue?  ___ Yes  ___ No

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Mail this completed form to The Vermont Music Educator, P.O. Box 178, Tunbridge, VT 05077
or scan and e-mail to vmeanews@yahoo.com  Questions? call (802) 763-8289 or send e-mail
Forest Elliott from Champlain Elementary discusses his composition with performer Steve Klimowski.

Composer David Ludwig works with elementary and middle level students at a workshop at Opus 18 held at the Haskell Opera House in Derby Line.

Eighth grade student Cecelia Daigle from Harwood Union School discusses her composition with Alexandra Foi, a composer mentor from Montreal. In the foreground is Michael Close, cellist and music educator from Moretown Elementary.
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