

SUPPORT

ED

A MAGAZINE FOR INSTRUMENTAL INSTRUCTORS



YAMAHA

2018 VOLUME 3

QUICK
REPAIRS
ON WINDS

**BUILDING
TEAMWORK**
WITH DRUM CIRCLES

+ RANCHO
HIGH SCHOOL:
**SUCCESS
IN THE
INNER CITY**

PABLO RIEPPI

THE POWER OF PRACTICE



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Cover photo by Rob Shanahan for Yamaha Corporation of America

Yamaha SupportED

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INSPIRING, EMPOWERING AND EQUIPPING MUSIC EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS THROUGH FINELY CRAFTED INSTRUMENTS, ACCESS TO LIFE-CHANGING MUSICAL EVENTS AND THE SHARING OF GIFTED ARTISTS

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Music Educator,



I cannot believe you are reading this letter. I mean it! Whenever it's time for me to write the Editor's Note for SupportED, I can't help but think, "No one is going to read this."

In an attempt to quell this unfounded insecurity, I started to read more editors' columns in the magazines I subscribe to instead of skipping past these pages like I used to.

It probably won't come as a surprise, but many editors' columns are well-thought-out and well-written. There is something to be learned from almost all of them. My goal is to write messages of value, including relevant and inspiring words to you in my Editor's Note. Actually, that is my goal for all of the pages of SupportED magazine.

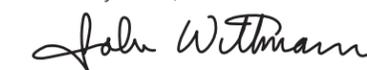
There is no question that this issue includes valuable, relevant and inspiring stories. I have known Pablo Rieppi for years, but hearing his story again — from his unlikely start to his incredible focus and drive — blew me away. It is a must-read for all teachers and students — percussionists and non-percussionists. The Success Story about Clint Williams' work at Rancho High School in Las Vegas, Musical Tips about Matt Savage and drum circles, and Education Tips on quick winds repairs are full of great information to help and motivate you.

During Yamaha staff meetings, we often stop and ask ourselves, "Are we working in a vacuum?" and "Are we writing the best content to help band and orchestra directors?" We question ourselves because we never want to lose sight of our mission: to inspire band and orchestral directors to continue to be the best teachers they can be.

In order to do our jobs well, we need your advice on the content and direction of SupportED. Please write to me at jwittmann@yamaha.com and offer your suggestions. Your insight would be heard and much appreciated.

Enjoy this issue and, as always, we look forward to seeing you in the near future.

Musically Yours,



John Wittmann

Director, Artist Relations and Education

MUSIC FOR ALL BRINGS TOGETHER I-65 CORRIDOR



Music for All (MFA) continues to live its mission with the launch of a program aimed at supporting music education in urban communities along Interstate-65, which runs from northern Indiana, through Indianapolis where MFA's offices are located and then south to Alabama.

Through its I-65 Corridor Summit, MFA invited teachers and several of their students from nine school districts along I-65 to attend the Music for All Summer Symposium, presented by Yamaha Corporation of America, held each June at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

Funded in part by a grant from the Country Music Association Foundation, the initiative provides positive opportunities and decreases barriers for these

and other communities along I-65.

As a "camp setting, where... teachers come to participate in professional development and students grow from the environment of individual learning, the Summer Symposium served as an ideal launching pad for the project," says Debbie Laferty Asbill, vice president of marketing and communications at MFA.

The teachers participated in the Directors' Academy while students participated in various camp tracks including concert band, orchestra and jazz band. All participated in full-camp programming, such as nightly concerts.

Special workshops for I-65 participants included a directors' session that focused on issues specific to the region and

another for students to brainstorm ideas for their school music programs. Sessions brought together the I-65 directors and students to increase connections between the students, teachers and the common goals in their programs.

An Urban Education Advisory Committee created by MFA worked on all efforts related to the I-65 Corridor Summit. MFA plans to invite all participants to next year's Summer Symposium as well as to expand the summit by asking this year's directors to recommend "the up-and-coming teacher or the stable rock of the district" to attend next year's symposium, says James P. Stephens Jr., MFA's director of advocacy and educational resources. 

TITLE IV FUNDS IN CALIFORNIA

In June, the California government allocated more than \$44 million in one-time Title IV funds for enhancing visual and performing arts education or expanding access to physical and mental health care in schools. The California Department of Education announced that it will distribute the funds through the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Program.

The announcement came following the federal budget approval in March of \$1.1 billion provided for Title IV, Part A for a "well-

rounded education," which was spelled out in the Every Student Succeeds Act.

California local educational agencies (LEAs), including charter schools, were eligible to receive the funds. Grant recipients will be announced in November.

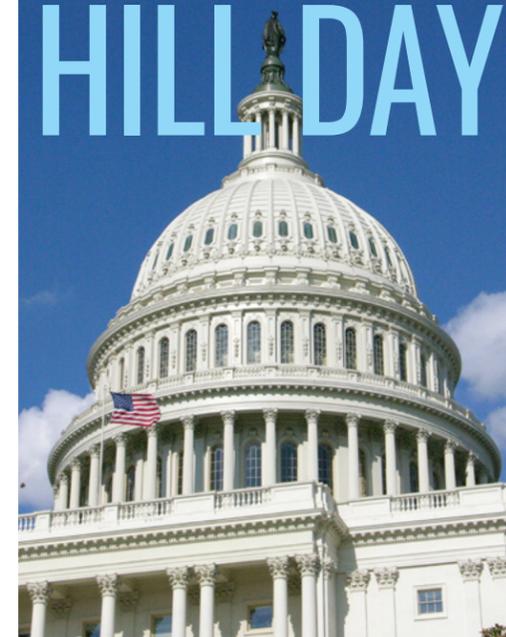
The California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE) was part of a coalition that successfully urged Governor Jerry Brown to sign the



budget that included these grant funds, said Joe Landon, executive director of the group.

The CAAE also advocated for SB933, which passed in August. Written by Senator Ben Allen of California's 26th District, this bill includes \$50 million in the state budget specifically for visual and performing arts education. 

NAfME'S 2018 HILL DAY



Persistent advocacy at the federal level is bringing attention and awareness of the importance of music education to the desks of influencers in Washington, D.C. In late June, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) held its 2018 Hill Day advocating for music education.

More than 300 delegates representing music education associations convened in Washington, D.C. to show support for the Guarantee Access to Arts and Music Education (GAAME) Act, introduced by Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez from New York into the U.S. House of Representatives less than two weeks prior to Hill Day.

The Act encourages school districts to use their Title I-A funds (school-wide and targeted assistance grants) to help provide music education for disadvantaged students, according to NAfME. It is "incredibly important, primarily because of it being the first actual stand-alone piece of music education-focused legislation that's ever existed in Congress," says Ronny Lau, assistant director of public policy for NAfME.

Senator Jon Tester from Montana introduced a companion bill in the Senate on Aug. 28.

While advocating for the GAAME Act was an immediate goal, Hill Day also looks toward the future. One of the goals for this year's Hill Day was to brainstorm "how [Hill Day] can continue to grow and how we can make this even better," Lau says. 

EL SISTEMA USA SPREADS CAUSE VIA PRESTO FUNDS



Thirteen rising music programs should experience quick growth as recipients of \$1 million in investment provided by the Program for Rising El Sistema Organizations (PRESTO).

The aim of El Sistema programs is to "effect social change through music for children with the fewest resources and the greatest need," according to El Sistema USA (ESUSA).

ESUSA launched PRESTO, a three-year initiative, to provide mentorship, match funding and develop special training through the Duke University Nonprofit Management Program for young El Sistema-inspired programs.

PRESTO is aimed specifically at "El Sistema-inspired organizations around the country that are within their first through fifth year of programming" to help them grow and network as an organization as well as "grow their funding resources, so that they have greater sustainability," says Nikki Kirk, PRESTO program manager.

In an important part of the training, "every cohort member is paired with a mentor," says Katie Wyatt, ESUSA executive director.

ESUSA created PRESTO after receiving a \$1 million grant from the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation. The PRESTO funds are designed for capacity development. Kirk notes that ESUSA will host an annual symposium where each organization's leader will provide updates about its programs and use of funds.

The following 13 organizations have been accepted into the new ESUSA PRESTO program: Accent Pontiac in Michigan, Buffalo String Works in New York, Trenton Music Makers in New Jersey, Project Harmony at the Charlotte Symphony in North Carolina, ComMUSICation in Minnesota, Empire State Youth Orchestras CHIME in New York, Harmony Project KC in Missouri, Harmony Project Tulsa in Oklahoma, Make Music NOLA in Louisiana, Project Music in Connecticut, Riverside Arts Academy in California, Salty Cricket Composers Collective in Utah and WHIN Music Community Charter School in New York. 

#ParentsChooseYamaha VIOLIN SELECTION TOOL

BY CHRISTINE NCEO KATZMAN

When a child starts his or her musical journey, parents may feel overwhelmed with choices of instrument features and price points. That's why Yamaha Corporation of America is simplifying the decision-making process with its #ParentsChooseYamaha initiative for violin selection.

A short online quiz walks parents through the essential questions they need to answer when evaluating a violin. These include the type of wood finish, strings, bow and tone.

"We designed #ParentsChooseYamaha to take the mystery and stress out of finding a violin by looking at the important questions each family needs to answer before they start shopping," says Heather Mansell, product manager for orchestral strings at Yamaha.

To get started, visit www.yamaha.com/US/Violin_Finder.



Newly Signed Yamaha Artists



FLUTE

- **Rose Lombardo** — principal flute of the San Diego Symphony

BASSOON

- **Kathleen McLean** — associate professor of music at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University in Bloomington

SAXOPHONE

- **Leo P (Leo Pellegrino)** — founding member of the band Too Many Zooz
- **Jessica Voigt-Page** — adjunct instructor of saxophone at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and founder of the Abundant Musician Project



2019 YYP A APPLICATION

BY JALISSA GASCHO

Do you have a student ready to launch his or her career as a professional musician? For more than 30 years, the Yamaha Young Performing Artists (YYPA) Program has been recognizing outstanding young musicians in jazz and contemporary and classical music and helping them take the next steps in their musical pursuits.

Winners will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the YYPA Celebration Weekend

held during the Music for All Summer Symposium. There they will have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to perform in front of thousands, participate in invaluable workshops designed to help them launch their careers, gain national press coverage, receive professional photos and videos of their performances and form relationships with Yamaha's Artist Relations department.

Next year's celebration weekend will

take place June 22-25, 2019, at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

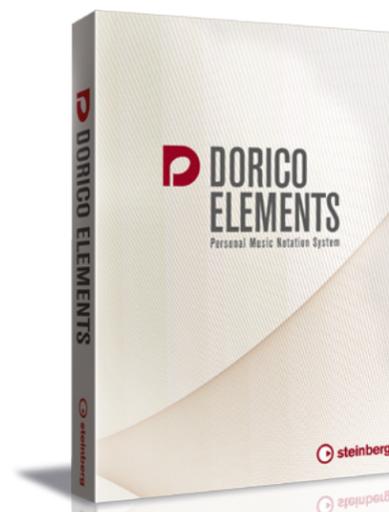
Applicants must be accomplished woodwind, brass, strings, concert percussion/drums or piano soloists between the ages of 18 and 22 at the time of application.

Encourage your students to apply by Dec. 19, 2018. For more information, visit

www.4wrd.it/YYPA2019.

#COMPOSEWITHDORICO

BY JAMIE LEE CORTESE



Steinberg Media Technologies' #ComposeWithDorico initiative includes one software program, 100 schools and countless possibilities. A wholly-owned subsidiary of Yamaha Corporation of America, Steinberg is giving free copies of its entry-level music composing software, Dorico Elements, to 100 schools in the United Kingdom.

With the software, students can create and submit original musical pieces that will then be weaved together into one cohesive composition. The resulting composition from this massive collaboration will be performed at a concert in late October.

This campaign will help ensure that "kids have a way of expressing their creativity and [providing] tools to do that," says Greg Ondo, senior technical specialist at Steinberg.

The campaign officially launched June 21. In the future, #ComposeWithDorico may expand to other countries in Europe as well as to the United States and Asia.



THE 411 ON REPAIRING WINDS

SHARPEN YOUR REPAIR SKILLS AND BUILD YOUR TOOLKIT TO FIX YOUR STUDENTS' INSTRUMENTS IN A PINCH.

BY MARK SORLIE

As a school band director, you take on many roles, including instrument doctor.

For students renting an instrument, the dealer most likely offers maintenance and repair insurance. Though insurance is a great investment in the long term, in reality, problems almost always occur at the wrong time or at the last minute.

Here are some pointers for short-term fixes to help you get a wind instrument playing well enough for a concert or competition without making the actual final repair more expensive.

GET EDUCATED

Most educators have experience with the basics of either brass instruments



or woodwinds but usually not both. You can find many videos on YouTube and elsewhere that show repair and maintenance for instruments. Be careful because while some have good advice, others are questionable in content. The Band Instrument Repair program at Minnesota State College Southeast in Red Wing, Minnesota, has a series of videos on YouTube with solid information.

You can also learn band instrument repair and maintenance by taking college courses that can be applied toward continuing education requirements. Or consider a part-time job at a music store during the summer to immerse yourself in a shop situation.

SEEK EXPERT RESOURCES

Develop a relationship with your local school service sales representative and repair shop. They can help you stretch your repair budget and provide parts for last-minute needs. They can also help you purchase some needed supplies to stock in your band room.

ASSEMBLE A KIT

Here are some specific tools that you should have in your school repair arsenal.

- A few screwdrivers appropriate for woodwind instruments to tighten loose pivot screws and hinge rods. Make sure you know which screws should and should not be turned.
- A spring hook to hook needle springs back into their cradle.
- Blue painter's tape to wrap up torn woodwind tenon corks.
- Plastic twist ties or twisted pipe cleaners to connect brace feet on a saxophone when the guard screw has fallen out. By using ties, the threads are not damaged by an incorrect screw.
- Cable ties can temporarily connect a brace on a brass instrument and avoid a more expensive repair caused by soldering or gluing the connections.
- Non-latex bandages to keep a water key closed when the spring has broken. Latex can damage the lacquer or silver finish.



- Rotor string or braided fishing line to restring a rotor.

STOCK EXTRA SUPPLIES

Keep a small stock of cleaning and lubrication supplies for students to use or purchase. Items like valve oils, slide grease, swabs and reeds can save the day.

CONSIDER THE WEATHER

It's essential to know your year-round local weather, both inside and outside, so

you can consider and plan for the best storage solutions for your instruments to prevent repair problems in the short and long term.

Seasonal changes in temperature and humidity are much more dangerous for wood instruments, so humidifying and maintaining temperature in the music room is very beneficial.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Once you have the tools that you feel comfortable using and have your room set up, all you need is experience.

Know your limits because there is a very fine line between making a student's instrument play well for the concert and adding to the final repair cost or actually damaging a part. If you are unsure, it's best to leave the repair to the professionals. 



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Sorlie has a degree in double bass performance from the University of North Dakota and also attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston. After years of performing, he developed an interest in instrument repair. He is the national warranty manager for Yamaha Corporation of America, Band and Orchestral Division. Sorlie is a long-time member of the National Association of Professional Band Instrument Repair Technicians, and he has taught repair clinics at regional and national conferences.



PABLO RIEPPI'S TRUEGRIT

WHEN A TEENAGER DISCOVERED HIS PASSION FOR PERCUSSION, HIS SINGLE-MINDED FOCUS DROVE HIM TO BECOME AN INSPIRATIONAL PERFORMER AND A DEDICATED EDUCATOR.

BY SAVY LEISER | PHOTOS BY ROB SHANAHAN

World-renowned percussionist Pablo Rieppi decided to teach himself to play drums as a junior in high school. Little did he know that a year later, he would decide to pursue music professionally when the rock band he formed with his friends won a local battle-of-the-bands competition.

Starting on a chosen instrument at a later age than typical musicians, Rieppi faced many hurdles in the pursuit of his passion. But he eventually succeeded due to his resilience and dedication.

"The greatest strength is ... grit," Rieppi says.

Throughout his career, Rieppi's grit helped him push past obstacles that arose instead of stalling in his tracks. The first challenge came during his college audition for George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, when a panel of college professors asked Rieppi to play the marimba. "I asked, 'Which one's the marimba?' They looked at me like, 'Who ... is this guy?'" Rieppi recalls. "I said, 'I can just jam on the snare drum.' So I did that."

Yamaha Master Educator Anthony Maiello was one of the professors on the panel. He told Rieppi to take some lessons, then come back and audition again. Rather than taking this feedback as a rejection, Rieppi accepted the constructive criticism.

"I said, 'Sure! I'll take lessons!'" Rieppi says. "Being naïve was my anesthesia. It prevented me from feeling a lot of bumps and bruises because I figured everything would be fine."

He took private lessons with Ken Harbison of the National Symphony Orchestra and was later accepted at George Mason.

Now the percussion department coordinator and faculty member with the Pre-College Division at The Juilliard School in New York, a member of the New York City Ballet Orchestra and a regular guest with the New York Philharmonic, Rieppi emphasizes the values of ambition and commitment.

FEEDING THE MIND AND BODY

With a bottomless hunger for musical knowledge, Rieppi began devouring the wisdom of his professors during his undergraduate years and while working on his master's at Juilliard.

Maiello grew to be one of his greatest mentors. "He is responsible for forming my standards when I was a student," Rieppi says. "He's the kind of person who teaches and leads by example. If he says that you should work hard every day to develop your ears, it's because he places a score on the treadmill and sight

RIEPPI'S LIBRARY

Percussionist Pablo Rieppi has written the following books to help snare drummers.

RHYTHMIC ROOTS: This book offers snare drum rudiments with accompaniments for bass drum and hi hat. According to Rieppi, the book is filled with pieces that “explore the relationship between the lower and upper limbs while using material from various musical roots.”

ACCOMPANIMENT MUSIC FOR SOLO SNARE DRUM, VOL. 1: Rieppi recommends using this book along with *Douze Etudes Pour Caisse-Claire* by Jacques Delecluse. “These tracks are all original melodic and harmonic material meant to inspire music making and ease in performance,” he says.

SNARE DRUM TECHNIQUE – ESSENTIAL EXERCISES FOR DAILY PRACTICE: Rieppi recommends this as a method book. In 2015, it was named one of the 30 most utilized snare drum method books by *Percussive Notes*.

sings while he works out every morning.”

When Rieppi holds his own students to a high standard of excellence, he thinks of Maiello's influence. “I realize I am transmitting many of the standards I learned from Mr. Maiello,” he says.

Rieppi also recalls the tutelage he received under Elden “Buster” Bailey, the retired snare drummer from the New York Philharmonic, who was highly regarded for his virtuosity on the snare drum. Because it was Bailey's final year of teaching at Juilliard, Rieppi was committed to squeezing as much knowledge out of him as he could.

Rieppi's lesson with Bailey followed his lunch, so Rieppi would start warming up



Body Posture: From the back to the fingertips, proper alignment results in better performance, emphasizes Pablo Rieppi.

during the lunch hour; that way, he was able to get more advice from Bailey outside of the scheduled lesson. “I really had a two-hour lesson instead of one,” Rieppi says. “It was just an amazing year.”

Around the same time in his life, Rieppi attended a class about the Alexander Technique, which taught him to develop strong posture and body techniques that he incorporated into his percussion playing. “Both Buster and the Alexander Technique showed me how to use my body, my back, my fingers, everything — how to play better using rebound,” he says.

As an educator, Rieppi tells his students to use posture and movement in their percussion performance. “A lot of times, I'll look at their fingers or their hands or the way they're holding their sticks, and they're like, ‘Why is this a big deal?’” he says. “I'll go into an explanation [of] my days with Buster and how the body and physics help us be better musicians.”

TEACHING THE INDIVIDUAL

When teaching, Rieppi makes sure students have a complete understanding of *why* they should do something, not just *what* they should do.

“I give them a long-winded explanation, and they understand,” he says. “It's not just something they're going to forget after a lesson. They're going to think about using [their] back, using different muscles, how

gravity helps the stick come down easily by itself, how you can recycle your strokes to play more efficiently.”

Rieppi's thorough explanations help him gain trust with his students. “I tell [them], ‘If I ask you to do something, you don't have to do it unless I have a really good reason.’”

Not only do Rieppi's clear explanations help students retain and internalize new skills, but they also help him tailor his teaching, taking into account each student's background and experiences. “My job as a teacher is to understand where the student is coming from, [to] find an individual way to address what they need, so it doesn't become a formula,” he says. “If you took two actors and gave them the same script, it's going to sound totally different. Music is the same.”

Rieppi recommends taking students' differences into account rather than ignoring them. “You can take what they've learned [in the past] and adjust it, so that going forward, you can have a much broader base,” Rieppi says. “I've written books. I have all these worksheets. But at the end of the day, each worksheet has to be individualistic.”

FIGURING OUT PRIORITIES

Regardless of a student's level of expertise, practice always needs to be the number one priority. Early in his college education, Rieppi developed an incredibly strong work ethic and a passion for the art of practicing itself. “I just practiced, ate and went to the

bathroom,” he says. “Every free hour, I practiced.”

While at George Mason, Rieppi would become frustrated when the music building closed its doors around 10 p.m. “I wanted to practice even later,” he says.

He asked the director of the music department to keep the building open later; his request was denied. He then asked multiple teachers if they could find a solution for him. Rieppi was ultimately given 24-hour access to the building.

While Rieppi exemplifies the importance of making school and practicing a priority, he warns students that school shouldn't be their top priority forever. “School is just the beginning,” he says. “A lot of students see [their] master's degree as the final step into the professional world. It's really the first steppingstone.”

Throughout the journey, Rieppi also made family a priority. “My parents bought my first Yamaha marimba and were very supportive of my dream to be a musician,” Rieppi says. “My wife and kids are the most important things in my life. I love them, and I need them. I'm blessed to have both [music and family].”

His son, a rising percussionist, has allowed him to bring the worlds of music and family together. “I play with him, but I'm not his actual teacher,” Rieppi says. “I'm his dad first. I got him his own percussion teacher. I'm not going to sit down with my son every week and say, ‘You [need to] practice more!’ We jam together. We just have fun with music.”

For Rieppi, having fun with music was what inspired him to pursue percussion in the first place. “To me, music is like a vital organ; it has taught me almost everything, and I have to have it,” he says.

That passion is essential to the oft-tumultuous journey to securing a paying job in music. “Some guys take 36 auditions before they get the job,” he says. “It's a huge investment from your soul, your time and your wallet. To keep up that investment, [so] that someday it might pay off, that's grit. ... It takes a while ... [but] being able to make a living and being happy with what you're doing [is] my definition of success.” 

THE ART OF PRACTICING



Perfect Practice: Pablo Rieppi encourages students to make practicing a priority and also teaches them how to enjoy their practice time.

After Pablo Rieppi discovered his passion for percussion in his senior year of high school, he practiced nearly nonstop through his college days. To keep daily practice from becoming tedious, Rieppi recommends the following:

EMPHASIZE CREATIVITY: For Rieppi, the joy of practicing comes with finding the creativity in your part. To bring out that creativity, Rieppi has written solo snare drum accompaniments (see “Rieppi's Library” on page 10) for students to use during practice. Although snare drums have no pitch, “you still have to pretend you're playing with someone who's playing melodies and harmonies, so that comes out in your phrasing or tone color, articulation or dynamics,” he says. “I wrote these accompaniments for solo snare drum [to help] students practice creatively with pieces that can get mundane.”

KEEP A PRACTICE JOURNAL: When students become frustrated with practicing, a good educator helps them break down the aspects of practicing that are giving them trouble. Rieppi tells his students to reflect on the process of practicing by writing down their thoughts, feelings and ideas in a practice journal. “If they're having trouble with a piece, I want them to think about the areas causing them difficulty,” he says. “How does it feel in your fingertips? Your gut? Your back? Is it uncomfortable? Why? Find ways to make it comfortable. You have to help them unravel the way they think.”



New York, New York: Pablo Rieppi has made the city his home as an instructor at Juilliard and a member of the New York City Ballet Orchestra.

THE REHEARSAL ROUTINE



OPEN THE DOOR FOR MORE VALUABLE REHEARSAL TIME BY ESTABLISHING AND FOLLOWING A SET OF RULES.

BY MARCIA NEEL

How many times has the thought, “If I only had one more week,” passed through your mind when preparing your ensemble for an upcoming performance? You can actually get back some of that time by establishing a routine and structure that streamlines rehearsals and increases efficiency. To ensure consistency, consider establishing the following sequence.

ENTRANCE AND PREPARATION

Students enter quickly and quietly. Music may be playing in the background. Students retrieve their instruments and folders and take their seats.

Students put their music in rehearsal order as indicated by the detailed lesson plan, which should be clearly visible on the board in the same place each day. The plan should not only indicate the order of

the selections to be rehearsed but also which sections and what specifically will be practiced, e.g., articulation or dynamic contrast. This lesson plan sets up the short-term goals to be realized during this rehearsal.

WHEN DOES CLASS REALLY BEGIN?

Students must know exactly when class begins. Is it when the bell rings? Is it when



the director takes the podium? Getting class started is one of the major difficulties for beginning directors.

One middle school director in Henderson, Nevada, starts his beginning band class by playing a recording of a march (which changes weekly) as soon as the bell rings. This provides a given amount of time for students to be in their seats and ready to play. Students are not considered tardy as long as they are in their seats with instruments and folders by the end of the march.

This works well because the march encourages a prescriptive expectation as well as a weekly listening lesson. Whatever the policy, class must begin in the same fashion each day or a good bit of rehearsal time will be lost in just getting started.

WARMUPS

Warmups, scales, sight-reading and assorted exercises should be chosen purposefully to enhance tone quality and

promote good technique. Try to provide warmups that are related to the literature being worked on that day.

REHEARSAL GOALS

Try to make strides in at least three pieces of music in each rehearsal. The higher the expectation, the better. Expectations should be set not necessarily in terms of

level of difficulty but based on the level of achievement of the various musical aspects being rehearsed.

END OF REHEARSAL

At the end of the rehearsal, do three things.

1. Review the musical accomplishments by asking students a question like, “What improvements did we make in the Holst today?” Rehearsal review forms are one way for students to record their daily achievements. Authentic assessment activities like these forms also provide an opportunity for students to reflect upon their musical experiences. Always expect good writing, spelling, punctuation, etc.
2. Articulate what needs be worked on tomorrow as a result of what was achieved today.
3. Make relevant announcements during the last couple minutes of class, never at the beginning.

The benefit of following a routine is that more time will be allotted to music-making. It might even add up to that extra week that you wished for! 



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marcia Neel is senior director of education for the Yamaha Corporation of America, Band and Orchestral Division. She is president of Music Education Consultants Inc., and serves as the education advisor to the Music Achievement Council. In this capacity, she presents sessions with practical success strategies for music educators at state music conferences, district in-service days and dealer workshops. To inquire about hosting or attending a session in your area, contact marcia@musiceducationconsultants.net.

AUDACITY IN ACTION

{ *audacity* } (*ôdas 'atē*) n. bold courage, daring



Rancho Regiment Rising: Since Clint Williams started as band director in 2013, the ensemble has become a finalist and winner at many regional competitions.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE RANCHO HIGH SCHOOL BAND

BAND DIRECTOR CLINT WILLIAMS TOOK RISKS AND OVERCAME THE ODDS AT INNER-CITY RANCHO HIGH SCHOOL, TURNING A DECLINING BAND PROGRAM INTO ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL IN NEVADA.

BY FRANK DIMARIA

Nestled between the city's homeless corridor and a cemetery near the historic Fremont District of Las Vegas, Rancho High School might not seem like the ideal home for a successful performing arts program, but thanks to

Clint Williams, Rancho's director of bands, the program is thriving.

In the last five years, Williams put his personal mantra of "*L'audace, l'audace, toujours l'audace!*" (Audacity, audacity, always audacity!) to work. He transformed

Rancho's sputtering band program into one of the most successful in the state.

Overall, the school has amassed 25 superior ratings at various concert festivals and five Sweepstakes Awards through the Southern Nevada Band Association.

The largest public high school in Nevada, Rancho has one of the highest homeless student populations in the county, and 73 percent of Rancho students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

On the flip side, the school offers five year-round bands: wind ensemble, wind symphony, concert band, freshman band and beginning band. The Rancho Regiment marching band is one of only two in the state that was a finalist at a Bands of America regional marching competition in 2017.

THE VISION

In some ways Williams' success can be attributed to the vision of the school's principal, Dr. James Kuzma, who came to Rancho in 2008. At that time, Rancho was graduating around 50 percent of its students. Kuzma predicted that a quality performing arts program would lead students toward improved academic standings. Out of this priority, Kuzma brought in Williams in 2013 to lead the band program.

The program Williams inherited was

bereft of hope and numbers. Just 87 of Rancho's 3,300 students participated in the band program with only 49 in marching band. Rancho's beleaguered program had not earned a superior rating in a generation.

On day one, the new band director laid down the law and abolished traditions that were inconsistent or that did not advance camaraderie or musical achievement. Williams warns directors that "getting rid of traditions can work, but it can also be risky."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE RANCHO HIGH SCHOOL BAND

Growth in Numbers: More than one-third of Rancho High School's student population currently participates in the performing arts.

The key is to replace them with new traditions. "In our case that became the love of performance and good fundamental music skills," Williams says.

Williams also encouraged students to gather for pregame dinners and honored graduating seniors with cords and trophies. In addition, he created a new logo for the band to signify a new beginning.

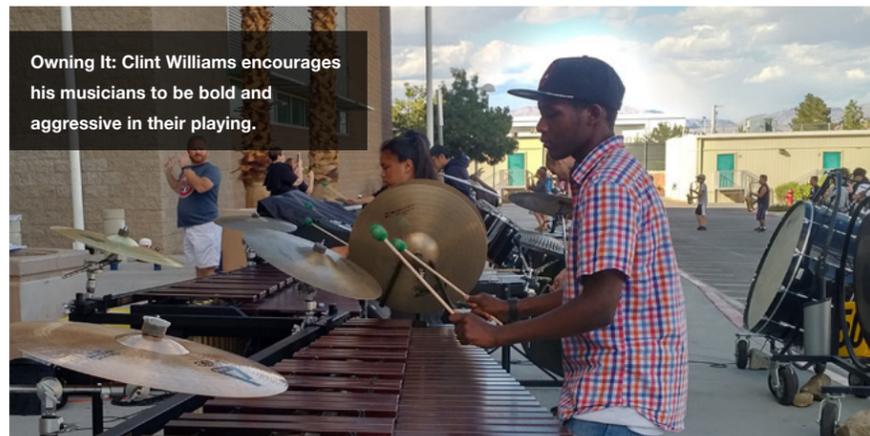
Directors should always start with the committed kids, Williams advises. His strategy freed the band of students whose interest in music was half-hearted or nonexistent. "I knew the students who remained did so because they loved making music, loved band and were committed to excellence," Williams says.

Dexter Hidalgo, a clarinet player who spent four years in Williams' program, knew immediately that the new director meant business. Before introducing himself, Williams was ousting disruptive students. "That set the foundation that this was much more serious than we'd thought," Hidalgo says. "A lot of kids left that semester."

BOLD AND AGGRESSIVE

The plan worked. In Williams' first year, the Rancho Regiment placed first in its class at the Showdown at Silverado competition through the Marching Band Open Series circuit. Although Rancho had only 10 brass players, one of the top judges that day called his brass players "fearless," Williams says.

"The best advice I can give is to be bold and aggressive — aggressive air, aggressive sound, aggressive performance ... own it," he says



Owning It: Clint Williams encourages his musicians to be bold and aggressive in their playing.

Word of the band's success spread. Soon students were arranging their class schedules to include concert band. "Human beings are attracted to achievement and excellence," Williams says.

Students who participate in band must be disciplined, team players and accountable to one another, says Andrew Smouse, Rancho's coordinator of percussion. "All of these are evident without question at Rancho," Smouse says. "A huge portion of that is what Clint Williams brought to the table."



Clint Williams

QUALITY AND QUANTITY

To increase his numbers, Williams raised his standards rather than lowering them. Focusing on the individual player rather than the ensemble was the means to this end. "I never want a child to feel neglected; I don't want a [student] to feel inferior in any way," Williams says. Assessing the individual is "where it all starts."

Hidalgo says, "There was no moment when [Mr. Williams] was too busy for [any] of us."

Demanding quality is vital to increase numbers. "The best advice I can give for growth is to always provide excellence in the performances of the high school ensemble," Williams says. "This, partnered with communication to the middle school directors, will attract students to your program. People are attracted to high standards. ... Quality breeds quantity."

With higher standards and increased quality, Williams' numbers spiked. By 2018, more than one-third of Rancho's students were enrolled in the performing arts while the school's graduation rate nearly doubled to 97 percent.

Band directors, Williams says, must always consider optics. Marching bands are often the public face of a high school. Therefore, they must exude quality when they play — from the national anthem to the school's fight song.

ALL IN

Parents buy into band programs if their children are playing to the highest standard. Before Williams arrived at Rancho, few



Equal Access: Rancho High guarantees that all students have a school-issued classroom instrument.

INSTRUMENTS FOR ALL

The Rancho High School band program operates on a tight budget — owning no semi-trucks, using inexpensive stock uniforms and reusing equipment from season to season as much as possible. However, one area where the band does not skimp is in its instrument inventory.

The school's band director, Clint Williams, guarantees that each student in his program receives a school-issued classroom instrument. Those who play brass or woodwinds have one instrument in the classroom and one they can leave at home.

The school owns all of the student instruments and, most importantly, they're all the same brand. "When you're talking about at-risk students or low socioeconomic students, they don't want to feel inferior," Williams says. "I think it's important to put everyone on the same playing field."

How did he afford to provide the band with two instruments for each student? In his first two years at Rancho, Williams was "given a shot in the arm of money to acquire instruments" from the school's principal, he says.

On top of that, for the first three years, his band did not travel. "All the fundraising we did went into purchasing quality instruments to put in the kids' hands," Williams says. "Not a piece of junk but something that was going to last. That's why I ended up with a lot of Yamaha [instruments] because they'll last."

parents were involved. Deanna McHenry, a parent of two Rancho band students, witnessed the immediate positive effects Williams had on the program.

"He raised the bar and expected them to be excellent," McHenry says. "Mr. Williams started to include the parents more. The band boosters was started. More parents were buying into supporting the band and supporting their kids. He opened the

doors, so parents got more involved." Parents started building props and equipment and doing the band's laundry.

Getting students and their parents involved and committed to the band program is just one of Williams' many achievements. "Clint Williams is one of the most dedicated professional band educators I've had the privilege of knowing or working with," Smouse says. 

DRUM UP EXCITEMENT

DRUM CIRCLES IMPROVE MUSICAL SKILLS, BUILD TEAMWORK, DEVELOP STUDENT LEADERS AND STIR EMOTIONS.

BY LISA FIELDS

On the first day of school, new students may come to band class and sit timidly, not making eye contact with others. If the teacher facilitates a drum circle, then by the end of class, everyone will be smiling, chatting and bubbling with excitement.

“A drum circle is a great way to connect people together in a way that’s musical but not necessarily academic,” says Matt Savage, percussion specialist at Cary (North Carolina) High School, founder and director of Rhythm Alive drum circle events and a Yamaha Artist. “[They’re ideal] at the

beginning of a new school year as a team-building event; before a concert to sharpen listening skills, rhythmic accuracy and ensemble playing; and after a concert or big event as a fun stress reliever and way to celebrate together.”

If you’d like to incorporate drum circles into your repertoire, here’s how to get started.

CREATE A CIRCLE

Don’t leave the classroom chairs in their usual positions. Students should sit in a circle, so everyone can see each other,

and each person is viewed as an equal participant.

You can set up chairs before students arrive or ask for help. One circle is fine for 50 students. Larger groups should sit in concentric circles.

INCLUDE EVERYONE

Drum circles are great for the entire band, not just percussionists. You can include color guard members and wind and string players.

“With the whole band, it puts the [students] in a different, unique, risky



Feel the Beat: Matt Savage leads drum circles around the world, such as this gathering in Moscow, Russia, through his organization Rhythm Alive.

situation,” Savage says. “They have to play and feel rhythm in a different modality.”

DISTRIBUTE INSTRUMENTS

Try world percussion instruments like bongos, djembes, congas, shakers and tambourines. You can use empty soda bottles, wood blocks or five-gallon buckets. Or ask students to clap, snap or use body percussion.

If you’re handing out sticks or mallets, give each student one, not two. Using one mallet levels the playing field because “a lot of the wind [and string] players don’t have drum techniques,” Savage says.

START WITH THE HEART

Begin with a steady beat that is relatable to everyone. “I always start every one of my drum circles with the first rhythm you ever hear — the heartbeat, your mother’s heart,” Savage says. “The facilitator plays a steady ‘lub-dub’ rhythm on the drum. The counts in 4/4 time would be on 1 and 3. Ask the others to join in after 10 to 15 seconds of listening and feeling the heartbeat groove.”

Once everyone is playing, visually cue half of the circle to stop while the other half continues. Then, cue the half that isn’t playing to play the heartbeat between beats. One side will play on 1 and 3, and the other side will play on 2 and 4. Once the new rhythm is established, give cues to start and stop as you see fit.

TRY DIFFERENT RHYTHMS

Echoes are popular and effective: Play a simple rhythm and ask everyone to play it back. Then, tell a student to play a rhythm and have everyone echo it back. Move to the next student until everyone in the circle has a turn.

Or ask each person to play two notes in turn, striving for a steady 1-2, 1-2, 1-2 rhythm. Explain how to recover if the rhythm becomes unsteady.

Once the rhythm travels the circle a few times, increase the tempo slightly each time the beat reaches the starting point.

“The outcome should be an incredibly fast wave of notes around the circle,” Savage says.

ENCOURAGE STUDENT LEADERS

Drum circles can help participants develop rhythm, listening skills and coordination. They also give students the opportunity to lead a large group, sometimes for the first time.

“A few students really open up and bloom right in front of your eyes,” Savage says. “Sometimes the quiet [students] come out of their shells.”

Savage once asked a shy student to lead a drum circle and was pleased with the results.

“Instead of doing it the typical way — instead of pointing — he would use his legs, his head, his eye contact,” Savage says. “At one point, he started dancing. It erupted into this great strong group, and soon everyone was in the center and dancing. High school kids are self-conscious, but they were comfortable enough to come together and dance. It’s literally feeling the power of the drum.”

MEASURE YOUR SUCCESS

Students should think about music differently after a drum circle.

“The students have listened to each other and played rhythm in a different way,” Savage says. “Their rhythmic accuracy, their listening skills [and] their timing should improve. There should be a higher sense of camaraderie. There should be a buzz in the room.”



Matt Savage

Artist Events

Would you like a chance to be inspired, to motivate your students, to expand your musical horizons? Yamaha Artists conduct clinics all over the United States. Here's a partial list of who's going to be in your area in the near future.

DATE	CITY, STATE	INSTRUMENT	ARTIST(S)	WEBSITE	EVENT TYPE	EVENT NAME
11/3	Brooklyn Center, MN	Trumpet	Charles Lazarus	www.schmittmusic.com/events/2018-08/	Workshop, Performance	Masterclass and Performance
11/3	Tacoma, WA	Saxophone, Trumpet	Tower of Power Horns	www.tedbrownmusic.com	Clinic	Masterclass
11/7 - 11/8	Reno, NV	Master Educator	Douglas Droste	https://www.washeschools.net/Page/1063	Guest Conducting	Washoe County School District Senior Honor Orchestra
11/10 - 11/13	Winston-Salem, NC	Master Educators	Cheryl Floyd, Richard Floyd	www.ncmea.net	Clinics	North Carolina Music Educators Association Conference
11/15 - 11/16	Las Cruces, NM	Trumpet, Strings	Wayne Bergeron, Christian Howes	https://music.nmsu.edu/forms/jazz-jump-start-registration	Clinics, Masterclasses, Performances	50th Annual New Mexico State University Jazz Festival and Jump Start
11/14 - 11/17	Indianapolis, IN	Percussion	Rusty Burge, Pius Cheung, Matthew Geiger, Brady Harrison, Don Liuzzi, Colin McNutt, Oliver Molina, Iain Moyer, Tony Nuñez, Jeff Queen, Patrick Roulet, Joshua Smith, John Tafoya, Benjamin Toth, Los Angeles Percussion Quartet and more	www.pasic.org	Clinics, Performances	Percussive Arts Society International Convention
12/1	Bainbridge Island, WA	Trumpet	Thomas Marriott	www.bainbridgebands.org/festival	Clinic, Performance	Puget Sounds Jazz Fest
12/19 - 12/22	Chicago, IL	Oboe, Bassoon, Trumpet, Trombone, Percussion, Master Educator	Wayne Bergeron, David Collier, Andrew Eldridge, Wycliffe Gordon, Jerry Junkin, Oscar Petty Jr., Kevin Sedatole, Doug Spaniol, Emily Threinen, Kennan Wylie and more	www.midwestclinic.org	Clinics, Performances	The Midwest Clinic International Band and Orchestra Conference

The Yamaha Master Educator Program

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Workshops offered by the Master Educators are designed for middle school through collegiate levels and include topics such as: Student Leadership, Habits of Successful Middle School Band Directors, Design Clinics for Marching Band, Conducting Pedagogy and Strategies for Connecting Movement Vocabulary and Musical Intention, Advocacy and Parent Involvement & Student Retention.



Daniel Berard
Director of Bands
Grain Valley High School



Dr. Travis J. Cross
Professor of Music and Chair
of the Department of Music
University of California, Los Angeles



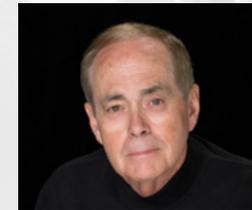
Dr. Rodney Dorsey
Professor of Music in Bands
Indiana University



Douglas Droste
Director of Orchestras
Ball State University



Cheryl Floyd
Director of Bands
Hill Country Middle School



Richard Floyd
State Director of Music Emeritus
University of Texas at Austin



Kevin Ford
Director of the Leadership
Conservatory for the Arts
Tarpon Springs High School



Larry Gookin
Distinguished Professor and
Emeritus Professor of Music
Central Washington University



Jeffrey Grogan
Director of Orchestral Activities and
Professor of Music
Oklahoma City University



Michael Haithcock
Director of University Bands and
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor and Chair
of Conducting
University of Michigan



Barry Houser
Associate Director of Bands, Director
of the Marching Illini and Director of the
Fighting Illini Athletic Bands
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign



Jerry Junkin
Director of Bands and Professor
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University of Texas at Austin



Craig Kirchhoff
Professor of Conducting and
Director Emeritus of University Bands
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Marcia Neel
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Professor of Music and
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