VMEA Salutes Vermont’s Town Bands

Summer vacation does not mean the end of music in Vermont. Many students — and teachers — participate in community bands each year.

ABOVE: VMEA President Gary Moreau presents Gary Aubin, director of the St. Johnsbury Band, with a certificate recognizing the band’s contribution to music education in Vermont. The band, one of the oldest community ensembles in the country, was subsequently profiled in a news segment on WCAX-TV.

RIGHT: The Williston Town Band, led by music director Kim Tokarz, performs for several hundred spectators during the town’s annual Independence Day celebration. This year was also a centennial celebration for the town library. Organizers of the accompanying ice cream social said they went through 1,000 plates and napkins.
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The Public Supports Music Ed; We Each Must Do Our Part

Gary Moreau
VMEA President

Fellow Music Educators:

As I sit here writing to you, it has been only a couple of weeks since the school year ended, and already I miss the daily interaction with students, parents, and other colleagues. The many hours spent working on concerts, projects, school committees, and daily music instruction seems to disappear for a moment as we leave for the summer to rejuvenate ourselves in preparation for another school year.

That new school year is now upon us and I am always anxious — even after all these years — to get back to school to meet new students and their parents, continue work with returning students, and rekindle old friendships with colleagues.

Each year brings new challenges and unanticipated problems, but the excitement remains because we believe that what we do is important. Not only is it important to us, but apparently to many others as well. A recent Harris Poll released on the attitudes of Americans toward arts education revealed that “93 percent of Americans agree that the arts are vital to education revealed that “93 percent of Americans agree that the arts are vital to helping children to communicate effectively with adults and peers.”

83 percent of Americans believe that arts education helps teach children to communicate effectively with adults and peers.

79 percent of Americans agree that incorporating arts into education is the first step in adding back what’s missing in public education today.

79 percent of Americans believe that it’s important enough for them to get personally involved in increasing the amount and quality of arts education. At the same time, it reveals uncertainty among “those involved in the life of a child” about how to become involved in advocating for arts education in schools:

62 percent believe that there are other people or organizations in the community who are better suited to take action (than they are).

40 percent say that they do not know how to get involved in arts education.

You see, we are supported by many others, but some don’t know what to do to help us. I believe a vital role we play as music educators is that of advocates. Not only do we need to advocate for our own individual programs but advocate for a well-rounded education for all students that includes the arts (visual, dance, music, drama) as core curriculum. We also need to work more closely together to see that this advocacy stretches beyond the boundaries of individuals and out to their schools, communities, the state, and the nation. We can get much more out of our time spent on this if we work side by side to secure the necessary support for our programs.

86 percent of Americans agree that an arts education encourages and assists in the improvement of a child’s attitudes toward school.

86 percent of Americans agree that an arts education encourages and assists in the improvement of a child’s attitudes toward school.

To this end, I would like to make it a personal goal during my tenure as president to increase membership in the MENC/VMEA. Only about one-third of all Vermont music educators are members of VMEA. Although the VMEA attempts to work for the good of all teachers, we need your support through your membership, your attendance at conferences, your participation at district-level meetings, and most importantly, your ideas. I know you have needs that we can support, but VMEA needs the financial resources and strong membership participation to carry out these projects and ideas. The VMEA needs your help with this. If you know someone who is not a member, ask them to join. If you aren’t a member yourself, contact me for information on how to join or visit the MENC website at www.menc.org to find out how you can become a member. With your support, we can all work together toward a better system of educating students and parents in and about the arts.

Another area of need for the VMEA is that of securing additional funding for our ongoing work in music education. The All State Music Festival is one of our most important projects. We need to be able to raise the monies necessary to continue funding the hiring of fine, nationally recognized conductors, and we need to increase our financial support for the All-State Scholarship fund. This is a formidable task. In addition to this, our fall conference is extremely important to our individual and collective professional development goals, and we need to have the necessary resources to enable us to continue building this conference to meet the needs of all.

Continued on Page 6
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President’s Message

Continued from Page 4

music educators. To accomplish these and other potential projects, I would like to invite a small group of members to work on a capital campaign to build up our financial resources. If you have ideas on how we might go about this or are interested in being a part of such a committee, please contact me.

Thirdly, I plan to continue my work of recognizing the town bands from around Vermont for their contribution to music education throughout the state. This summer I have visited several towns and presented their band directors and members with a certificate of appreciation for the work they continue to do to promote music through their rehearsals and concerts. These multi-generational bands are a pleasure to hear and the comments I get from those in the audience are positive and supportive for the arts. In addition, many of the conductors are you, our members and colleagues. You are advocating for the arts year round and we appreciate it and salute you!

When I attended the 2005 MENC Leadership Conference in Reston, Virginia on July 9-12, I delivered this message as president of VMEA. We are alive and well in Vermont and these are the initiatives we plan to pursue over the next two years. With your support and assistance, I believe we can do it!

I appreciate the support you have shown me by voting me as your president. I am always open to suggestions and ideas on behalf of the VMEA, and I hope you will consider backing current and future initiatives through your membership and support. Also, consider joining me and others at the 2006 MENC National Conference in Salt Lake City on April 19-23. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet colleagues from around the country and attend exceptional concerts and presentations by nationally and internationally recognized individuals. Won’t you please plan to attend?

I wish for you a great 2005-2006 school year. I thank you for your work on behalf of the thousands of individuals whose lives you touch on a daily basis. I feel extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to serve with and for you, my friends and colleagues.

Gary Moreau teaches at A.D. Lawton Middle School in Essex Junction. He is the 2005-2007 president of VMEA.

News Briefs

Ellis Scholarship Recipients Announced

Ellis Music Company, Inc., is pleased to announce the recipients of its District Scholarships for the 2004-2005 school year. Scholarships were awarded to the following students:

District I - Audrey Bell (Milton HS), flute
District II - Erica St. Louis (Lyndon Institute), musical theater / flute
District III - Ben Smith (Champlain Valley UHS), percussion
District IV - Karen Boltax (Montpelier HS), violin
District V - Aram Barsumian (Rutland HS), trombone
District VI - David Besserer (Brattleboro UHS), trombone

The recipients were chosen on the basis of their musical abilities, enrollment in their high school music program for at least one year, community musical contributions, performance and/or acceptance in their individual district festivals, future plans for music, and music teachers’ recommendations.

The recipient of the Richard W. Ellis All State Music Scholarship was vocalist Paul Connelly of St. Johnsbury Academy.

Ellis Music Company offers our congratulations to these scholarship winners and wishes the best of luck to them in all their future endeavors.

- Submitted by Ellis Music Co.

Publicize Your Concert on the VMEA Web Site

Free publicity! Send your concert details to Aron Garceau <agarceau@sheldon.k12.vt.us> and he will post it on the VMEA web site. The deadline for submitting information is the 15th day of the month before your concert. (Example: If concert is December 6, submit information by November 15.)

To view events, go to the VMEA web site: <www.vmea.org>.
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What Is He/She Like?

Shawn R. Funk

By the time you are reading this, the school year will be in progress, but as I sit at my computer to write, many elementary students and elementary teachers are thinking about the above question. I want to explore two approaches to this issue and give you some ideas for thought as you continue the current school year.

Of course, many students wonder what to expect in their new teachers. Some schools are blessed to have continuity of staff, where there is very little change from year to year. In these circumstances, everyone knows Mr. and Mrs. So and So, who have been teaching in the same classroom for years. In other schools, teachers may be very transient and — especially in nontraditional disciplines such as music — there may be a different teacher every year.

What kind of presentation of self is most effective in the elementary music program? First of all, I believe it is important that we demonstrate and wow our students with our skills. This does not mean that one must be able to play a concerto on their major instrument or sing an aria from a Wagner opera. What it does mean is that we must demonstrate a love for our craft and exhibit the skills we have acquired in our own personal quest for excellence. This may be playing the recorder expressively in a demonstration lesson, or it may be singing tonal patterns in solfege to impress a fifth grade general music class. It may be playing cello duets with a class of fifth grade cello students. This helps to answer, “What is he/she like?”

Secondly, I believe it is imperative that our students get to know that we are “people” first and musicians second. Now, for those of you who live near the school in which you teach, you already know that when a student sees you in the grocery store, they immediately flip because they can’t imagine that you need groceries and that you ever leave your room at school. Students often don’t see us as being “real.”

One activity that I like to do each year during the beginning weeks of school is to show each class a “me bag.” In this bag, I assemble items that are about me. I usually have some pictures of the farm where I lived growing up, items that are important to me, pictures of my family, and other trivia that help to tell them about “the real Mr. Funk.”

I enjoy this sharing time, and the students love to offer comments about what I have assembled. It also eases fears and anxieties for the students who have me for the first time and just aren’t too sure about this new music teacher. I found this mini-lesson to be a good time for self-reflection about my interests and attitudes. What do I consider important enough to put in the “me bag”? What is really important for your students to know and understand about you that will help them excel under your leadership? This activity could be done at any time during the school year, so if you haven’t done something like this, give it a try and let me know how it goes.

In the second approach to the title of this article, I would like to explore this question as it pertains to relationships that are formed when we begin to work with a new colleague. Of course we wonder, “What is he/she like?” Often it is difficult for a seasoned veteran to imagine a neophyte coming in and working side by side in the same school. Often, the neophyte has lots to learn.

The way that the relationship between veteran and novice is forged can often have an astounding impact on the music program in a particular school. It is hard to deal with change. Young teachers often intimidate existing faculty because they are perceived as being more current, more “up on the latest.” Many times this is true, and this should create a symbiotic relationship that will enhance the entire school. Many years ago, when I entered a new school for the first time, I overheard a teacher in the faculty room (where eavesdropping is always a dangerous thing!) say, “Well, he may have a lot of book knowledge, but he’s got a lot to learn about handling THESE kids!”

This teacher was precisely correct. I did have much to learn about that particular school and its population. It was never my intent to intimidate or appear to be supercilious. The antithesis of this situation occurs when the new teacher appears on the scene and really doesn’t wonder about what the colleagues are like. This new teacher wants to change everything and knows all the answers. In that case, the “what is he/she like?” is quickly answered.

I had a very good friend who took a year of family leave to raise a child, and her sub was the type mentioned above. The year was a disaster, and the program ended up in shambles. My friend said, “There was so much I could have told her about the kids and the program, if only she had cared enough to listen.” In our intercollegial relationships, it is important to respect each other. The veterans must give space to the “new blood,” and the novice teacher should be listening to the “wise old owls.”

As our students ponder the question “what is he/she like?” let us do the same for our colleagues. Mutual respect is so important in collegial relationships. Respect cannot be demanded, however; respect must be earned. We must strive to earn the respect of our colleagues and the respect of our students.

Shawn R. Funk teaches in the Fox Chapel School District and can be reached by e-mail at <Shawn_Funk@fcasd.edu>.
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Annual Midwest Clinic Promises Guidance and Inspiration to Teachers

For nearly sixty years, the Midwest Clinic has been the instrumental music educator’s best source of annual guidance and inspiration. This year’s event will be held December 13-17 at the Hilton in Chicago. Preparations for the 2005 Midwest Clinic have been underway since January.

The featured performers include school and professional ensembles from all around the country.

The clinics presented at the 2005 conference will address issues facing school music programs, offer practical advice on conducting, rehearsals, and specific instruments and sections, and inspire educators to return to school in January with new ideas and renewed vigor. The 2005 clinics and clinicians will include:

- Communication Tools for the Middle/High School Orchestra Teacher - Pamela Tellejohn Hayes
- The Dirty Dozen: Identification and Elimination of Twelve Mannerisms Inhibiting Expressive Conducting – Patrick Dunnigan
- Composer’s Forum: Renewing the Creative Environment – Richard K. Hansen
- Keep Me Out of Trouble, A Legal Primer for Music Teachers – Barry E. Morgan
- Educating Today’s Versatile Percussionist: “It’s All About the Basics” – Tim Adams
- From Classical to Contemporary in the String World – Daryl Silberman
- Incorporating Jazz Concepts in Contemporary Jazz Charts with a “Dose of Duke” – Ron Carter
- Fundamentals of Fine Flute Playing Made Simple – Ervin Monroe
- Do Unto Others – Do We Know How to Behave as Artists – James Jordan
- Care and Feeding of Contemporary Big Band – Gordon Goodwin
- Writing, Arranging, and Re-Arranging Music for Your Young Band – Randy Navarre
- We Already Teach More than Music: Interdisciplinary Approaches For All – Amy Novick
- The Participation of Students with Disabilities in Instrumental Music Education: Strategies for Successful Inclusion – Jennifer L. Stewart
- Performance Artist Master Class: Contemporary Jazz Phrasing and Improvisation Techniques – Bob Mintzer

In addition, numerous regular Midwest Clinic programs are again being offered:

The Teacher Resource Center offers classes on the latest music-related software, in addition to a library of music education videos/DVDs, a listing of available jobs and job candidates, a concert tour exchange network, and reports and literature on the importance of music education.

Three school leadership seminars focusing on intelligent musicianship and stimulating creative thinking in the music program will each be presented three times during the week. College student and beginning teacher clinics target issues at the start of a music educator’s career. In its seventeenth year, College Night is a rare opportunity for students and teachers to visit with representatives from the music programs of seventy colleges, universities, and branches of the military.

A program offered by the University of Miami enables teachers to earn one or two hours of graduate credit while attending the Midwest Clinic.

The exhibit halls feature more than 350 organizations in 560 booths.

Pre-registration is available now, through the Midwest Clinic website at <www.midwestclinic.org>. For more information, contact the Midwest office by phone (847-424-4163) or e-mail <info@midwestclinic.org>.

- Submitted by The Midwest Clinic
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During this past summer, I have had the great fortune of traveling around to various towns and cities throughout Vermont to witness first hand our community bands in action. What a thrill!

I have watched as young beginning students are mentored by more experienced players, sometimes three to five times their age. I’ve seen marching through the park by toddlers and tapping to the beat of the music with canes and crutches. The level of playing has varied from bands that practice weekly year-round to those that get together for just a couple of rehearsals in late spring before the concerts begin for the summer. The one thing evident at all these venues is a love and appreciation for music. How lucky we are!

I plan to continue my travels throughout the next two summers until the VMEA has recognized all the community bands throughout the state. If you have not already contacted me with information about your community band, please do so soon. VMEA editor Denis Lambert and I are hoping to present the histories of these bands in a future publication. Please forward any historical information you have to one of us.

The Hills Are Alive…

with the Sounds of Town Bands

Gary Moreau

How does the musicianship of your students who participate in town bands compare to that of students who do not, in terms of sightreading ability, tone quality, and general technique? (Also, the “chicken and egg” question: Do talented students tend to participate in town bands, or do town bands develop talent in student musicians?)

Send your response via e-mail to townbandproject@yahoo.com or via traditional mail to P.O. Box 149, Rochester, VT 05767. Any responses received will be shared in the next issue of The Vermont Music Educator.

“How The Vermont Town Band Project”

Denis Lambert

Last year, when Gary Moreau told me about his plan to recognize Vermont town bands and their contribution to music education in our state, it immediately caught my interest. To the best of my knowledge, no single reference about Vermont’s town bands exists, and internet searches returned surprisingly few results for books about town bands in other parts of the country.

This project that Gary and I have undertaken strives to document town band history, past and present. What bands are the oldest/newest? What is the profile of the “average” band member? How many town band participants went on to become music teachers? Exactly how many town bands exist in Vermont today? These are but a few of the questions we would like to answer.

We need your help.

Since (roughly) the beginning of 2005, we have each been conducting research and talking with people who participate in these community institutions.

Surveys have been created – one for town band directors/leaders and another one for town band members/participants. I would like to have every director and participant in the state complete the appropriate survey.

I am very interested in acquiring town band photos that may be reproduced. I would also like to collect original compositions and arrangements by Vermont’s town band members (past and present). Eventually I hope to record Vermont’s town bands playing their best selections, in either a concert or rehearsal room setting.

There is much to be shared about Vermont’s community bands.

Information regarding town bands and communication about this project can be sent via e-mail to...

townbandproject@yahoo.com

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Submit information about any town bands you know… conductor names, founders, concert schedules, etc.

Ask town band leaders you know if they have completed the VT Town Band Project director survey… if not they can request one by sending an e-mail message to the address printed above.
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The Kids Play Great. But That Music...

Stephen Budiansky

If there is a medal awarded for conspicuous bravery in the form of sitting through countless elementary-, middle- and high-school concerts above and beyond the call of duty, I'd like the authorities to know that I am eligible for it.

Unflinchingly, I have kept my face rigid through the most trying of musical ordeals. My kids are both in high school now, but every now and then my jaw muscles still hurt from the effects of one fourth-grade chorus concert.

I think only once in all those years did I give way to temptation and relate to the person next to me that bit from one of the Marx brothers' movies, where Chico is playing the piano and a man sitting next to Groucho says, "I love good music," and Groucho replies, "So do I. Let's get out of here."

I should hasten to add that I'm not really a curmudgeon, at least not when it comes to taking the normal, abundant parental pride in the efforts of my offspring. I've never actually dreaded all these school band and chorus concerts as far as the quality of the performers' efforts goes. Learning to play or sing is impossible without some squeaks or screeches or rhythms that occasionally wander away for a stroll on the erratic side, and I've always been genuinely impressed by how well the kids do.

No, the problem is not how they play. It's what they play.

What they play is always That Piece, as I've come to think of it. That Piece is not written by any composer you have ever heard of -- not classical, not jazz, not pop, not rock, not blues, not folk, not alternative Czech heavy metal fusion, not nothing. You've never heard it on the radio, not even late at night at the bottom of the dial. It in fact exists nowhere in the known music universe -- except for the twilight zone of school musical performance.

That Piece is nearly always written by someone who (a) is alive and collecting royalties, and (b) has a master's degree in music education. It is always preceded by a very wordy description, read out to the audience by way of preparation, explaining that the piece (a) was inspired by a medley of Lithuanian folk songs and Gregorian chants that the composer heard while researching his master's degree; or (b) depicts the journeys of Lewis and Clark and, if you listen carefully, you will hear the American Indian motif that represents the faithfulness and courage of their young Native American guide Sacagawea and then in the saxophones the sound of the rapids as the raft approaches and then the warning cry from one of the men on the bank and then the raft plunging down the rapids and then the return to calmer waters and then another set of rapids approaching and then... or (c) evokes the soaring ideals we can all aspire to. (Pieces in this last category usually have "eagle" in their titles.) If I've heard That Piece once, I've heard it a hundred times. Different composers, different titles, same bombastic banality.

There had been hints of what was coming, back when my kids were in elementary school. Instead of "Home on the Range" and "Jingle Bells," their school concerts were filled with rather slick but soulless numbers cranked out by the music ed publishing industry. I vaguely recall one sort of Disneyesque self-esteem-boosting number called "Possibilities," in which the fifth-graders informed us that they were "the future." There was also a song about recycling.

But I wasn't prepared for the extent to which such new and original works of great mediocrity have completely supplanted the real music -- classical, folk, Sousa marches, American popular music, Scott Joplin rags, Broadway show tunes - - that was once a staple of the American school music curriculum. And it's not a question of new vs. old: There's plenty of truly great contemporary music of all genres being written. This stuff just isn't it.

I've pored over publishers' catalogues and lists of recommended pieces from various state music educators' associations, and it's happening all across the country. In place of genuine folk music, there are compositions "inspired" by the folk music of the American South or West, or Korea, or Africa. In place of real rock numbers are "rock originals" by one of those school band directors with a master's degree. The closest thing I've heard to a real Sousa was a creation called "Sousa! Sousa! Sousa!" that (according to the publisher's description) "includes famous themes from 'Manhattan Beach' and 'El Capitan' along with just a hint of 'Semper Fidelis' and other Sousa favorites."

I do understand the pedagogic purpose behind this stuff. Beethoven didn't have to come up with music scored for middle school bands made up of 57 alto saxophones, 40 trumpets, 15 percussionists and one oboe. Fair enough.

But music education is supposed to be about more than just learning to make your fingers move the right way. It's also supposed to be about having the chance to experience firsthand the truly great music of all genres -- the great music that, after all, is the whole point of learning to play or sing.

And, to put it kindly, it's hard to imagine anyone falling in love with music on a diet of band directors' compositions portraying the initial helicopter landing of the 1st Marine Division during the Korean

Continued on Page 15
That Music...

Continued from Page 14

War (yes, that really is one frequently played high-school band piece), or the one by the same composer that I heard at my son's all-district concert a couple of years ago: Pretentiously titled “Symphony No. 2,” this turned out to be a blow-by-blow re-creation of Homer's “Odyssey,” complete with musical depictions of the Trojan horse's squeaking wheels and the crackling fires of Troy burning. I know this because the guest conductor was the composer himself, and he spent 10 minutes describing to us what we would be hearing.

A bit of what is driving the dominance of all this pseudo-music are education-theory mandates that music education “connect” with other parts of the curriculum (this probably explains those elementary-school songs about recycling and self-esteem); a bit comes, too, from pressures for parent-pleasing or competition-judge-pleasing pieces that are showy and give the illusion of being more advanced than they are.

But the result is a terrible confusion of ends and means. One of the songs my daughter's all-county chorus sang at its recent concert had won a 1991 competition among choral directors in Iowa. Described in the program as a “blend of contemporary and madrigal styles,” it was a nice enough, if completely unmemorable, piece. But why, I kept thinking, couldn't they sing a real Elizabethan madrigal? Or how about a Beatles song? Or anything at all that has inspired and touched and sent shivers down the spine the way great art does?

If high-school English teachers stopped assigning Shakespeare and Faulkner and instead gave their students the winner of the 1991 Iowa English teachers' novel-writing contest to read, I think we'd know where to tell them to get off.

I did glimpse one ray of hope at my son's most recent high-school band concert, though. Sandwiched between all the variations on Korean folk songs and musical depictions of erupting South American volcanoes came a performance by a small woodwind ensemble, made up of students who met on their own time after school. They had no director, no adult supervision, and had chosen entirely on their own the one piece they performed.

They did Mozart.

Stephen Budiansky is the author of nine books about military history, science, and nature. He is a former national security correspondent and foreign editor of the weekly newsmagazine U.S. News & World Report. As a Congressional Fellow at the U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment he co-authored a classified study on the role of smart-weapons technology in warfare. He is also a former Washington Editor of the international scientific journal Nature. Stephen Budiansky is currently a correspondent for The Atlantic Monthly. He can be reached by e-mail at: <spb@budiansky.com>.

NOTE

This article generated such a response that Mr. Budiansky wrote a follow up article, which is posted on his web site at <http://www.budiansky.com/music.html>. 

Volunteers needed!

The VMEA Executive Board would like to find people interested in leading or serving on committees. Whether your interest is general music, technology, membership, fundraising, or something else, you are welcome!

Contact VMEA President Gary Moreau to get involved.
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The FlynnArts jazz program offers young musicians the opportunity to study with working professional jazz artists who are also skilled educators, and to experience exhilaration and artistic growth from playing in small combos. These richly rewarding classes are enhanced by Summertime Jazz intensive studies, public performances at First Night Burlington and the Discover Jazz Festival, and class trips to concerts by jazz greats at the Flynn. This fall the jazz program has grown to include a middle school combo, held at FlynnArts South, our new location at the Gailer School in Shelburne!

**Jazz Combo Workshops Fall 2005**

These performance workshops on the art of jazz improvisation encourage students to develop an individual style while learning basic repertoire (blues, standard tunes, and jazz classics). Instruction takes place in a combo setting consisting of a rhythm section (bass, drums, piano, and/or guitar) and up to five horns (typically saxophones, trumpets, and trombones). The final class session is a public performance in FlynnSpace on the evening of Monday, December 5. Combos B and C will also perform in First Night Burlington on Saturday, December 31. Tuition includes a ticket for a class trip to see jazz great Wynton Marsalis live at the Flynn on Saturday, October 29!

- Submitted by the Flynn Center

**Flynn Center Announces Fall Jazz Program**

**GRADES 5-8, SECTION A:** Tuesdays • 3:45-5:15 pm • Instructor: George Voland • Tuition: $215 • Length: 12 wks. • Gailer School, 4066 Shelburne Road, Shelburne • Limit: 10

**GRADES 9-12, SECTION B:** Mondays • 7:00-8:30 pm • Shane Hardiman • $215/12 wks. • Hoehl Studio Lab • Limit: 9

**GRADES 9-12, SECTION C:** Tuesdays • 7:15-8:45 pm • Tom Cleary • $215/12 wks. • Hoehl Studio Lab • Limit: 9

Placement session on September 12 or 13 required for all high school students to determine assignments to Combos B and C. Please indicate your preferred placement session date on the registration form.

A limited number of scholarships will be awarded to students demonstrating merit and/or need.
1. Buy him the cheapest instrument possible so that he can “look forward” to earning a “better one.”

2. Always point out ALL of his shortcomings; NEVER praise. “There’s no sense in spoiling him.”

3. Always call him for practice when the ball game’s going best; call in a loud, demanding voice so his friends will feel sorry for him.

4. Insist he practice a certain time each day without exception. Lay down the law. “Either you practice when I say, or you quit.”

5. Insist he practice the most uninteresting music the longest. “You can’t learn to play an instrument by playing tunes.”

6. Don’t invite other children in to play instruments with your child. They make too much noise, kill too much time, have too much fun, and track in too much dirt.

7. Be sure to tell father at the dinner table how little son has practiced. Then he won’t dare leave anything on his plate.

8. Never help him with his practicing. “I just don’t have the time.”

9. Add another hour of practice when he has been naughty or doesn’t mind you.

10. Call loudly from the kitchen or basement each time he makes a mistake. Add a punchline, such as, “Was that a sick cat I heard?” or “If you can’t do better than that, better give up.”

11. Stop him if he practices anything for fun other than his lesson. “Music is serious.”

12. Threaten, periodically, to stop his lessons, unless: (a) he practices much more, (b) he plays better than so and so, (c) he takes better care of his instrument, (d) he makes better grades, (e) he makes his bed each morning, (f) he treats his parents with more respect.

13. Insist on PERFECTION in everything connected with his music... 100% or it’s no good. “He’ll appreciate this when he grows up.”

14. Don’t let him play for his friends or anybody else until he can REALLY play his instrument. After two or three years, he’ll be able to “surprise” them.

15. Take him unawares the first time you want him to play for someone and ask him in front of everybody to play “something.” If he refuses, insist that he play; if he still refuses, announce that he’s through with music. By all means, don’t help him select and work up a number which he can play for company.

16. Don’t take him to a concert until he’s old enough and don’t take him unless he can play well enough to “appreciate” it.

17. Insist that he take private lessons from the strictest, driest teacher in town.

18. Be sure to point out his shortcomings often, especially in front of teacher or fellow students. “It will make a better impression on them.”

19. Rest your nerves after a hard day’s work by telling him not to practice where you can hear him. “Take that thing down to the basement. Don’t I deserve a little peace and quiet?”

20. Insist that he can’t take band or orchestra unless his grades improve in his “academic” subjects. “Band is just play anyhow.”

21. Insist that he take Latin in high school instead of band or orchestra. “After all, Latin is required for college entrance.”

22. Don’t pay attention to his music making; you don’t care whether he practices or not.

23. Use music as a wedge for getting other things done; e.g., if he doesn’t wash the dishes every night, threaten to cut off his lessons.

24. Don’t buy him a good instrument until he plays “real well.” “No sense wasting money.”

25. With some parents the real secret is to nag effectively and regularly. Others manage to ruin their child’s music making by disregarding it almost completely. “If my child likes it, okay. If not, okay.” Strangely enough, the over-ambitious parent succeeds with amazing consistency!

It is not necessary to apply all 25. Usually one or two will do the job.
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Vermont Alliance for Arts Education Presents a Variety of Sessions at “The Nature of Art”

The fall conference of the Vermont Alliance for Arts Education, titled “The Nature of Art,” will be held September 20 and 21 at Middlebury College's Breadloaf Campus in Ripton.

At right is a partial list of workshops being presented.

Workshop registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration cannot be guaranteed after September 13.

The conference includes student performances between sessions and a community singing event on Tuesday evening.

There will also be a silent auction and raffle during the conference to benefit the VAAE student scholarship fund.

The VAAE will present awards in three categories — school board/community, school administrator, and arts educator — recognizing exemplary programs and individuals.

For VAAE conference details and updates, contact VAAE directly.

Phone: (802) 333-4468
Fax: (802) 333-3246
E-Mail: vaae@valley.net
Web: www.vaae.org

Next year’s VAAE fall conference will be held September 26 and 27 at Vermont College in Montpelier.

- From VAAE conference flyer

- FROM VAAE CONFERENCE FLYER

SESSIONS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO MUSIC EDUCATORS

Vocal Health for Classroom and Arts Teachers with Sarah Hoblyn
Add Rhythm to Your Vocal Ensemble: An Intro to Vocal Percussion with Joseph Antonioli
How to Encourage and Develop the Elementary Student Singing Voice with Sarah Hoblyn
Percussion Ensemble and Improvisation for the Classroom with Jay Cook
Great Old Music, Dance and Drama for Programs with Sharon Groblicki
Understanding Performance Anxiety as Applied to the Arts with Ron Thompson
Musical Instruments from Common Found Materials with Jeremy Seeger
Middle School Music Madness with Andy Smith & Andrea Haulenbeek
Bassoon Techniques for Teachers with Rachael Elliot
Functional Jazz Theory: Useful Tools for Jazz Improvisation with Eugene Uman
The Vocal Band: An Intro to Contemporary A Cappella Arranging with Joseph Antonioli
Teaching the Jazz Band for Non-Jazz Teachers with Andy Smith & Jack Phipps
Baking an Opera from Scratch with Ron Luchsinger
Teaching Arts to Exceptional Children: Strategies and Techniques with Deirdre Moore
The Classroom as Theater: Using Singing and Acting Skills in the Classroom with Ron Luchsinger

OTHER ARTS SESSIONS (PARTIAL LIST)

VT Arts Council Grant Writing with Janet Ressler
African Dance with Shelby Jones
The Arts of the Handmade Book with Linda Lembke & Karen Murphy
Interdisciplinary Arts in the Classroom: Poetry, Painting, and Movement with Mollie Burke
Puppet-Making and Manipulation with Barbara Paulson
Larger than Life: Creating Autobiographically-Based Performance in the Classroom with Janice Perry
The Contemporary Color Woodcut with Sabra Field
Puppet-Making and Manipulation with Barbara Paulson
Acting Out in the Classroom: Theater Improvisation Games that Teach Media Literacy with Dayna Scott & See Why Improv Troupe
Irish Dancing with Deirdre Moore
Marking Time: The Decorative Art of the Early Pennsylvania Dutch with Mollie Burke
Feltmaking: Make Your Own Slippers with Janet Cathey
From Page to Stage: Writing and Performing Poetry with Kim Jordan
The following writing assignment was given to choral students after spending a semester working on the selection “The Beatles In Revue,” a 12-minute medley of several hit tunes made famous by the Beatles. The medley is arranged by Ed Lojesky.

1. Prior to being introduced to this music selection, had you ever heard of the Beatles? If yes, please explain in what way.

2. When we began rehearsing the music, what were your initial thoughts?

3. Were you familiar with any of the selections? If yes, which songs, and how did you become familiar with them?

4. If you had to choose three of your favorite selections, please list which songs they would be with number one being your favorite.

5. Can you explain what appealed to you about the selections that prompted you to place them as your top choices? For example: Was it the style, the lyrics (words), the beat, etc.?

6. If you were the arranger, would you have placed the songs in the same order?

7. Would you have started the medley using the song “Day Tripper” as the arranger did?

8. The arranger chose “Hey Jude” as the closing song. Do you feel he made the correct choice? Please explain your answer.

9. Comment on the performance time.

10. This music was composed in the 60’s. Some historical events highlighting this time period were: the Vietnam War, Woodstock, first trip to the moon, assassinations of President John Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. Do you feel life’s events can have an impact on song writing? Please explain your answer.

11. If you had the opportunity to ask two questions of the composers, John Lennon and Paul McCartney, what would you ask?

12. If you had the opportunity to ask one question of the arranger, Ed Lojeski, what would you ask?

13. What is your reaction to medley songs? Please explain your answer.

Fran LaPlaca is director of choral music at Fair Haven Union High School, where she directs student and community choruses, Keynotes (an extracurricular vocal ensemble) and the national anthem singers.

FranLaPlaca is director of choral music at Fair Haven Union High School, where she directs student and community choruses, Keynotes (an extracurricular vocal ensemble) and the national anthem singers.
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Andy Boysen teaching a conducting class
Choral Score Investigation
AN INTERVIEW WITH DAWN WILLIS

Dawn Willis is Vermont’s newest musical treasure. It was my pleasure to interview Dawn recently, to learn what brought her to Vermont and to ask her questions about selecting choral music.

Dr. Dawn Willis holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Music from Arizona State University and Masters degrees in Sacred Music and Choral Conducting from Southern Methodist University. She has directed college, community and church ensembles throughout the country and her conducting responsibilities have included various academic and church choirs, madrigal groups, music theatre, youth choirs and handbell ensembles. She conducted the McMurry University Choirs and Alumni Singers in a performance of Mozart’s Solemn Vespers in Carnegie Hall in 1999. Recently, Dr. Willis founded the Bella Voce Women’s Chorus of Vermont. She is Associate Conductor of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra Chorus. She resides with her husband, who is the provost of Champlain College in Burlington.

AL: What are some considerations a choral conductor must look for when choosing repertoire?

DW: There are a number of elements one needs to look at.

- The composer/arranger, the historical period, and general compositional stylistic elements.
- The text: What language? Is it a sacred text? Is the text written by the composer or a famous poet, or is it traditional?
- Vocal considerations: Check out the voicing, the range, the tessitura and division of parts.
- Instrumental accompaniments: Does it use piano, organ, orchestra, additional instruments, or is it a capella?
- Other musical components: the tempo; key or mode; rhythmic features; changing meters or keys; articulation; dynamic ranges; fermati; phrasing.

AL: How would you go about analyzing a piece to be sure it is right for your group?

DW: There are a few very important questions one should answer.

- What elements are featured in this piece?
- Which elements should be brought to the choir’s attention?
- Which elements do you anticipate will be a challenge for the choir?
- Does this piece provide growth opportunities for the singers?
- What similarities between this piece and another piece can be identified for the singers? What contrasting elements can be found?
- Can connections be made between this piece and some other subject or occasion that the singers are involved with?
- How does this piece fit into the choir’s need for programming that is educationally valuable and interesting at the same time?
- Is this piece worthy of precious rehearsal time?

AL: Where should directors go to look at music?

DW: Run, don’t walk to the best choral people in the state. Go to the person directly and look at her/his library while the person is there to answer questions. There are a few music stores available for resource purposes. Spectrum Music in Lexington, MA is one. You can sit there and look at the music at your leisure. If you contact Spectrum Music at www.spectrum-music.com or call 781-862-0088, they will e-mail you notebooks of suggested repertoire. It is a wonderful service.

AL: Sometimes choral directors are afraid to try anything but “pop” music because they don’t think their singers will like it. How would you suggest giving these teachers courage to try something else?

DW: Try some fun, rhythmic pieces, energetic, maybe in Spanish. Find a seasoned teacher in the area who has literature they have found successful and try some of it. The students will be receptive to well written literature by respected choral composers. Give it a try!

AL: Are there any organizations or publications that you would suggest choral directors become a part of?

DW: The American Choral Director’s Association (ACDA) and the Music Educators National Conference (MENC), are good starting places. If these organizations are used to their full degree, all the resources one would need are available. And, once again, finding a choral mentor is invaluable.

Allyson Ledoux is a VMEA board member.

Dawn Willis can be reached by e-mail at <willisdawn@aol.com>.
American Choral Director’s Association

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Early Decision Students

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February 17, 2006

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2005 VMEA Fall Conference
Thursday, October 20, 2005, at Essex High School

Information You Need To Know...

HOW TO REGISTER
A registration form is printed in this journal. Remove (or photocopy) the registration form, complete all required information, and send the completed form — with payment — to:

Paul Rondinone, VMEA Treasurer
677 Dawson Hill Road
East Wallingford, VT  05742-9681

Please pay by check. Unfortunately, we have no way of processing credit or debit cards.

Pre-registration is recommended but not required. Individuals who register in advance (by October 7) will save $10.

There will be a registration table at the conference.

CANCELLATION POLICY
Sorry, conference registration fees are non-refundable.

MEALS
The cost of registration includes complimentary coffee and doughnuts for breakfast, as well as a lunch.

EXHIBITORS
A variety of exhibitors from the music industry will be on hand for the conference. Music, instruments, and other items will be on display and available for purchase.

SAVE A STAMP... JOIN VMEA
If you wish to become a member of MENC/VMEA, complete the MENC membership form on the reverse side of the conference registration form.

Send both forms with one check payable to VMEA Treasurer Paul Rondinone (for the combined conference registration and membership fees) and VMEA will process your membership!

DIRECTIONS TO
ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL
For those traveling from the south or north via Interstate 89, exit at Exit 12 and head north on Route 2A. 2A will continue straight into the intersection of 2A and Route 15 in downtown Essex Junction. Continue straight on 2A through the five corners and take your second right turn. Immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, turn left and Essex High School will be on the right hand side.

For those traveling north on Route 7, get onto Interstate 189 at the entrance to Burlington and drive to Interstate 89 south. Bear right and follow to exit 12. Follow directions from exit 12 as stated above.

For those traveling Route 15 east, Essex High School is on Educational Drive, a right hand turn from the highway, before the center of Essex Junction, about one mile past the Lang Farm Shopping Complex.
2005 VMEA Fall Conference
Thursday, October 20, 2005, at Essex High School

Registration Form

Name: _______________________________________________________

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School(s) at which you teach (if applicable): __________________________________

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Subtract $10 from prices listed above if your registration is postmarked by Oct. 7 !!!

Other Info

For MENC membership rate, write your membership number here: _______________
or become a member using the form on the other side of this page.

If you are interested in conducting during the master class with Dawn Willis (“Conductor’s Tune Up”), write your e-mail address on the line below and someone will contact you.

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Why not join MENC/VMEA at the same time?
An application form is on the other side of this page...
Write one check to register for the conference and become a member!
Join Us!

Share this application with non-MENC member colleagues and tell them of the benefits of joining MENC.

When your colleagues join MENC: The National Association for Music Education, they automatically become a member of Vermont Music Educators Association. From local activities to national issues, MENC and VMEA offer the combination of services and benefits music educators need!

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*General Music Today*—Dealing specifically with the concerns of the general music educator.

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If you have recently retired please call 1-800-828-0229 for the retired dues rate.
Jazz ‘n Orff:
Swingin’ on the Bars
In this interactive session presented by jazzmusician/educator Ron Carter and Orff educator Glenda Cosenza, participants will learn how to play standard jazz tunes that have been arranged for Orff-barred instruments. They will discuss appropriate teaching strategies for using these tunes as a ‘hands on’ way of teaching jazz in a general music classroom setting for upper elementary and middle school grades. The session will include scat singing exercises, enculturation activities, and lots of playing and singing.

Glenda Cosenza received her doctorate in music education from Temple University in 1996. She is currently Assistant Professor of Music Education at Northern Illinois University where she teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in general music, research, and music education technology. She is a certified Orff specialist (Levels I and II) and has composed and arranged a variety of pieces for use in church choir situations for Orff instruments and treble voices. Dr. Cosenza’s research interests focus on teaching writing and other literacy skills through music, teaching preservice music educators reflective practice skill sets, and on assessing teacher dispositions among preservice music educators and determining how such assessment may or may not be a predictor of teacher attrition.

Ronald Carter is Professor of Music at Northern Illinois University and also serves as the Coordinator of the Jazz Studies Program and director the World Renowned NIU Jazz Ensemble. He has facilitated workshops as guest conductor, artist, clinician, or adjudicator at many colleges/universities, high schools, and conferences. Ron Carter spent over 18 years in the St. Louis metropolitan area as both an educator and as a professional freelance musician on saxophone, clarinet, flute and as a vocalist. Carter has performed professionally with Clark Terry, Lena Horne, Lou Rawls, the Jimmy Dorsey Band, the Temptations, Frank Mantooth, and others. Carter is currently a Conn/Selmer instrument artist clinician and educational specialist.

First Steps in Music™
Pre-literacy music skills for preK-2
From lesson plan outlines for your preK-2 students to understanding music aptitude to material resources, this session will add a boost to your preK-2 teaching. Learn how to help students become musical persons. This session will be based on the FIRST STEPS IN MUSIC curriculum by leading music educator Dr. John M. Feierebend.

Betsy Greene teaches general music K-5 in Burlington City Schools. She also teaches summer courses in Conversational Solfege™, a music literacy method developed by Dr. Feierebend. Betsy has a master’s degree in music education with an emphasis in early childhood from the Hartt School of Music, University of Hartford, CT. She is co-chair of the VMEA general music committee.

Sound Systems for Musical Performance in the Gymna-Café-Torium
Learn how to customize your sound system for the best possible response in multi-purpose performance spaces. Discussion topics will include reverberation/noise, microphones, loudspeakers, amplifiers and sound processors, and wiring.

Clinician: Dave Fuchs

Latin Music Styles for the Band Director
This workshop will explore the fundamentals of Latin music (focusing on Afro-Cuban, salsa, and Latin jazz styles). The elements of the clave rhythm structure will be covered in detail, focusing on the role of the various instruments in the combo or big band. Recordings of various artists will be played to demonstrate the material covered in the session. The workshop will end with a reading session of arrangements for a Latin jazz combo.

Clinician: Rick Davies

A complete schedule showing session times will be distributed to participants upon arrival at the conference site.

2005 VMEA Children’s Choir Festival
The VMEA vocal music committee is pleased to present the first VMEA Children’s Choir Festival, for students in grades 4, 5 and 6. Students were selected based on teacher recommendation. Eleven teachers and approximately 65 children are involved with this event during its inaugural year. All attendees at the conference are invited to attend open rehearsals of the chorus. This year’s guest conductor is Andrea Bonamico, director of the Mad River Children’s Chorale. The day’s work will culminate in a 4:00 pm concert for conference attendees and the general public.

Andrea Bonamico received her Bachelor of Music Education degree from Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA in 1998 with further study at Circle in the Square Theater School in New York City after teaching elementary music for four years. Presently, she studies vocal jazz with Dick Forman, head of jazz studies at Middlebury College. She has appeared in various roles at Waitsfield’s Skinner Barn, Bundy Center for the Arts and Valley Player’s Theater, Burlington’s Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, and Middlebury’s Town Hall Theater. She directs the annual fall musical at the Green Mountain Valley School and is the director of the Mad River Cabaret Troupe. She is the conductor of the Mad River Kids Chorale and has been a guest conductor at district music festivals in Vermont.

On the Rebound
Rather than pummeling and plodding through the concert band pieces, show your drum section how to come alive by using a relaxed and dynamic technical approach.

Clinician: Jeff Salisbury

2005 VMEA Fall Conference
Thursday, October 20, 2005, at Essex High School
Workshops & Clinicians

Page 29
2005 VMEA Fall Conference
Thursday, October 20, 2005, at Essex High School

Workshops and Clinicians

Musicianship in Instrumental Music
This workshop is designed to improve understanding of instrumental methods based on sequential teaching techniques at all levels of instruction. It will provide hands-on experience developing musicianship and instrumental skills for recorder, wind instruments, strings, and percussion. The course will also focus on improvisation, reading music, composition, assessment, and teaching the National Standards.
Clinician: Chris Azzara

Branching out from “Louie, Louie”
How to help your drummers provide a musical foundation
Basic rhythms for performance on drum set can be provided by any number of media sources. DVDs, CDs, videos and instructional methods are readily available to those who seek them out. Clinics and live performances are close at hand, but what will help students sift through and find what is the cake and what is the icing? We will examine some practical and accessible rhythms that can come in handy for school ensemble performances.
Clinician: Jeff Salisbury

Choral Assessment... Models for Success
Join successful Vermont choral directors at all levels as they share their models for effective choral assessment. Come with your questions and examples to share; leave with well-developed rubrics from local experts to help you with your own choral assessments.

Betsy Greene teaches K-5 general music in Burlington. She earned her bachelor's degree in music education from the Crane School of Music and her master's degree in music education from the Hart School of Music in Connecticut. She is certified in both Orff-Schulwerk and Kodaly. Becky regularly teaches summer courses in Conversational Solfege™.

Basic Brass
This session will cover basic brass instrument procedures, including cleaning and general maintenance. Minor repairs such as pulling a stuck mouthpiece or slide, replacing a water key cork and re-stringing a rotor will also be discussed and demonstrated.
Jeff Vovakes is the owner of Vermont Musical Instrument Repair in Middlesex, Vermont. Established in 1985, VMIR is a full service facility repairing brass, woodwind, string and percussion instruments. Clients include students, amateur and professional musicians, schools, colleges and universities throughout the Northeast as well as music dealers and technicians nationwide. Mr. Vovakes’ background in musical studies and theory began in Pennsylvania and continued to the college level. He then attended Western Iowa Tech Community College in the Band Instrument Repair program, graduating in 1975. He spent eleven years in Dallas, Texas, managing the central repair facility, as well as repair services purchasing for Brook Mays Music Company, Inc. Mr. Vovakes serves on the Western Iowa Tech Curriculum Advisory Committee. He is a charter member and twice past president of the National Association of Professional Band Instrument Repair Technicians, Inc. (NAPBIRT).

Conductor’s Tune-up
Dawn Willis will coach several volunteers in a conducting master class. Review basics and experience a new approach to your conducting. Sign up to be a conductor in this session by providing your e-mail address on the registration form (4 volunteers needed).

Dawn Willis, a new resident in VT, has been a professional musician for over 20 years. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Music from Arizona State University and master’s degrees in Sacred Music and Choral Conducting from Southern Methodist University. Dr. Willis has directed college, community and church ensembles throughout the country and her conducting responsibilities have included various academic and church choirs, madrigals, musical theater, youth choirs, and handbell ensembles. Dr. Willis conducted the McMurry University Choirs and Alumni Singers in a performance of Mozart’s Solemn Vespers in Carnegie Hall in 1999. Dawn is the founder and director of the Bella Voce Women’s Chorus of Vermont. She also is the Associate Director of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra Chorus.

Choral Reading Session
Join Glory Douglass as she leads participants in a read-through of hand-picked selections of quality choral music for students in grades 7-12.

Glory Douglass received her B.S. in Music Education from the University of Vermont and is presently working towards her Masters’ Degree in Music Education at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain. She has taught at Lamoiile Union in Hyde Park, North Country Union in Newport, and presently teaches at Essex High School. Her duties at Essex High School include the 140-member concert choir, the extra-curricular vocal ensembles, music theory, piano lab and classroom guitar. She annually produces a Cabaret Night and a Variety Show. Ms. Douglass has led church choirs and has been involved in community musical theatre throughout her career. She has been an adjudicator and guest conductor throughout Vermont. Ms. Douglass is a Past-President for the Vermont Chapter of ACDA and VMEA. Past awards include the 1997-1998 recipient of the "Vermont Music Educator of the Year", and the 1998-1999 recipient of the North Country Union High School "Teacher of the Year". She presently sings with the Vermont Symphony Chorus and Bella Voce.

Register for the conference by October 7 and save $10!
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At Castleton, we believe that in order to become a successful music educator one must develop superior performance skills. Our curriculum allows the student musician to earn a teaching certificate without sacrificing the necessary training in applied music or ensemble participation. Our music education courses are designed to integrate performance skills and teaching skills in multiple lab and field settings. The music core, which must be completed by all music majors, offers a well-rounded curriculum including music theory, history, and performance.

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Jonathan Lorentz, MA, New York University, Instrumental Education, Theory
Sarah McQuarrie, MM, The University of Maine, General Music Education, Piano
Richard Ullman, MFA, Sarah Lawrence College, Graduate, Kodaly Pedagogical Institute, Hungary, Aural Skills, Guitar
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Chamber Winds
Guitar Ensemble
Piano Ensemble
Percussion Ensemble
Plymouth State Theatre
Plymouth Players
Contemporary Dance Ensemble
The Rep Company
Jazz Combos

Information
Dr. Jonathan Santore, Chair
Department of Music and Theatre MSC 37
Plymouth State University
Plymouth, New Hampshire 03264
jsantore@plymouth.edu
(603) 535-2334
www.plymouth.edu/mtd
On April 12, 2005, approximately 550 instrumental students from ten schools traveled to Harwood Union High School to participate in the first annual VMEA Band Festival. Each band presented three pieces (two taken from a repertoire list and one of their choice) to three outstanding adjudicators: Gary Corcoran from Plymouth State University, Andrew Boysen from the University of New Hampshire, and D. Thomas Toner from the University of Vermont.

The bands each had forty minutes of “on stage” time and in addition to taped and written comments, they each received a clinic from one of the three adjudicators. Many groups were able to stay for part of the day to hear other bands perform (often the same pieces they played) and the clinics that followed.

The directors were able to choose whether they wanted “comments only” or “ratings and comments,” but in either case, they were judged on tone, tempo, rhythmic accuracy, melodic/harmonic accuracy, blend/balance, clarity in articulation, dynamics, phrasing and intonation.

The day ran smoothly and was a great success!

Comments from some of this year’s participants:

“I met with my group today, and the students had a fabulous experience. They were SO appreciative of the opportunity to hear the other groups, and hear the comments of the adjudicators. The comments, by the way, were well said by all three gentlemen on our tapes.”

“The discussion before and afterwards was wonderful for my classes. Tom’s humor and expertise was well received and appreciated by my students. The taped comments were also very helpful and both Andy and Gary had great comments. I think this was a wonderful event and will do whatever I can to help it continue.”

“It seemed to run very smoothly and I was pleased with the comments from each of the adjudicators and especially pleased with Gary’s clinic after our performance.”

For 2005-2006, we are very excited to expand the VMEA Band Festival to two full days, Tuesday, April 11 at Harwood Union High School and Wednesday, April 12 at Springfield High School. If you are interested in participating, please fill out the application [printed in this journal] and send it to:

Christina Toner
South Burlington High School
550 Dorset Street
So. Burlington, VT 05403

If you do not wish to participate this year but would like to see what it’s all about, we would like to invite you to bring some students to listen and watch. Let me know (via email) if you would like to watch and I will send you a program with participating groups, times of performances, and selections.

Please feel free to call (802-652-7542) or e-mail <ctoner@sbschools.net> with any questions!

Registration details for the 2006 Festival are printed on the next two pages...

Pictures on this page were taken at the 2005 VMEA Band Festival. (Submitted by Christina Toner)
VMEA will present its second annual Band Festival on Tuesday, April 11 at Harwood Union High School and Wednesday, April 12 at Springfield High School. This 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.

The adjudicators this year are:

- Steve Peterson, Ithaca College
- Lt. Col. Michael Colburn, conductor of "The President's Own" United States Marine Band
- TBA

Each participating ensemble will have 40 minutes of on-stage time (including set-up) and will perform three pieces: two chosen from the repertoire list (below) and one of your own choosing. Directors can choose to receive a rating and comments, or comments only. Each group will also receive a recording of their performance.

Repertoire list for the 2006 Festival:
1. "Shenandoah" by Frank Ticheli
2. "Toccata for Band" by Frank Erickson
3. "Prelude, Siciliano and Rondo" by Malcolm Arnold
4. "First Suite in Eb" by Gustav Holst
5. "American Riversongs" by Pierre La Plante

*Each of these pieces can be found through J.W. Pepper.*

Last year's one-day festival was packed with ten bands, but was extremely successful and rewarding. In order to give more bands the opportunity to participate, we are offering two days in two separate locations (Harwood UHS and Springfield HS) with 18-20 slots available. These spaces will be filled on a first come first serve basis. If you would like your band to participate, please out the information on the following page (please indicate which site you would like to attend) and return along with the $250 participation fee to

Christina Toner
South Burlington High School
550 Dorset Street
South Burlington, VT
05403
*Checks should be made out to: SBHS Music Department*

**VMEA Band Festival**

School Name

Director’s Name

School address

Phone number

Email address

# of participants

"Comments only" or "Ratings/Comments"

**PLEASE INDICATE THE SITE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND**

_____ April 11 at Harwood UHS

_____ April 12 at Springfield HS

Indicate your time preference (morning, afternoon, etc). Take into account the time it takes to travel to the site.

____________________

Return this form and a check for $250 to:

Christina Tozer
South Burlington High School
550 Dorset Street
South Burlington, VT 05403

*Checks should be made out to: SBHS Music Department*
Meeting called to order at 6:08 PM

Members present: Glory Douglass, Gary Moreau, Bear Irwin, Cindy Hall, Paul Rondinone, Steffen Parker, Allyson Ledoux, Aron Garceau, Betsy Greene

REPORTS

Secretary’s Report
Motion to accept secretary’s report as printed: Steffen Parker. Second: Gary Moreau. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report
Balance as of January 14, 2005: $8258.19
Income: $1748.49
Expenses: $1484.80
Current Balance: $8521.88

Motion to accept treasurer’s report: Steffen Parker. Second: Aron Garceau. Motion carried.

Paul brought up several points:

- Asked about W9 forms for people registering for All State. It is proof that you’re a legal, tax-exempt organization. One school asked for it.
- Paul had a hard time switching banks. We are now with Chittenden. Paul will make multiple copies of the tax-exempt form and give a copy to all who have signed off on the account. He will also keep a copy with the checkbook. This is a very important document that we MUST have to switch banks.

- Why do we have three email accounts if we also have the listserv? Steffen answered that the whole idea is to have the offices of state manager, editor and president to have their own addresses.

- Questioned the cost of Valleynet based on the services we get. A benefit of Valleynet is that they are a local company and provide great tech support. Paul and Steffen will research other ISPs.

- Paul felt that since gas prices are so high, we need to raise the executive board mileage reimbursement. Motion to raise mileage from fifteen cents to twenty cents per mile: Paul Rondinone. Second: Steffen Parker. Motion carried.

State Manager’s Report

Steffen sent emails out to music teachers reminding them of the bylaws changes and the vote. The bylaws vote is in person, the officer election is by ballot. Steffen will hand deliver ballots at All State and mail the remainder. The “box of minutes” dating from the 1970’s has been put in chronological order and hung in hanging files. The board decided it was a good idea to send an electronic copy (data CD or similar) of the minutes once a year to the state manager. Paul asked if we could change the bylaws to allow a ballot vote on the bylaws. A ballot would reach more people than those who go to All State. There is a perception in the state that the high school teachers run the show. The bylaws say the vote has to happen at a live meeting. Can people send a ballot to be counted at a live meeting? The bylaws state “present and voting.”

Motion to change the wording of the bylaws from “present and voting” to “by secret ballot.” – Gary Moreau. Second: Steffen Parker. Motion carried with 1 nay. It is still early enough to add this change in time for the 30-day warning. Motion to amend the constitution and bylaws so that we can change them in the future by secret ballot: Steffen Parker. Second: Gary Moreau. Motion carried.

All State Director’s Report

Steffen reported that plans are coming along, though there is still no parade route or starting area. Composition scholarship results just came in. If one of the winners is for large ensemble, it will be performed Friday night because of space issues. Only 24 of 56 schools sent in their All State acceptance forms on time, correctly and completely.

Discussed what to do with any leftover money from All State. In the past, VPA gave All State $3000. We gave 60% of what was left over to VPA and 40% to the host school. Paul suggested that we could either sweeten the pot for the host school or put it in a contingency fund for All State. If the fund gets too large, we could reduce All State fees. Gary felt we shouldn’t be the ones to make the decision. Motion to allow the All State committee to determine how to spend their funds for this year: Gary Moreau. Second: Aron Garceau. Motion carried.

Glory asked if our state manager stipend covers All State. Gary recalled that at the last All State meeting that helping the festival director financially was discussed. Though it is a very valid discussion, it is one that should take place at the All State meeting.

Past President and President-Elect Reports

Gary and Glory passed on reports due to time constraints.

President’s Report

Bear thanked Aron for his good work on the website. Reported that there was a good Vermont showing at Easterns – especially among college students. Bear thanked the Board for their hard work in these transient times.

There are many professional development opportunities available through MENC. Funding to attend is available even in smaller states. We should consider sending a delegation to these things – at least every Easterns and national Conference. We should send at LEAST the state manager, president-elect and the president. Bear felt we must find a way to send a delegation – not just one person. It is not a luxury, it’s a responsibility. Ideas and information from the conferences expand exponentially if more people go. We should be able to send at least three people comfortably. Bear will find someone to appoint as a development person to find the money to do this. Until then, all who went should submit bills to Paul.

Bear mentioned that we need to get back to sharing district handbooks. Gary handed out the District III handbook and contact info. Aron reported that District I’s book can be downloaded: www.sheldon.k12.vt.us/nwd.

Conference

Conference will be in Essex on Thursday, October 20. There will be an all-day children’s choir rehearsal with performance. Ron Carter

Continued on Page 37
and Glenda Cosenza will do a workshop entitled “Swingin’ On the bars” – encompasses Orff instruments and improvisation. Betsy will run a K-2 pre-literacy session. Allyson will do a workshop on how choral teachers evaluate their students.

Discussed the children’s choir: Ten of the best singers from each school can be nominated. June 1st is the deadline. Fee is $15/student, due by September 10. A block of rooms will be set aside for teachers who want to bring kids the night before. Open rehearsal will run all day. The concert is planned for 4:00. Discussed whether parents should be charged. Decided not to. $275 plus expenses will be paid to conductor; $175 to accompanist. The choir will be self-supporting. Open to grades 4-6, but only 6th graders that are in an elementary school.

Glory suggested we have a question/answer panel for college kids.

Gary handed out a rough draft of the “executive board guide.” Continue to send info to Gary.

Bear thanked Gary for his work.

OLD BUSINESS

Advance

Bear stated his appreciation for the work done at the Advance.

Strategic Plan

Glory handed out a rough draft of the strategic plan. Board members should look it over and send any suggestions to Glory.

Bear pointed out a letter from Dick Disharoon complimenting the board on their work at the Advance.

We should send Gary and Steffen to the national Leadership Assembly in Reston.

Election

Steffen reported that the slate of nominees is nearly complete.

Teacher of the Year

Steffen reported that only one nomination had been received. We should make a bigger deal of this at the district level. Give out a plaque at a festival and have someone from the executive board show up and make the presentation. Outlined a timeline: Nominations come in between January and spring. Vote in May. Present award in October. Gary mentioned that we should announce it at the beginning of the school year to stick with the academic calendar. We should know who nominees are by April 15.

Membership

Gary reported that we’re dropping again. Gary sent a personal invitation to join MENC to all District III non-members. He listed the benefits of becoming a member. All district chairs should try this – very helpful.

Vacancies

Michael Zsoldas is our new instrumental chair. He is also District Chair for Paul’s district, replacing Matt Martyn who is going to China again. An instrumental committee will be formed.

Library

The library is still at UVM. Frank will contact people when he needs help moving.

NEW BUSINESS

Communications

Allyson asked about ways to help communication. Cindy stated that the personal emails to missing members after each meeting will help. Allyson had a concern about so many emails to missing members after each meeting will help. Allyson had a concern about so many district presidents being absent so often.

Collegiate Research

Bear will ask Geoffrey Reynolds if he would be interested in research chair. Perhaps he could swap collegiate chair with someone.

Concerts on VMEA website

Decided to list them once a month. The deadline for submitting info is the 15th of the month before the concert. Submit all materials to Aron.

Motion to adjourn: Gary Moreau. Second: Paul Rondinone. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

MAY 5, 2005

AT MIDDLEBURY HIGH SCHOOL

Meeting called to order at 5:05 PM.

Present: Paul Rondinone, Gary Moreau, Cindy Hall, Bear Irwin, Matt Tatro, Steffen Parker, Chris Rivers, Glory Douglass, Mark Whitman, Denis Lambert, Michael Zsoldas, Anne Hamilton, Allyson Ledoux

REPORTS

Secretary’s Report

Motion to approve as printed: Steffen Parker. Second: Gary Moreau. Motion passed.

Treasurer’s Report

Motion to approve: Steffen Parker. Second: Mark Whitman. Motion passed. Steffen questioned the fifty-cent difference in ad revenue. It is due to 10% discount. The Board congratulated Denis for his good work on the recent journal.

Editor’s Report

Denis handed out and presented a detailed report and asked for clarification/action on several points:

Do we archive the journals? All agreed it should be done, and has been – informally. Denis will archive future issues.

Denis has been receiving a lot of spam. Should we look into a spam filter? Would cost about $30/month. Consensus was that it is not a big enough problem yet.

Inquired about getting Adobe Acrobat – software that would make it easier to get each issue out. Will improve layout capabilities. Uses Microsoft Publisher now. Steffen suggested Adobe Creative Suite would be better – offers more possibilities and is a good deal. Costs about $650. Gary added that we need to make work as easy as possible for Denis. Motion to allow Denis the funds to purchase Adobe Creative Suite: Gary Moreau. Second: Steffen Parker. Motion passed.

State Manager’s Report

Hall of Fame: Steffen reported that Hall of Fame nominations are up on the website. Discussion regarding requirement of being a VMEA member. There are a number of nominees who are not members. Motion was passed in 2003 implementing this requirement. Chris questioned the purpose of the requirement. Cindy felt the name of the award should be changed to VMEA Educator of the Year or something similar to better reflect eligibility and selectiveness. It was agreed that this requirement is still not publicized enough to the districts. Steffen stated the requirement will drastically reduce the number of nominations. Glory mentioned

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

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that membership should be considered a professional responsibility. Michael asked if we elected a non-member, would it encourage them to join in the future? Steffen stated that it was good for advocacy no matter what. Quality educators promote music education. Matt suggested paying membership for a year for the selected teachers. If already a member, they could be reimbursed. Perhaps they’d stay a member after their one-year membership expired. Chris asked if there was a connection between VMEA and All State requiring All State teachers to be VMEA members. We should wait to enforce this requirement for the awards until the All State requirement happens. Motion to dispense with the VMEA membership requirement for award nominations for this year: Steffen Parker. Second: Matt Tatro. Motion carried with 9 yeas and 1 nay.

MENC will maintain current dues values.

MENC Chapter Growth Recognition: UVM Chapter has had 31% increase. We should send a letter to Geoff and the chapter members from the president. Should also mention it at the conference.

Discussed requests for contact lists/email lists. Wisconsin sells these lists for six cents per label. Board felt the disadvantages outweigh the small profit that could be made. Consensus was to NOT give out these lists.

In 1997 we lost our incorporation with the state because we didn’t file a report. We can re-activate by filing a new report and paying $300. Motion to allocate $300 to re-incorporate: Paul Rondinone. Second: Steffen Parker. Motion passed. We pay a small fee to stay incorporated each year. $75-80. Must file an annual report to help maintain records. Glory felt that this could be added to the state manager’s duties. Paul wanted a photocopy made and kept with all officers.

**Festival Director’s Report**

Current festival going well. Steffen reported on recent communications. There has been some misunderstanding of the Evelyn Springstead scholarship. The online form doesn’t state the criteria. Received applications from six ineligible students this year. Also, kids are feeling that All State not as “fun” as it used to be. Trying some new things this year to allow a bit more freedom and interaction time while keeping it safe. Fifty more auditions this year. Only eight cancellations. The festival is in good shape financially. 3500 donation T-shirts from VT Oral Surgery. The Board joined Bear in thanking Steffen for his hard work.

Steffen asked for consensus of the board in regards to requiring teachers of All State kids to be VMEA members. Paul felt that All State is put on for kids, not teachers so membership shouldn’t matter. When All State was sponsored by VPA, schools had to be VPA members. Chris felt schools should pay a participation fee. The money could be used to train adjudicators, fund festival director position, pay stipends to adjudicators, etc. Paul noted that NH has a sponsoring district fee. It is different for each school, based on enrollment. Steffen suggested that in lieu of membership, all teachers sending kids should be required to serve the festival in some manner – adjudicate, volunteer on a committee, etc. Chris felt the logistics wouldn’t work. Right now, we can send a form to adjudicators stating that they donated x amount of time, and they can deduct from their taxes. Couldn’t do that under VPA because they weren’t a non-profit. The consensus was that the VMEA membership requirement is not a good idea at this time. A participation fee structure based on enrollment could be a good solution. Anne felt it shouldn’t be implemented until 2006/2007 because budgets have already been submitted. Chris felt the “why” needs to be clearly articulated. Judges/scholarship money, festival director, etc. Using general student money for the scholarships is a problem.

Discussed hierarchy of the festival including roles of VMEA, All State committee and general membership. Historically the general membership has made decisions and voted on them at the Friday morning meeting. We can’t all of a sudden take that right away. The VMEA Board can present proposals and recommendations, which will help discussions go more quickly at the larger meeting.

Steffen’s proposal for division of All State proceeds: 40% to host, 40% to festival to maintain operations, 20% to VMEA. Motion to divide the proceeds as per Steffen’s proposal: Matt Tatro. Second: Chris Rivers. Motion passed

Bear will research a participation fee structure to present at the general meeting. Anne requested that schools be billed directly for winners of Educator of the Year/Young Educator of the Year; Matt Tatro. Second: Gary Moreau. Motion passed.

**President-Elect Report**

Gary reported that membership is down nine from last year. We are at 125 total members, not including Tri-M or collegiate. Tri-M is up significantly. Asked district chairs to send out personal invitations to join, if that is what it takes.

**President’s Report**

Vacancies: Discussed current vacancies and filled positions. Michael Zsoldas has taken over as instrumental chair and District VI Chair. Ron Sherwin has filled the collegiate chair. Glory volunteered to by VMEA representative.

Matt will look into a low cost or free listserv.

Election: Ballots will be ready to go at general meeting.

Bear thanked the board for their generosity, ingenuity and hard work during his term.

**District Reports**

District VI – Michael reported that he just took over and is learning the ropes. Work needs to be done on the website.

District V – Matt reported that all is well.

District IV – Cindy reported that the Middle School festival was held at Oxbow in April. Very successful. Included a fifty-member string ensemble.

District III – Nothing new to report.

District II – Nothing new to report.

District I – No report.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Conference will be Thursday at Essex. Discussed details.

Denis voiced concern over mailing September issue to everyone. Many felt it is good for more people to see the breadth of the organization. To make the larger mailing easier, Denis should get the word out about when he’s working on the mailing and some can come and help. The listserv can be used to remind district chairs about journal deadlines. Bear is doing a membership database.

Allyson sent out 140 letters to general music teachers about the honors choir. Included deadline, fee, etc. The interest is out there.

**OTHER**

Motion to fund VMEA membership or reimburse current member for one year for winners of Educator of the Year/Young Educator of the Year; Matt Tatro. Second: Gary Moreau. Motion passed.

Motion to adjourn: Matt Tatro. Second: Paul Rondinone.

Next meeting dates: Bear will send out choices to be voted on. Tossed around August 16 or 22 as possibilities.
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Sing National Anthem on September 14

On September 14, schools and communities across the United States are encouraged to sing “The Star-Spangled Banner” in celebration of the anniversary of the poem Francis Scott Key wrote on that day in 1814 on the back of an envelope. He wrote the stanzas that became “The Star-Spangled Banner” during the bombardment of Fort McHenry by British forces in Baltimore, Maryland.

MENC: The National Association for Music Education urges music educators to encourage students, parents, and community members to participate in communal singing of the national anthem on September 14 at 9:00 a.m. local time. Visit <www.thenationalanthemproject.org> for a variety of teacher resources, lesson plans, and information on how your school or community can create an anniversary celebration.

MENC members who take photographs (300 dpi if digital) of their students and communities singing “The Star-Spangled Banner” on September 14 are requested to share them with MENC. Email them to MENC’s director of conventions, Margaret Jamborsky, at <margaretj@menc.org>. Or you may mail photos to her at MENC, 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191, att: Margaret Jamborsky. Photos will be part of a big-screen display at MENC’s Biennial National Conference in April 2006 at Salt Lake City.

Visit the project’s web site <www.nationalanthemproject.org> for more information, including how to purchase awareness items to support the campaign, a list of current sponsoring organizations, teacher lesson plans, an online bulletin board, and updated information for the project.

- Submitted by MENC

UVM Recognized for CMENC Growth

The collegiate MENC chapter at the University of Vermont was recognized in April by MENC for membership growth. The UVM chapter grew from 9 members during the 2003 academic year to 13 during the 2004 academic year.

- Submitted by MENC

District I Notes

District I closed off the year on a great note. In our final meeting it was determined that we would be able to award each of our three scholarship winners a prize of $400. We are very happy that we have been able to support students in this manner and look forward to being able to do so again in the 2005-2006 school year.

The revived jazz festival took place in the newly-built Enosburg Falls High School auditorium. It’s a beautiful space... one of the best auditoriums I’ve seen in the state. The festival consisted of performing groups from the area schools as well as a select ensemble directed by Steve Blair, chair of the music department at Johnson State College.

Right now, District I teachers are preparing for a new year and new students. You can see what we’re up to by visiting our website <www.sheldon.k12.vt.us/nwd>.

- Submitted by Aron Garceau

Wisconsin Opens New Music Education Center

Wisconsin music organizations are celebrating the opening of an exciting new headquarters. The Wisconsin Center for Music Education opened in July of 2005 as the new headquarters for the Wisconsin School Music Association, the Wisconsin Music Educators Association, and other arts organizations.

A capital campaign for the $1.9 million, 16,900 square foot facility was completed in 2004.

In addition to providing meeting and office space, the building also contains a music education resource library, a digital sound studio, an electronic keyboard lab, and classroom space. Music instruction occurs at the center, with integrated arts classes for pre-school children and music technology courses for adults.

This facility is the first of its kind in the nation.

To learn more about the center, check out the web site link at: <www.wsmamusic.org>.

- From a WSMA press release

Conn-Selmer University Review

Over 200 music educators and music education majors from 33 states gathered at the University of Notre Dame for the 2005 Conn-Selmer University. Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser leads Conn-Selmer University (CSU). The 2005 program included presentations and discussions led by highly respected music educators. Of special note were comments and presentations made by MENC president Dr. David Circle and past president, Mel Clayton. MENC is an affiliated partner of CSU.

Originally created to help graduating music education majors transition into the teaching environment, CSU has expanded to include summer sessions for professionals at the beginning of their careers, sessions designed for teachers with five or more years of experience, one-day satellite sessions for future music educators, and in-service sessions for specific school system music faculty members. There is also a music-business track designed specifically for music store representatives who serve the educational market.

For information about Conn-Selmer University programs, visit the CSU website at www.connselmeru.com, or call 574-522-1675 x1620.

- Submitted by Conn-Selmer

Software Release:

New Music Ace Maestro Features Educator Management Tools

Harmonic Vision has announced the release of Music Ace Maestro for professional music educators teaching music primarily to elementary-aged students. Music Ace Maestro combines the 48 award-winning music lessons from Music Ace and Music Ace 2, sequences them in pedagogical order, and includes a new suite of student assessment and curriculum management tools called “Maestro Manager.”

For more information, including pricing, visit Harmonic Vision’s web site: <www.harmonicvision.com>.

- Submitted by Moody & Associates PR
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10 Years Later: Changing Lanes

Denis Lambert
VMEA Editor

There are two roads in life. First, there’s the paved road. Speed limit of 50. Smooth ride. Pretty much straight away. No wonder, then, that it’s more heavily traveled than the dirt road. On the dirt road, the speed limit may be 50, but no one’s going to be going that fast in the middle of mud season. As far as being smooth, well, maybe in the winter when it’s glare ice. And not many things have more curves than the backroads of Vermont...

That was me in June of 1995, speaking as valedorian of Richford High School. I was using travel as a metaphor to talk about choices. Although I had decided to attend Keene State College as a journalism major, I didn’t really know what I wanted to do with my life. Now, ten years later, I believe I finally have found my calling.

I’ve attended school continuously — either as a student or as a music teacher — since the age of five. Recently, I decided to change lanes and enter the music business industry. More specifically, I chose to leave teaching and accept a job working for Ellis Music Company. It’s a decision that has drawn mixed reactions from teachers and others who know me. In the end, though, we each must choose the road we will travel, and I believe this is the best road for me at this point in my life.

Once you become a music teacher at a school, it’s easy to become entrenched. That’s not necessarily bad. As long as the school’s budgetary situation is positive — a big gamble these days — and you don’t do anything bad, your contract is likely to be renewed. Bonds with students (and staff) are quickly formed and the environment becomes comfortable. Yet this situation introduces the potential for stagnancy... staying in a job just because it is there.

As a junior in high school, I could not have been any more confident that I would not teach. It simply was not a career that interested me.

But my desire to stay involved with music led to majoring in music education and — when it was time to get a job — becoming “Mr. Lambert.” Were my personality and skills different, the story could have ended with thirty years of service and retirement. For me, though, teaching never felt right. I gave it time, knowing from discussions with veteran teachers that the first few years would be challenging. After four years at one school, I felt I had reached the limit of what I could accomplish in that particular situation. Still unsure of my desire to teach for the long-term, I was privileged to have a chance to change schools and work with younger students. But, alas, there was still no “spark” that made me look forward to each day. Without that feeling of inspiration, one cannot be truly satisfied.

This is not the end of my education or my role as a teacher... just a change. We must all continue to learn and grow if we are to lead productive, pleasing lives. In my new position, I am learning many things about instruments, like proper cleaning methods, basic repairs, and differences between brands and models. As you are reading this, I am probably performing an instrument demonstration for potential music students at some school in Vermont. In this fashion, I hope to be able to inspire young people to become musicians. Working in the store, I will help educate parents of young musicians as they shop for sheet music, instruments, and accessories. Later in the fall, I will be traveling a service route that will take me to several different schools... maybe yours!

I regret nothing about having taught. In fact, I believe all adults should spend time in schools, observing and volunteering, so they can understand the critical nature of teaching and realize that... well, as our current U.S. president might say, “it’s hard work.” My four years in Fair Haven and one year in Bethel gave me valuable experience and helped me to grow as a person. It certainly gave me practice in decision making. (Have you ever thought about how many decisions you make in a day in the music classroom?) Teaching also introduced me to many people, provided connections for additional trombone playing opportunities, helped me discover the wonderful town of Rochester, and led me to becoming editor of this journal.

A former colleague whom I admire greatly told me once that everything happens for a reason. I had doubts at the time this was said, but now that theory seems plausible, as I find myself content in a job that would not have been possible had I not traveled the roads that led me to this point.

Change is often accompanied by a desire to look back and reflect. In that spirit, I hope you’ll pardon me for sharing a few memories of my teaching years.

Baritones and Euphoniums and Tubas.... Oh, My!

While attending Keene State College, I was introduced to “TubaChristmas,” an annual event held at various locations throughout the U.S. on various dates, at which Christmas carols are played in four-part harmony by baritone horns, euphoniums, and tubas. (No other instruments allowed!)

One year, there was a particularly motivated group of musicians in my band who also happened to be friends with one another. I was going to play in Keene’s TubaChristmas and figured it would be nice to have company, so I rented a van and turned it into a field trip for the students. They had a great time and were hooked. (We ended up playing in a second TubaChristmas in Glens Falls a couple weeks later.)

The next year, by the beginning of November, those students were asking me about TubaChristmas. Soon I found myself planning a trip to the event in New York City. I rented a van again, and we left for New Jersey on a Saturday evening. One of the students had a grandmother just outside the city in New Jersey who...
graciously agreed to let us spend the night at her house.

The next morning we were talking about how to get into the city, and somehow the students convinced me that it would be easier if I just drove the van into the city. Getting out of New Jersey proved interesting, as I discovered a road on my map no longer existed. Other than that, the journey into the city went fairly smooth. We found a parking space without much trouble and took the subway to the rehearsal location — a parking garage underneath Radio City Music Hall. The concert itself was on the ice rink outside Rockefeller Center. We were all a bit disappointed with the turnout — there were “only” about 200 musicians... not as many we had envisioned, but the experience was good.

Our last challenge was getting out of the city. I headed for the Brooklyn Bridge and all was fine until I saw signs for the upper deck and lower deck. “Which way should I go?” I asked. “Left,” one person said. “Right,” another person said. “What?” asked a third person. You have to realize this all happened in a matter of seconds. Unable to make a decision, I remained in the center lane (the only wrong choice!), which took us straight to the Bronx. Somehow, after a lot of driving — it probably was 15 minutes but it seemed like forever — we made it out of the city and onto the interstate. Now that was an adventure!

Lessons in Composition

John was a trumpet player in the high school band. He often had a difficult time getting notes out and when he did, the tone was rather shaky. Not destined for greatness as a trumpet player, yet a really great kid. He was on the football team but didn’t get much playing time. For him, I think band was a place where he felt comfortable.

One year, he had an extra period and signed up for “band lab.” I introduced him to Finale and had him start writing his own music. Sometimes I would let him go wild; other times I presented structured assignments. He wrote some very interesting short pieces. During the year, I saw him grow. He seemed to become more confident and started taking charge as a leader within the band. Since he was in the music room during the period right after band each day, we often talked about ideas for improving the band and worked on special projects as they came up (like decorations for the annual pops concert).

Together, using a MIDI file from the internet, we transcribed the theme from Magnum P.I. for use in a concert featuring television theme songs. In the process, John made decisions about who should play what part, how loud each part should play, and other arranging considerations. The high school band performed the piece in concert and — if I can say so without sounding biased — it was really good. I helped John record his original compositions onto a CD using the computer and during the spring concert, with his permission, I played the recording we had made... a medley of five of his best works.

For his exam at the end of the year, I had John write one more original composition using the computer. After he left the room, I looked at his work and noticed a memo written at the top of the page. Tears filled my eyes as I read what he had written. John had thanked me for giving him a voice.

A Proper Ending for Mr. Holland’s Opus

I like the movie “Mr. Holland’s Opus” but the ending seems wrong to me. At the end, a crowd fills the gym to honor the career of Mr. Holland... but his job is eliminated anyway.

In 2004, the school board in Fair Haven voted to reduce my teaching position to half time because of scheduling and budgetary issues. Once the news got out, parents bombarded the superintendent’s office with phone calls, recent band graduates wrote letters to administrators, and a group of parents urged others to attend the next school board meeting. What resulted was the exact scene that should have ended the movie “Mr. Holland’s Opus.”

Over 120 citizens — students, teachers, parents, and other community members — gathered to protest the cut. The high school library was packed. One by one, for over an hour, they spoke eloquently to the school board about the value of a musical education and the personal impact it had on their lives. The community won, the cut was reversed, and the music program survived. I realized that night that advocacy is not so much about printing music factoids in programs and giving out annual achievement awards as it is about forming relationships with your students and their parents.

Students, Students, Everywhere...

Teachers get to “borrow” kids for a period of time. Sometimes we are grateful that they go home at the end of the day and become the responsibility of other adults. (Be honest, now, you can think of at least one student in that category!) Yet mixed in with the challenging students are those who enhance our lives in various ways.

Among the kids I think of when I remember being a teacher are: the guitarist who wasn’t in a music class but spent a period in the music room each day playing guitar and singing country songs; the quiet, troubled girl (another non-musician) who sought out advice about relationships because she felt safe in the music room; the sixth-grade boy who struggled with brass instruments and finally took off on the saxophone; the self-motivated young lady who, as a junior, finally learned how to read music after years of playing flute by listening to others; and the students with special needs who lacked sophisticated communication skills but whose faces were priceless when they made music.

I’ve found that the individuals I think of most often are not the best musicians but the most spirited people.

I suspect that someday, somehow I’ll find myself once again working directly with students — perhaps as a volunteer or a private teacher -- building the sort of relationships that keep music going. For now, though, I’ll enjoy interacting with the music educators of Vermont behind the scenes, supporting music education through the music industry. And it will be nice to be just “Denis” once again.

Best wishes to all who may read this column, whether you are stepping boldly into a new phase of your life or continuing fearlessly on a path that satisfies your career aspirations.

I’ll see you on the road.
Keene State College

Keene State College is a comprehensive, public, liberal arts college offering 37 major programs of study. Of the 5,200 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.

Faculty
Craig Sylvyn, DMA (Ohio State), Department Chair, Saxophone, Composition, Music Technology
Don Baldini, BM (Indiana), Double Bass, Jazz Ensemble, Orchestra, Theory, Jazz History
Joseph Darby, PhD (City University of New York), Musicology, World Music
Maura Glennon, DM (Florida State), Piano, Accompanying, Piano Ensemble, Piano Literature
Gladys Johnsen, PhD (North Dakota), Music Education
Carroll Lehman, DMA (Iowa), Voice, Chamber Singers, Conducting, Opera Workshop
José Lezcano, PhD (Florida State), Guitar, Theory, Guitar Orchestra, Latin American Music
George Loring, MM (New England Conservatory), Piano, Piano Pedagogy, Accompanying, Theory, Harpsichord
Douglas Nelson, MM (Eastman) Band, Conducting, Music Education
Kathy Andrew, MM (Peabody), Violin
James Boccia, MAL (SUNY- Stony Brook), Trumpet
Elaine Broad, DMA (U of Cincinnati), Theory, Masterworks
Diane Cushing, MM (Boston Conservatory), Voice
Donna Deardorff, MEd (Keene State), General Music
Joy Flemming, MA (U of Akron), Bassoon, Woodwind Quintet
Sussan Henkel, MM (Northwestern), Oboe
Karen Horton, MM (Manhattan), Horn, Brass Methods
Michael Kelley, MM (Juilliard), Viola
Marcia Lehninger, MM (UCO), Theory, Masterworks
Ted Mann, MA (UNH), Guitar Studies, Music History
Robin Matathias, MA (CCNY), Flute, Flute Ensemble
Victoria Moore, MM (UMass Amherst), Low Brass
Timothy Rogers, MM (Bob Jones), Class Piano, Fundamental Music Skills
Thomas Souza, MM (UMass Lowell), Clarinet
Pamela Stevens, BA (Central Missouri State), Voice
Christopher Swist, MM (Hartt), Percussion, Percussion Ensemble
Scott White, MM (Boston U), Organ, Piano Class
Perri Zimmerman, MM (UMass Amherst), Cello

Facilities
The Redfern Arts Center on Brickyard Pond features a superb recital hall, two theatres, practice modules, rehearsal rooms, a 17-station piano lab, a music resource library, and an electronic music studio.

Auditions
December 2
January 27
February 17
March 3
March 24
For an audition application or more information call, e-mail, or write to:
Deborah Butler
Department of Music
Keene State College
229 Main Street
Keene, NH 03435-2402
603-358-2177
Fax 603-358-2973
dbutler@keene.edu
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