

SUPPORT ED

A MAGAZINE FOR INSTRUMENTAL INSTRUCTORS

2017 VOLUME 4

8 STEPS TO
SIGHT READING
SUCCESS +

HOW TO BUILD A
MUSIC PROGRAM
FROM THE GROUND UP



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BRASS

 YAMAHA

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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,



Welcome to our seventh edition of Yamaha SupportED, a publication designed specifically for you, the instrumental band and orchestral teacher.

If you have ever been moved...I mean really moved by a lesson or clinic given by a gifted artist – you know that it is very difficult to explain why it affected you. It just did and you cannot put words to why it moved you so.

I can say without hesitation or exaggeration that we CONSTANTLY hear from people all over the world as to how powerful the members of Boston Brass are as inspirational teachers. There is something gigantic and urgent about their effect on musicians – leaving their audiences desperately needing to improve their skills and musicianship.

So we asked Jeff Conner of Boston Brass – what is it? What is at the core? What is the secret sauce, the pillar, the common thread that binds them together making them so affective? The answer is brilliant: “genuine commitment to teach as thoroughly and sincerely as their music teachers; the teachers who they all acknowledge are the most important adult role models.”

I know exactly the teachers who taught me with such thoroughness and sincerity in my musical up bringing: Sister Mary Ellen John, Joseph Bonville, Richard Albagli and Dr. Margaret Schebach. All of these fine teachers were artful masters – quiet and humble but clear and demanding. All were so different but completely committed to having me understand, not only the musical topic at hand but as importantly – how this topic fit in the BIG picture of our musical world. I am forever grateful.

So – what is your special sauce for inspiring teaching your students? Where does your thoroughness and sincerity come from? Who was it that moved you musically as a young person? Please share your story with me at jwittmann@yamaha.com. We would love to share it in a future story!

We hope you enjoy this very special issue of SupportED!!!

Musically Yours,

John Wittmann

John Wittmann
Director, Artist Relations and Education



INDUSTRY NEWS

LAUNCHING IN 2018

FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION

BY CHRISTINE NGEU KATZMAN

From learning to open their instrument cases to performing their very first concert, your students come a long way in just a few short months. Commemorate your students' achievements with a national program created by the Music Achievement Council (MAC). The First Performance National Day of Celebration will launch in 2018 as a formal way for instructors, students, parents, administrators and communities to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of beginning band and orchestra students.

The program aims to increase retention, encourage positive communication with parents, strengthen administrative support, and create a memorable experience for the students, according to a press release by MAC. "The sound of applause early in a musician's life can encourage continued growth and learning and lead to a lifetime of music-making," the press release says.

MAC, a not-for-profit organization sponsored by the National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD) and the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), will provide recommendations

for turnkey first performance programs as well as a national recognition plan that will include certificates of achievement and a press kit. MAC plans for the National First Performance Day of Celebration to be on or around the third Thursday in November each year.

To kick off the program, The Midwest Clinic International Band and Orchestra Conference recently hosted a session titled "First Performance: A Beginning Band Demonstration Concert," featuring an actual beginning band demonstration concert by two schools—Madison Elementary School and McKinley Elementary School, both in South Holland, Illinois. Mario Moody, director of bands for South Holland School District 151, which includes Madison Elementary; Nyle Taylor, director for McKinley Elementary in School District 150; as well as Dr. Teresa Hill, superintendent from School District 151, spoke during the clinic about how to implement this type of program in your school.

For more information, visit http://4wrd.it/First_Performance. 



FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION



CT ROCKS TO REBUILD CUT MUSIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS


BY SAVY LEISER

Connecticut organizations SpreadMusicNow and Band Together CT are using the power of music to fight a common enemy: budget cuts in music education. "The entire state is in a fiscal crisis," says Richard Wenning, co-founder and director of SpreadMusicNow, which provides grants to music education programs for under-served youth. "Education will see further cuts. ... The first to go is investment in the arts."

Together, the two organizations held a benefit concert, CT Rocks! A Rock N' Roll Party for Music Education, on Nov. 4. Band Together CT, with its roster of musicians and artists who help families in need, performed covers of '70s and '80s rock hits. The show also featured local students involved with the Little Kids Rock program.

The concert raised money through ticket sales, a silent auction, and donations. "All proceeds from the event will go toward rebuilding specific music education programs that have been impacted by budget cuts as well as toward filling overall gaps in statewide music education funding," the organizations state in a press release.

In addition, the BeFoundation, SpreadMusicNow's parent organization, provided a dollar-for-dollar match.

"If you care about music education, speak out and get involved," Wenning says. "Sharing information is as important as donating funds. [For] more focus on bringing harmony to our schools and our society, we've got to invest, and that takes all of us." 

BERKLEE INSTITUTE

FOR ARTS EDUCATION AND SPECIAL NEEDS

BY SAVY LEISER

Building upon 10 years of work, Dr. Rhoda Bernard launched the Berklee Institute for Arts Education and Special Needs at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee this September. "It's been more than a dream come true," Bernard says.


While Bernard's work began with a private lesson program for children and adults with autism, the institute now serves a variety of musicians with special needs including those with cerebral palsy and visual or hearing impairments.

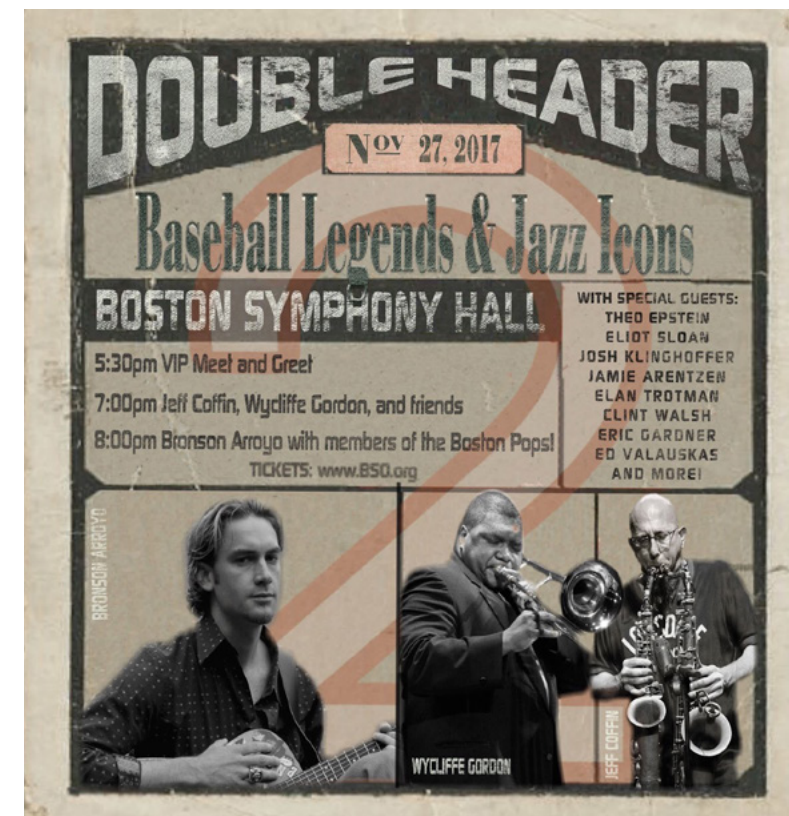
The institute also includes a degree program, where students earning their master's degree in music education can concentrate in autism. "We're



the only graduate program in music education with a concentration in autism on the planet," she says.

Bernard is also expanding this effort to undergraduate students and hopes to create an undergraduate minor in the future. "This semester, I'm teaching two sections of an undergraduate service arts course, and they're doing service in the institute," she says.

Launching the insitute allows Bernard to devote her full attention to improving music education for those with special needs. "This work in arts education and special needs was a side project that had stolen my heart," Bernard says. "Now this is my full-time commitment. ... That really allows us to take the work to the next level. ... It's really about making arts education open to everyone in a meaningful way." 




JAZZ AND BASEBALL DOUBLEHEADER FOR UNITED SOUND

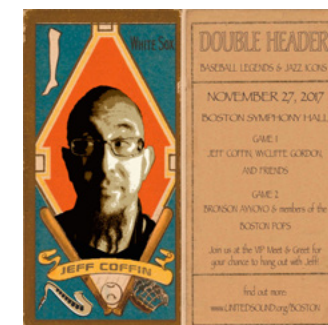
BY SAVY LEISER

United Sound's Nov. 27 concert at Boston Symphony Hall hit it out of the park. The show, which joined jazz icons like Wycliff Gordon and Jeff Coffin with big baseball names like Theo Epstein and Bronson Arroyo, showed the music and sports worlds that we're all playing for the same team. All profits from ticket sales benefited United Sound, an organization that provides musical opportunities for students with special needs.

Jeff Coffin, saxophonist for Dave Matthews Band, first met United Sound founder and executive director Julie Duty through Yamaha. "I'm excited [this concert was] a fundraiser for her program," Coffin says. "She's doing amazing work with students with disabilities."

During the show, some performers showed off hidden talents. Arroyo, a pitcher with the Cincinnati Reds, performed covers of alternative rock hits from Pearl Jam and the Goo Goo Dolls alongside the Boston Pops Orchestra. "The baseball players are all musicians," Duty says. "Bronson is really quite talented" on guitar and vocals.

The unique concert brought great visibility to United Sound's work. "[We wanted] to raise a lot of money for this program, so [we got] some heavy hitters in there—literally and figuratively," Coffin says. 



Yamaha Education Space

BY CHRISTINE NGE0 KATZMAN

Aiming to meet educators “where they are,” Yamaha recently debuted a new “Education Space” within its trade show booth at select instrument and music educator conferences.

In this space, current and future music educators can connect one-on-one with Yamaha staff and pick up free educational resources, including the latest issue of Yamaha SupportED Magazine, a USB flash drive containing videos and educational resources from Be Part of the Music and the Music Achievement Council, and much more.

“The Education Space is another way we make a vast array of resources available to music educators,” says John Wittmann, director of education and artist relations. “No other instrument manufacturer invests so heavily in the support of music educators, and we always strive to make those resources available to the widest group possible.”

The Yamaha Education Space will be at the Midwest Clinic International Band and Orchestra Conference, Texas Music Educators Association and select state music educator conferences.

To join the Yamaha community of music educators and to receive valuable educational resources via email, please visit

www.YamahaSupportED.com. 



Jeff Coffin Partners with Yamaha to Support Music Educators

BY YAMAHA CORPORATION OF AMERICA

Jeff Coffin, professor and saxophone artist for Dave Matthews Band, went on the road with the Yamaha Band & Orchestral division to raise support for school music programs. He surprised students at his alma mater, Spaulding High School in Rochester, New Hampshire, speaking and performing at an event to promote teacher and citizen donor involvement in DonorsChoose.org.

With often limited funding from schools and districts, 80 percent of teachers say that funding is the main hurdle they face in music education. Music teachers spend an average of \$945 of their own money every year on essential music supplies for their classrooms.

Yamaha is in the second year of its #MusicEssentials partnership with DonorsChoose.org, an online crowdfunding platform where teachers seek the resources their music students need most, to fund music education projects for the new school year. Yamaha has donated more than \$250,000 in matching

funds, generating \$500,000 worth of supplies for classrooms around the United States.

After encouraging students to apply the values learned in music classes, Coffin and Yamaha presented the school with a new Yamaha YX-500F xylophone valued at \$4,406.00 (MSRP). Yamaha donated \$10,000 in Coffin's name to DonorsChoose.org, which Coffin will disburse to public school teachers using the program.

“I want to say a huge thank you to Yamaha for its groundbreaking #MusicEssentials program,” Coffin says. “As a Yamaha Performing Artist, I have been given the opportunity and potential to share the many benefits of music education with future generations of students and educators. I am forever grateful for the meaningful support and friendship.”

To find out how crowdfunding can help your program, visit www.DonorsChoose.org. 

Newly Signed Yamaha Artists

Yamaha is proud to welcome the following talented musicians to its acclaimed artist roster.

OBOE

- **Chengwen Winnie Lai** - second oboe of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra

CLARINET

- **Tom Puwalski** - former principal clarinetist of The United States Army Field Band and teacher at Music and Arts Center in Maryland
- **Dr. Jennifer Tinberg Fraley** - lecturer of music at Troy University and member of the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra

SAXOPHONE

- **Adrian Barnett** - saxophone professor at Tennessee State University and educator at Nashville State Community College

TRUMPET

- **Kyle Sherman** - principal trumpet of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra


- **Dr. Lance Witty** - lecturer of music at Texas A&M University-Kingsville and adjunct trumpet instructor at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

- **Kevin Woods** - director of jazz studies at Western Washington University and jazz instructor at the Whatcom Jazz Music Arts Center (WJMAC)

FRENCH HORN

- **Dr. James Boldin** - associate professor of music at the University of Louisiana Monroe and member of the Shreveport, Monroe and Rapides Symphony Orchestras

CONCERT PERCUSSION

- **Dr. Matthew Halligan** - adjunct percussion professor at George Mason University
- **Oliver Molina** - assistant professor and assistant director of bands at Northwestern State University of Louisiana 

RESOURCES FOR STUDENT RETENTION

Keeping students involved in music education all the way through high school involves early planning and action. Gain access to invaluable materials online.

BY MARCIA NEEL

One of the hallmarks of highly successful instrumental music educators is their desire to continually seek out new ways to “build a better mousetrap.” For example, they look for new rehearsal and conducting techniques, innovative ideas to reach others through advocacy and more effective strategies to enhance recruitment and retention. These and a plethora of other topics have been addressed in resources provided by the Music Achievement Council (MAC), a not-for-profit organization sponsored by the National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD) and the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM).

The MAC resources presented below have been created by teachers for teachers to help with recruitment and retention. They are available on the MAC website at www.musicachievementcouncil.org. “First Performance Concert” book costs \$45 while the rest are available as free downloads.

1 First Performance: A Demonstration Concert for Beginning Instrumental Music

For Band: http://4wrd.it/MAC_Band

For Orchestra: http://4wrd.it/MAC_Orchestra



Available for beginning band or orchestra, the “First Performance” materials help students demonstrate what they have learned in a short 30-minute concert to be presented within the first six to eight weeks after picking up their instruments. The package features sheet music, programs and a script that can be read by the school principal, a band parent or other invited emcee.

The timing of “First Performance Concert” creates excitement for parents and students alike, inspiring young musicians to practice more because they have quickly learned the satisfaction of a well-prepared show.

To further encourage retention, you can involve high school students as ushers, hosts or guest performers. In the case of band, a surprise appearance by the high school marching ensemble just prior to the conclusion of the show might be an impactful way to provide beginners and their parents with the “long view” of the music education program.

2 A Practical Guide to Recruitment and Retention

http://4wrd.it/MAC_RecruitRetention

One of MAC’s most successful resources, “A Practical Guide to Recruitment and Retention,” compiles ideas and practices of music teachers, music dealers and the music products industry.

Here are two key concepts discussed in the booklet:

- Don’t miss any prospective students
- Don’t try to avoid dropouts—rather, strive to improve retention



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.

3 Tips for Success: Guide for Instrumental Music Teachers

http://4wrd.it/MAC_TipsForSuccess

This guide covers 24 topics that fall under four general areas—The Classroom, The Business Side of Teaching, Telling the Story and Supporting Music Education. Many tips include supplemental videos from directors who explain how they have implemented the specific concepts.


4 Bridging the Gap Between Middle School and High School

http://4wrd.it/MAC_BridgingTheGap

The transition from middle school to high school has been repeatedly identified as being the most crucial period in retaining students. The key to successful retention is action. This publication provides strategies that directors, parents, principals, music supervisors and even the students themselves can implement to create a more seamless changeover as musicians advance from middle school to high school programs.

5 Bonus: Be Part of the Music

<http://4wrd.it/BePartOfTheMusic>

In addition to the tools provided by MAC, check out the website Be Part of the Music, created by Scott Lang. This collection of written content and video materials provides information for students and educators segmented by band and orchestra as well as by middle school and high school. 

B E Y O N D BRASS



WHILE THE **BOSTON BRASS** ENTERTAINS AUDIENCES WORLDWIDE WITH ITS RANGE OF REPERTOIRE AND BOISTEROUS FUN, ITS PRIMARY MISSION INVOLVES EDUCATION FOR MUSICIANS OF ALL KINDS.

BY ELIZABETH GELI

As you might have guessed, the Boston Brass is a brass quintet originally formed in Boston. What you might not have guessed is that more than performing, the group's first goal is to help educate as many young musicians as possible.

"If there's a day that goes by that we don't teach or do a clinic, it feels like it was empty," says tuba player Sam Pilafian.

As the ensemble travels around the world performing, its members make plans to include as many clinics, master classes and guest artist concerts as possible.

"We are on the road 180 days a year," says trumpet player Jeff Conner. "Part of our mission is to leave as big a footprint as we can wherever we are with music education."

Reverence for music teachers is coded in the group's DNA. In every performance, the Boston Brass asks all past, present and future music educators to stand for a round of applause.

"[At] every concert, no matter where we are in the world, I will always say that I would not be on stage if it were not for my middle school and high school band directors," Conner says. "And I think all of us in the group have had these experiences."

Horn player Chris Castellanos always recognizes his mentors. "I was fortunate to have a great band director in Las Vegas named Ed Jackson," Castellanos says. "He always made it a point to challenge us with fun assignments. He turned practicing into a game, which in turn got a lot of kids interested who would've otherwise not practiced at all."



— Domingo Pagliuca

JOINING FORCES

In 1986, Conner founded the Boston Brass, modeled after the Empire Brass, while he was a student at Boston University. Thirty-one years later he's the only original member and the only member that actually lives in Boston. Yet Conner stresses the group has no leader.

"What's unique about the group is we're all equal partners," he says. "That's something that we really think works best."

In addition to Conner, Castellanos and Pilafian, the group includes trumpet player Jose Sibaja and trombone player Domingo Pagliuca.

Thanks to today's technologies, they often write, arrange and rehearse music remotely, then arrive at their next location a day early in order to rehearse for a full day before performing or teaching.

"When we're in real time, it's a pleasure, and a lot of the gist of what has to happen has happened," Pilafian says. "We combine the digital life with seeing each other live, and then you have two families: Boston Brass and our real families."

SERVING ALL STUDENTS

To prepare for clinics, the group likes to communicate with band directors in advance when possible. This early planning makes the clinics more dynamic and tailored for specific students.

"We will be in touch with the director ahead of time, and we'll ask them: 'What would you like for us to cover during the course of the clinic?'" Conner says. "[If] they have a specific need, we will definitely address it. We are very flexible."

Sometimes hearing a clinician say something—even when their director has said the same thing for weeks on end—can be exactly how to reach the students. "They pay just a little bit more attention, or it's delivered in a different accent, or they hear it on a different level, and they run with it right afterward," Pilafian says. "Sometimes it's simply the change of scenery that causes the breakthrough."

All five members of the Boston Brass participate in the clinics unless they are in residence for a longer period of time when they may break into more specialized

workshops. Their clinics can apply to all musicians of any type and level from elementary school to college and adult community groups.

The Boston Brass makes sure to tell the directors that all members of their school or organization are welcome. "Our clinics aren't brass-specific, so everything we talk about is for all musicians," Conner says. "We always let the directors know that ... if they want to have orchestra students or choir students, they are welcome as well."

Sometimes, the quintet even gets to participate in halftime shows. The Boston Brass played with the James Madison University Marching Royal Dukes in Harrisonburg, Virginia, on its high school band day earlier this season.

"There were [more than 1,000] people on the field, 750 of them were high school students, and we did two clinics for all the players; [the clinics] were so big that we had to put them in a basketball arena," Pilafian says. "That's satisfying. That feels like a great day's work that we got to touch that many people and influence that many

TOP TIPS EDUCATION ESSENTIALS

Education is essential to the mission of the Boston Brass. Here are some tips that the Boston Brass members like to impart to music directors during their many clinics.

1 Listen to the Pros: Play recordings of professional musicians as much as possible, perhaps during the beginning of class or as students are putting together their instruments. "It only needs to be three minutes or so of different soloists on [different] instruments each day," says horn player Chris Castellanos. "Students need to listen to professionals just as athletes watch pros on TV all the time."

2 Breathe: Incorporate "The Breathing Gym" or other breathing exercises into your rehearsal routine. "It kind of calls the meeting to order, and everybody gets on the same page," says trumpet player Jeff Conner. "You're breathing the same way, everybody's dialed in, and they're all concentrating. They've gotten the tension out of their bodies, and now they're ready to play their instruments and ready to rehearse."

3 Encourage Chamber Groups: With Boston Brass being a chamber group itself, Conner says that he and its members always try to encourage band directors to incorporate chamber music into their music programs. "It's invaluable, [and] it makes the larger ensemble better," Conner says. "It's something that doesn't necessarily have to be the responsibility of the band director, but it can be duets, a jazz quartet, anything. Playing in small groups is just a great thing for students to be doing."



Practice What You Preach: The Boston Brass teaches and motivates students at Gainsville (Florida) High School.

people. That felt good flying home on the day after that game."

FOR YOUR LUNGS AND EARS

In addition to the director's requests, some of the most common topics covered in the Boston Brass clinics include breathing technique, increasing sound, breaking down rhythms and improving dynamics. Pilafian is coauthor of the popular Emmy-winning "The Breathing Gym" exercise book and DVD, so that is one of the pillars of the Boston Brass's teaching and playing.

"We're a living lab of 'The Breathing Gym,' and so it's one of the things we spend a lot of time doing," Pilafian says. "It makes the band sound better and only takes three to five minutes. It's addictive because you're getting better."

The Boston Brass always encourages students to listen to professional musicians as much as possible. "Have an open ear to all music and listen to music played by a professional that performs on your

instrument," Pagliuca says. "You will grow as far as your ears grow. The more you listen to great music, the better you will be as a musician."

GENERATIONS OF PERSPECTIVE

The group's respect for educators came full circle four years ago when Pilafian decided to join as a member of the group after his retirement from teaching in colleges. "I've known Jeff since he was a teenager, and he fell in love with brass chamber music," Pilafian says. "He built this incredible career for the group, and I didn't realize he was building my retirement at the time, but that's what happens."

For Conner and the other Boston Brass members, performing with Pilafian is a dream come true.

"It's incredible," Conner says. "I mean I never would have imagined that Sam would be playing in the quintet when he was coaching us as students 30 years ago at Boston University."

Pilafian enjoys the unusual arrangement. "It's your job as an older professional to stop treating students like students when they become great and acknowledge the fact that they're now your colleagues," he says. "We've got years and years of experience, but we have generations of perspective on the same piece of music, so we're all learning from each other."

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The Boston Brass presents an engaging clinic at the Seika Girls (Fukuota, Japan) High School.

A FESTIVAL CAROL

BY MARCIA NEEL

As our thoughts turn to preparing for upcoming festival performances, we must remember that this is all about students attaining full facility of the skills required to become independent music-makers within the framework of the ensemble.

To borrow from a familiar framework, this is a good time to focus on festivals past, present and future.

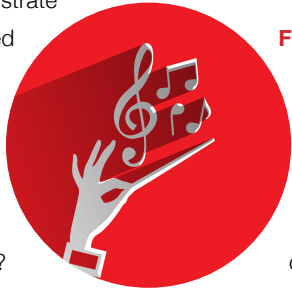
Festival Past: All performances reflect the skills taught up to that point in time. In fact, festivals are the very definition of a “performance assessment.” Ensembles that demonstrate quality tone production do so because they learned the techniques required to produce that sound consistently. Those that play with proper blend and balance have been taught how to make appropriate adjustments by way of their acquired listening skills.

So why do we still hear festival performances where students do not demonstrate these qualities? Is the music too difficult? Is the director still working on developing his pedagogical bag of tricks? What can be done to ensure a more musical and impactful performance?

Festival Present: The most memorable performance experiences occur when where we were completely prepared and all that

remains is to enjoy the moment of music-making. What does this mean for the director?

- We must prepare the students so that they will perform with absolute confidence in themselves as an individual player as well as in the ensemble as a whole. In other words, they KNOW that they are READY because they already own it!
- The festival performance should bring fulfillment to our students as music-makers and joy to the audience as the beneficiaries of an inspirational performance.



Festival Future: The best directors continually improve their teaching skills to provide their future students with more comprehensive and enriching musical experiences. Whether competitive or not, adjudicated performances provide us with just this type of helpful assessment. The festival assessment can thus serve as a prescription to help identify our own professional development needs and set the course for learning teaching strategies that will result in higher quality performances in the future. With musical growth comes a deeper understanding, commitment and passion for the art of producing the pinnacle performance and this is our target—music-making at the highest level. 🎵



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.

ADVANCING THE ART & SCIENCE OF LISTENING

MEET THE HD-200 HARMONY DIRECTOR

This comprehensive tool brings harmony training, rhythm training and ensemble timing together in one convenient device. It enables music educators to clearly demonstrate for students how to tune individual notes within chords, so that entire chords may be tuned. The HD-200 Harmony Director helps musicians understand how their parts fit into the complete harmony of the ensemble.

TONE

- 10 voices, including piano for accompaniment
- 32-Note Polyphony
- Octave Slider – Choose up to 4 octaves
- Figure Slider – Adjust the attack, release and brightness to demonstrate to players the desired tonal image
- Hold Button – Show the differences of harmony changes caused by modifications to pitch and volume

HARMONY

- Temperaments Selection – Switch on Equal, Pure Major or Pure Minor
- Pitch and Volume Adjustment – Modify the pitch of each of 12 notes in 0.1 cent increments up to +55 cents – Change the volume of each of 12 notes from -15 to +5
- One Button Transposition C, Bb, Eb & F

METRONOME

- Up to 6 note subdivisions including quarter note triplet
- Programmable up to 8 sets
- Tap Tempo – Easily set the tempo using the tap tempo feature



BUILDING FROM THE GROUND UP

HOW TO BUILD A PROGRAM FROM SCRATCH

BY FRANK DIMARIA



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When Daniel Berard walked into his job interview at Fossil Ridge High School in Fort Collins, Colorado, he had a clear vision of how to start the band program from scratch. He pictured the Fossil Ridge band program one, two, five and 10 years down the road and hoped the administration would buy into his plans.

"I laid out what I thought we might be able to do at Fossil Ridge, and that resonated with the people who opened the building," recalls Berard, who had previously been a high school band director for 10 years before working toward his master's degree in music education and instrumental conducting at Colorado State University.

Berard became a critical member on a core team of about 12 individuals who opened the high school in 2004. Since the birth of the band program, he has striven for music excellence at Fossil Ridge as the performing arts department chair for the last 10 years and currently as the director of bands.

Then-principal Dr. Dierdre Cook wanted the band program to set the school apart from others, citing it as "one of the foundational cornerstones" for a successful high school. "I knew a marching band would be important, and I knew it had to be the right band director, and Dan Berard is the right band director," she says.

The band program has about 180 students this year, but 13 years ago, it had only 20 students. Over the years, the bands have won several awards. The Wind Symphony and Symphonic Band received superior ratings at state and regional concert band festivals while the marching band has been a state championship finalist every year since 2005 and won the 2012 and 2013 Colorado Class 5A marching band championship.



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A New Standard: The Fossil Ridge Wind Symphony prepares in February 2016 for its performance in the Music for All National Festival that spring.

BABY STEPS

As the band program took life before his eyes, Berard says the first few years involved pumping blood into the group to get it up and running.

"As we were getting going, we were just taking little baby steps along the way to make sure that every time we took a step forward, it was something that [the students and administration] could feel good about," Berard says. "Then we just built from there, slowly and methodically, kind of putting things in place."

The three other high schools in the area had bands, but they did not really participate in marching activities, Berard says, so nurturing the band program in a community without a strong marching culture was the hardest part in the beginning.

To grow the marching arts at Fossil Ridge, Berard analyzed successful bands from across the country. "It's matching what we wanted to do with what was happening from around the country and tailoring it to what our situation was going to be," Berard says.

His firsthand observation of other groups helped him determine the structure of his rehearsals, how to keep students motivated and how to operate the chamber ensembles.

Berard also pulled from his own personal experiences. Previously a band director of a high school band program that struggled after it saw success years prior, Berard says he learned the value of patience and the business of band.

LITTLE AND BIG SUCCESSES

Logistically at Fossil Ridge, the students are split into three sit-down bands—concert band, Symphonic Band and Wind Symphony—starting with the first day of school. These three bands combine to make up the marching band in the fall. After marching season, students continue playing in the concert bands for the rest of the school year and perform in several small ensembles during the second quarter. Color guard members continue their training through a spring dance program.

While the program earned several awards over the years, Berard says he does not solely use the awards to measure the bands' successes. He gauges everyday accomplishments during practices and dress rehearsals.

"There's a lot of what the community sees as being really successful, so like you win a couple of state championships or something for marching band, and everybody thinks things are great, which it is, but from the inside, I see it a little differently," he says. "The growth of the program is seen by having kids rally around achieving this really, really high level, and that sets the standard on a daily level. It was great to do some of these high-profile performances, but what we do every day establishes our opportunity to do some of those bigger things."

Berard says that the little successes snowball into large successes. Two of those pivotal moments came in 2012 and 2016 when the Wind Symphony performed at the Music for All National Festival.

Berard submitted an audition video on a whim in 2012, and the performance became the first "award" from a concert band standpoint, he says.

"That started this special climb because the kids really rallied around what that meant for them and the school," Berard says. "They knew they would be performing with some of the very best groups in the country, and that just kind of elevated everybody. That group of students set a new standard for what they wanted out of the band program, and that really challenged me because I had to get a lot better because they wanted to get a lot better."

When the symphony went back four years later, he says the performance set even higher standards for the program.

Participating in the festival remains a favorite memory for french horn and mellophone player Morgan Herrick. She describes the last note and release of the performance as "so satisfying and fulfilling."

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Daniel Berard took the band program at Fossil Ridge High School across a chasm—starting a band program from scratch and building it into a successful participant in both concert and marching settings. Here are tips to replicate his success.



Big Win: The Wind Symphony has performed twice—in 2012 and 2016—at the Music for All National Festival.

1. Focus on People First: When band directors first enter the music field, they believe that their primary focus is to teach music, Berard says. While that is part of the job, he says, band directors should always focus on the students and band staff first before the music. "It's about the people in the room first, not the music in the room first," Berard says. "The music will get there once the people are taken care of."

2. Start with the End in Mind: Have a plan and vision for the band and try to meet the goals set in that plan, Berard says. Berard looked at other successful bands to find strategies he could implement. "We could draw from these great band programs and find out what was really working and incorporate it into something here."

3. Know Success and Setbacks Are on the Same Coin: Band directors should remember that both victories and failures drive a band. When the band or particular students experience success, make sure to celebrate,

Berard says, but when tough decisions need to be made, staying fair and firm is the best policy.

4. Seek Out Colleagues and Mentors: While potentially terrifying to ask for an honest opinion, especially one that a director doesn't want to hear, Berard says that the advice of others will help the band and director improve.

5. Be Engaged in the School Community: The band is just one piece of the whole school system, and Berard says it's important to support school-wide goals. As the performing arts department chair, he collaborated with the school's administration team. "Try to get involved in those bigger picture educational leadership discussions," he says. "If the building is talking about making changes to the bell system, try to be engaged in that discussion and figure out how that's going to affect the science class just as much as how it's going to affect the band class. Then, you can see how all those pieces have to fit together instead of always arguing just for your little piece of the pie."

THE HEARTBEAT OF THE SCHOOL

Berard says several people have spurred the band's success over the years, with the students and administration being the driving force. Cook, on the other hand, credits Berard—who she calls the "heartbeat of the school."

"Those kids learn skills they wouldn't learn from anywhere else, and he rallies kids to that level of excellence," Cook says. "Dan moves it to the next level because he believes in the quality of the program and he believes in the talent of those kids, and he's able to bring that out and have them be successful."

The skills students learn in band go beyond the music and technical side of playing; they learn responsibilities and lessons that translate both on and off the field, Cook says. Seeing band students working on homework while riding the bus is a common scene at Fossil Ridge High School because they understand responsibility. The music students have higher GPAs and college acceptance rates along with less disciplinary problems, she adds.

Herrick understands firsthand how the program helps students grow musically and academically. "The competitive nature of band and how successful our band is kind of pushes you, especially as young high schoolers, because you realize how you have a part in the whole, and it's your responsibility as an individual to be a part of something bigger and to help the group, so I think that's a really good skill for people going into high school to start learning right from the beginning," says Herrick, a May 2017 graduate.

While band programs may be expensive, Cook says that the rewards outweigh the costs because they allow students to explore future opportunities, like college scholarships and university and military bands.

TO THE NEXT LEVEL


Looking back on 13 years of the band program and how it all started with a vision, Berard calls the band's success "magical."



With Pride: Students at Fossil Ridge rally around the ideal of excellence and know that making little improvements every day will lead to big successes down the road.

Since the band met Berard's 10-year goals in its seventh and eighth years, maintaining this success could be even harder, he says.

"Going from a 95 percent to a 96 percent is way harder than going from a 50 percent to a 90 percent," Berard says. "It's that one percent that is almost impossible to get to. It's that whole 'good-to-great' threshold."

Embracing music technology and discovering different ways to keep students' attention are just a couple of Berard's current goals. With the foundation of the band now set, these "little" goals will eventually lead to the long-term health of the program and, Berard adds, hopefully create a legacy that will continue to live on. 

TIPS FOR SIGHT-READING SUCCESS

INCORPORATING SIGHT-READING INTO DAILY PRACTICE AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND AS AN ENSEMBLE FOSTERS SKILLS FOR A LIFETIME OF MUSICAL SUCCESS.

BY STACY N. HACKETT

The key to sight-reading success? Consistent daily practice, according to Dr. Charles R. Jackson, Jr., part-time assistant professor of music at Kennesaw (Georgia) State University, and Michael Burritt, professor of percussion and chair of the woodwinds, brass and percussion department at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York.

“Sight-reading is a skill any musician can acquire,” Burritt says, noting that musicians will need to learn new music throughout their lives and must be able to pick up the nuances of the music quickly. “It’s an important skill, and musicians are called to do it more often than they realize.”

Jackson agrees, emphasizing that the process is just as important for the full band as it is for individuals. “Just a few minutes every day, enough to play a few measures of new music, can help an ensemble become very confident and comfortable with the sight-reading process.”

Burritt and Jackson share their tips for guiding music students as individuals and in entire ensembles toward sight-reading success.

1 START YOUNG

Jackson recommends making sight-reading a daily part of rehearsal starting in middle school. “As early as 6th grade, if not earlier, sight-reading has to become part of a band’s daily rehearsal schedule,” he says. “Daily sight-reading practice then becomes a normal way of musical life for the students.”

Introducing regular sight-reading at this stage also helps build confidence in young musicians. “There’s no apprehension in a competitive setting because they have over-prepared ahead of time,” Jackson explains. “Students introduced to the concept as young musicians don’t consider sight-reading difficult because they are challenged early on.”

2 TIGHTEN THE NUTS AND BOLTS

Teach students to dissect all aspects of the music—the “nuts and bolts,” Burritt says. This process includes reading through the notes (including any rests) and noticing any key changes, time changes, accidentals, dynamics or other markings.

KEYBOARDISTS: DON’T LOOK DOWN

Keyboard percussionists and pianists face a unique challenge when sight-reading. They must resist the urge to look down at their hands. “It is a learned skill to not look at the keyboard while learning new music,” says Michael Burritt. “Keyboard percussionists must learn to play by feel.”

Repeated practice of this technique helps such musicians develop the muscle memory to read music without looking down at the instrument. “You have to trust your muscle memory,” Burritt adds. “Your ear will tell you where to go, high or low. Just keep playing.”



“Ask your students to look at the terrain of the music and to try to hear the music in their heads before they play it,” Burritt recommends. “They should ask themselves: ‘How is the music going to sound out loud?’”

3 WRITE IT DOWN

Reinforce visual learning with written exercises.

Jackson has used rhythmic analysis worksheets with his students with consistent success. “We would work daily on the worksheets, studying two measures at a time,” Jackson explains. “The students would indicate beats, notes and rests with up and down arrows or numbers. The approach encompasses all types of learning styles.”

4 SCALE TO NEW HEIGHTS

To recognize key signatures during sight-reading exercises, you need to practice all of the scales—even the ones that may seem difficult.

Introduce the scales in chromatic order. “It helps encourage confidence in young musicians to build the scale cycle chromatically

[C, C#/D^b, D, D#/E^b, E, F, F#/G^b, G, G#/A^b, A, A#/B^b, B],” Jackson says. “Then when students are presented with a piece in the key of B, they don’t consider the music difficult.”

5 TAP THE RHYTHM

When they read through the music for the first time—before they pick up their instruments—have the students tap the beat with their feet. “This helps the students internalize the sense of pulse,” Jackson says. “Essentially, they become the metronome.”

Another benefit? “They learn to tap in phase with their neighbor, so all the students are in phase with each other,” Jackson says.

6 PLAY WITH FRIENDS


Regular sight-reading as part of a duo or small group helps musicians absorb the music more quickly. “When you play by yourself, you can stop and start whenever you want without impacting other musicians, but when you play with someone else, you have to keep going,” Burritt says. “It forces you to look two, three or four beats ahead. Plus, it makes sight-reading more fun.”

7 BE DYNAMIC

When judging sight-reading performances at festivals, Jackson sometimes encounters bands that have great balance and technical ability—yet the music lacks expression. He attributes this problem to an ensemble paying little attention to dynamic contrast during sight-reading practice.

“I compare it to a painting done in black and grey tones—how much better would it look in color?” he says. “Music is all about expression. Those changes in expression noted on the page are part of the music. The band has to make it sound like music.”

8 PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

And finally, because it bears repeating: practice, practice, practice. As Burritt says, “The key to sight-reading is to practice it on a regular basis, to make it a consistent part of daily [routine].” 



In Adjudication: Dr. Charles R. Jackson Jr., gives feedback to students at the 2016 Indianapolis School Music Festival, presented by Music for All.

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
12/20 - 12/23	Chicago, IL	Various, Master Educators	Doug Beach, John R. Beck, Travis J. Cross, Rodney Dorsey, Adam Frey, Tracy Harris, Thomas Hooten, Jeffery Kyle Hutchins, Kevin Lepper, Jens Lindemann, Stephen Page, Rex Richardson, Jose Sibaja, Jim Widner, Marguerite Wilder and many more	www.midwestclinic.org	Clinics, Concerts	The Midwest Clinic
1/3 - 1/6	Dallas, TX	Various	Randy Brecker, Bob Breithaupt, Caleb Chapman, Jeff Coffin, Joe Eckert, Robin Eubanks, Jeff Jarvis, Sean Jones, Grace Kelly, Dean Sorenson, Mike Steinel, Jim Widner, Greg Yasinitsky and many more	www.jazzednet.org	Clinics, Concerts	Jazz Education Network Conference
1/11	Salt Lake City, UT	Trumpet	James Thompson	www.music.utah.edu/events/index.php	Masterclass	University of Utah Trumpet Studio Masterclass
1/13	Evansville, IN	Clarinet	Lori Baruth	www.handhmusic.net	Masterclass	H & H Music Clinic Day
1/19 - 1/21	Estero, FL	Horn	Chris Castellanos	www.bonitaspringsconcertband.com/events/	Clinics, Concert	Bonita Springs Concert Band Horn Clinic
1/20	Hoover, AL	Percussion	Bret Kuhn	www.scgconline.org/event_details.php?event_id=201	Clinic	SCGC Indoor Circuit Percussion Clinic
1/25 - 1/27	Athens, GA	Various	Chip Crotts, Travis Downs, Adam Frey, Tracy Harris, John Pursell	www.gmea.org/conference-information/	Clinics	Georgia Music Educators Association Conference
1/27	Natchitoches, LA	Saxophone	Kenneth Tse	www.paulforsythmusic.com/nsu-saxfest/	Masterclasses, Recital	Northwestern State University SaxFest
1/28	Evansville, IN	Saxophone	Adam Estes	www.evansville.edu/majors/music/saxophoneDay.cfm	Masterclass, Recital, Concert	University of Evansville Saxophone Day
2/6	Mitchell, SD	Saxophone, Trombone	Tom Brantley, Jeffrey Rupert	www.palacecityjazz.com/palace-city-jazz-festival.html	Clinics, Concert	Palace City Jazz Festival
2/8 - 2/10	Kennesaw, GA	Trumpet	Allen Vizzutti	arts.kennesaw.edu/music/concerts-and-events/vizzutti_trumpet.php	Masterclasses, Concert	Allen Vizzutti Residency at Kennesaw State University
2/9 - 2/10	St. Charles, MO	Saxophone	Dave Camwell	www.lindenwood.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-of-arts-media-and-communications/music/lindenwood-university-jazz-festival/	Clinics, Concert	Lindenwood University Jazz Festival
2/9 - 2/10	Charleston, IL	Trombone	Andy Martin	www.eiu.edu/music/events_jazzfestival.php	Masterclass, Concert	Eastern Illinois University Jazz Festival
2/9 - 2/10	Fargo, ND	Trumpet	Charles Lazarus	www.ndsu.edu/performingarts/music/jazz_festival/	Masterclass, Coaching, Concert	North Dakota State University Jazz Festival
2/10	Salem, WA	Saxophone	Jeff Coffin	www.westsalemband.org/jazzfest.html	Clinics, Concerts	West Salem Jazz Festival



2/10	Ogden, UT	Saxophone	Glenn Kostur	www.weber.edu/PerformingArts/WSUJazzReview.html	Masterclass, Concert	Weber State University Jazz Review
2/10	New Lenox, IL	Trumpet	Bob Lark	www.lwcmusic.org/	Clinic, Masterclasses	11th Annual LWC Jazz Festival
2/13	Amherst, MA	Trumpet	Craig Morris	www.umass.edu/music	Coaching, Lessons, Masterclass	Craig Morris Masterclass
2/15 - 2/17	Hot Springs, AR	Master Educator	Douglas Droste	www.asboa.org	Rehearsals, Conducting	Arkansas All-State Orchestra
2/15 - 2/16	Shepherdstown, WV	Trumpet	Kevin Woods	www.shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts	Workshops, Masterclasses, Lessons, Concert	Guest Artist and Lecturer Kevin Woods
2/15 - 2/16	Hilton, NY	Trumpet	Allen Vizzutti	www.hilton.k12.ny.us/calendar_events.	Clinics, Masterclasses, Concert	Hilton Central School District Annual Evening of Jazz
2/16 - 2/17	Terre Haute, IN	Trumpet	Sean Jones	www.isujazzfest.org	Clinic, Rehearsals, Concert	Indiana State University Annual Jazz Festival
2/16 - 2/17	Mooreville, NC	Trumpet	Bobby Shew	www.thelakenormanbigband.org	Clinic, Rehearsals, Concert	The Lake Norman Big Band 2018 Jazz Celebration
2/18	Eagle Rock, CA	Trumpet	Wayne Bergeron	bands.caltech.edu/schedule.php	Workshops, Rehearsals, Concert	Caltech-Occidental Wind Orchestra
2/23	Corpus Christi, TX	Trumpet	Craig Morris	www.tamucc.edu/events/	Masterclass, Recital	Texas A&M-Corpus Christi Recital and Masterclass
2/25	San Marcos, TX	Trumpet	Craig Morris	www.music.txstate.edu/events.html	Masterclass, Recital	Texas State University Masterclass and Recital
2/26	Austin, TX	Trumpet	Craig Morris	www.music.utexas.edu/calendar	Masterclass, Recital	University of Texas Masterclass and Recital
2/27 - 2/28	Waco, TX	Trumpet	Craig Morris	www.baylor.edu/music/event.php?event_id=111208	Masterclass, Recital	Baylor University Masterclass and Recital
3/1	Stephenville, TX	Trumpet	Craig Morris	www.tarleton.edu/calendar/music/#/view/event/date/20180301/event_id/20410	Masterclass, Recital	Tarleton State University Recital and Masterclass
3/3	Nacogdoches, TX	Trumpet	Craig Morris	www.finearts.sfasu.edu/events	Masterclass, Recital	Stephen F. Austin State University Master Class and Recital
3/4 - 3/5	Tyler, TX	Trumpet	Craig Morris	www.utt Tyler.edu/music/all-events.php	Masterclass, Recital	University of Texas at Tyler Recital and Masterclass
3/5 - 3/6	Commerce, TX	Trumpet	Craig Morris	www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/	Masterclass, Recital	Texas A&M Commerce Recital and Masterclass
3/24	Fife, WA	Trumpet	Thomas Marriott	www.commencement-bayjazzfestival.com	Clinics, Concert	Commencement Bay Jazz Festival

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