

# INTERVAL

DECEMBER 2025

*Develop, promote, and support equitable learning and teaching in*

*Minnesota*



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# From the Editor



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Welcome to the December issue of *Interval*, the online publication of MMEA. I am excited to share this issue with you as the MMEA staff and board prepare for the 2026 Midwinter Convention in February. The theme for the upcoming convention is - *Connect, Engage, Act. This is how we UNITE!*

If you are anything like me, there have been times in the past year that have felt like I have been rolling a boulder up a hill with no end in sight. Whether it be navigating the microcosmos of our classrooms, the systems of our school community or school leadership, or changes in grant funding at the state and national level, it can feel overwhelming. It is in those times that I take a breath, look around me for the positive things, and rise to face another day. Sometimes this means digging in to face the challenge before me...and sometimes it means letting something go by passing the torch to a trusted colleague or friend. I have done both in 2025 in my professional life.

Navigating change in teaching is a part of our profession. In the theme of *Connect, Engage, Act* I invite you into this issue to learn about two facets of policy in Minnesota Music Education. First, we introduced you to the Culturally Responsive Arts Education program in our December 2024 issue. Due to changes in federal funding, this program has ended earlier than planned. However, you can read about the program and its impact on schools and communities in this issue. As a member of this program, I can attest to how it has created change in the school district where I teach.

Second, I offer thanks to Alina Campana from the Minnesota Department of Education and Max Clark-Vail from the Perpich Center for summarizing the groundwork that has occurred in revising the Minnesota Music License. This is important work to be aware of, even if you hold a current Minnesota teaching license. I encourage you to *connect* with your fellow music educators and consider an invitation to act if you wish to have a hand in revising Minnesota statute, which you can read about in this issue.

The Midwinter Convention is always about connecting and recharging with the hope you walk away with a good idea or two that you can use in your classroom the next week. The presenters for the Convention are carefully vetted for their expertise and the board seeks to select a wide variety of sessions from the pool of applicants (side note: if you have a great idea for a session, apply for 2027!). Bassoonist Ariel Detweiler shares her expertise in an article on bassoon intonation that you don't want to miss if you teach this instrument.

I extend gratitude to Sarah Minette, who led the “reboot” of *Interval* to an online publication, for her work on the past three issues. I also thank Becca Buck, David Davis, and Jennifer Hawkinson for their assistance on this current issue as well as MMEA’s Executive Director Jerri Neddermeyer for all the formatting work she does behind the scenes to bring the *Interval* to you.

If you like something you read or have an idea for us, we invite you to share your thoughts as we look ahead to the spring 2026 issue. We have updated the feedback form for the *Interval* and you will find a QR code to take you there in these pages.

We hope you enjoy this Midwinter Convention preview issue - See you in February!

## Members of the Editorial Team



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University of Wisconsin Eau Claire | Music and Theatre Arts

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- Cellopalooza | Nov 15
- GuitarFest | Nov 22
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# Minnesota Arts Licensing Update November 2025

by Alina Campana and Max Clark-Vail

## Background

In Minnesota, all of the teacher licensing standards are in Minnesota Rule. To update these standards, the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) must go through an official process called rulemaking. The arts licensure standards have not been updated in more than 20 years. Because PELSB did not have the capacity to independently review and revise the arts licensure standards, in 2024, Perpich Center and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) began leading this process and assisting PELSB in preparing for rulemaking in the arts.

Writing workgroups will be assembled for each license area to review, revise, and create standards for that license area. If you are interested in applying to join one of the writing workgroups, contact [max.clark@pcae.k12.mn.us](mailto:max.clark@pcae.k12.mn.us).

.....  
*Alina Campana* is the Arts Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education. For more than 10 years she has led statewide initiatives that support educators, administrators, and schools to deepen and expand learning in and through the arts. Prior to the Department of Education, she led programs including Turnaround Arts: Minnesota and the Perpich Arts Integration Network of Teachers at the Perpich Center for Arts Education. Her background includes teaching art, art methods, and English as a second language to children and adults. She has a MA in Visual Culture and Art Education from the University of Arizona.



*Max Clark-Vail* is the Leadership and Data Specialist for Perpich Center for Arts Education. His background includes serving as a high school administrator, school board chair, art education instructor, and Visual and Media Arts teacher. In 2022, Max was named Art Administrator of the Year by Art Educators of Minnesota. He holds a Master's in art education from Augsburg University, and received his B.A. in Studio Art, Art History, and Aesthetics from St. Olaf College.



# Arts Licensing and Standards Revision Process (Pre-Rulemaking)

The pre-rulemaking process has three phases.

**PHASE 1:** Arts Licensing Steering Committee reviewed structural issues and possible solutions (July 2024 - June 2025)

A steering committee was established to offer guidance on any structural changes needed before the review and revision of existing licensure standards in the arts. All five arts areas for which we have MN K-12 Academic Arts Standards (dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts) are represented on the Steering Committee. Additionally, the following areas of expertise were included:

- Arts education faculty in higher education
- K-12 administrators (both district and school level)
- K-12 arts educators

The committee met monthly and did an in-depth analysis of core structural issues, as well as potential solutions. Members thoroughly discussed pros and cons for each option and continued to discuss each item until coming to a unanimous consensus on recommendations for each item. These recommendations were presented to PELSB in the summer of 2025.

**PHASE 2:** Surveying the field to get feedback on the steering committee recommendations. (July 2025 - November 2025)

During this phase, Perpich and MDE developed surveys for each of the Steering Committee recommendations to share with Minnesota arts teachers, K-12 administrators, arts education organizations, arts organizations, higher education faculty, and teaching/working artists. After receiving hundreds of responses from the field, Perpich and MDE conducted a thorough analysis of the data and will present this data to the PELSB board in November 2025.

**PHASE 3:** Writing Workgroups to develop draft recommended arts teacher license standards (2026, schedule TBD)

This phase begins after PELSB has reviewed the recommendations of the Steering Committee and made a decision on how to move forward. During this phase, workgroups will be formed for each arts licensure area to draft recommended standards to be presented to PELSB.

## The Music Recommendation

The steering committee's music recommendation was to create a new PK-12 Music license and move the current K-12 Vocal and Classroom Music and the K-12 Instrumental and Classroom Music licenses to legacy licenses.

Note that since current K-12 music licenses would become legacy licenses, they would not go away. Teachers who hold those licenses would continue to renew them as normal. However, they would not be offered as new licenses.



<sup>1</sup>The expanded scope of PK-12 vs K-12 is due to a general move for all K-12 licenses to adopt pre-K during their review and revision processes. This was not determined by the Steering Committee recommendation.

**The issues this recommendation seeks to address:** K-12 music education does not fully represent the prevalent ways society engages with, and makes, music. To keep music education relevant and aligned with student interests and contemporary career opportunities in music, music educators need knowledge and skills in areas such as popular music, recording arts, and music production/technology, as well as related pedagogical approaches.

Additionally, the current licensing structure is built around the musical traditions of band and orchestra (instrumental), and choir (vocal), creating barriers to becoming an educator for the many musicians who are not from one of these specific musical backgrounds. It also creates barriers to offering music learning in K-12 schools that would prepare students for the range of musical careers that exist today.

**Rationale for the recommendation:** Creating an all-inclusive PK-12 Music license asks new music educators to broaden their knowledge and experience while still valuing and expecting some level of specialization. It also positions a wider variety of musical traditions as equally valuable to PK-12 music education.

The committee considered the following options:

- No change
- Change through standards revision
- Create a Music Production and Recording Arts endorsement requiring a Music license
- Create a Music Production and Recording Arts endorsement requiring a Music license or Media Arts pathway
- Eliminate the current Music licenses and create a PK-12 Music license, as well as three endorsements: Band and Orchestra, Instrumental, Choir and Music Production and Recording Arts
- Eliminate the current Music licenses and create a PK-12 Music license as well as two endorsements: Band and Orchestra, and Choir
- Maintain the current Music licenses and add a third, PK-12 Music Production & Recording Arts
- Eliminate the current Music licenses and create a PK-12 Music license that is all-encompassing

## National Context

We reviewed NAFME's Music Educator Certification State by State<sup>2</sup> and found that:

- 38 states (including District of Columbia) offer all-encompassing music licenses;
- 12 states offer vocal/instrumental split licenses, including Minnesota, and one of these states also offers an all-encompassing music license; and
- 5 states offer another variation of music licensing, with 4 out of 5 of these states also offering a music license that combines vocal & instrumental.

## Next Steps & How to Get Involved

The PELSB board will review the survey results at their November meeting and are unlikely to come to a decision before their December meeting. Once the PELSB board has made a decision on the path forward for each arts area, Perpich and MDE will prepare applications for writing workgroups. Writing workgroups will be assembled for each license area to review, revise, and create standards for that license area. Writing workgroups may include K-12 arts teachers, higher education arts education faculty, and higher education arts faculty.

If you have questions, or if you are interested in applying to join one of the writing workgroups, contact [max.clark@pcae.k12.mn.us](mailto:max.clark@pcae.k12.mn.us).

<sup>2</sup> <https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Music-Educator-Certification-State-by-State-NAfME-2023.pdf>

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# Culturally Responsive Arts Education Program

## Teachers Taking Action

By Nora Schull



*Nora Schull* is an Arts & Equity Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education. Previous to this role she was a dance educator for 10 years in the Anoka Hennepin School District and a district arts coordinator for 8 years for Minneapolis Public Schools.

### Editor's Note:

*“Great things can happen when you provide teachers with space, time, resources, and funding to critically examine their curriculum, school or district policies, or systems as a whole. Schools throughout Minnesota benefited from this program; teachers worked together and learned from each other to improve their students’ musical experiences. The CRAE program was a perfect example of our 2026 Midwinter Convention theme of Connect, Engage, and Act.”*

*The Minnesota Department of Education’s (MDE) Culturally Responsive Arts Education (CRAE) program is designed to advance equity and improve quality in arts education in Minnesota classrooms, schools, and districts through the development and implementation of culturally responsive and anti-racist arts curriculum, instruction, policies, and practices.*

From June 2023 through September 2025, a cohort of K-12 arts educators was engaged in ongoing and sustained professional learning that culminated in the development and implementation of local Pilot Action Initiatives at the K-12 classroom, school and/or district levels. CRAE Cohort participants were chosen through an application process in the spring of 2023 and consisted of 67 members from across the state in K-12 Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts. Approximately one-third of the participants were music teachers.

The CRAE Cohort kicked off their learning in the summer of 2023 with a three-day summer institute focused on developing culturally responsive curriculum, instruction, and practices rooted in the Six Principles of Arts Equity by Dr. Amelia Kraehe. Cohort participants engaged in learning during the 2023-24 school year with monthly professional development sessions that were both in-person and virtual. During these sessions participants continued to learn about cultural responsiveness as well as assess their current contexts using an Arts Equity Audit developed by MDE. The Arts Equity Audit consisted of three reflective tools that helped cohort members look at their curriculum, their values and beliefs, and finally, the culture and climate of their arts classroom, schools, and districts.

The CRAE Cohort came together again in June of 2024 for their second three-day summer institute. The focus of the institute was to analyze the data that cohort members had gathered over the past year using the Arts Equity Audit tools. Cohort members were led through a Data Interpretation Process and a Root Cause Analysis Process to identify the underlying causes of the inequities that were identified in their classrooms, schools, and districts. Cohort members then used this information to begin to craft their Pilot Action Initiatives (PAI).

During the 2024-25 school year CRAE Cohort members designed and implemented their PAIs. They also continued to engage in monthly learning and coaching sessions focused on deepening their understanding of culturally responsive arts curriculum, practices, and policies. MDE supported the PAIs through technical and financial assistance. In June of 2025 the CRAE cohort came together for one last summer session where they reviewed the work completed over the last year and developed additional ways in which they could support a culturally responsive arts education. Cohort members shared their progress and looked for additional ways to collaborate amongst the cohort during the 25-26 school year. In our 2025 Annual Survey of CRAE cohort members, participants reported:

- 650 new and/or updated curricula and resources were developed and these materials have had a positive impact on students;
- Profound positive change across their practice, student outcomes, and systemic influence within their schools and districts;
- Enhanced student engagement and participation, with an increased sense of belonging, as well as student growth in confidence and artistic identity;
- Time, space, professional learning, collaboration, and funding were areas of support that positively influenced their ability to make equitable changes.

The CRAE program was funded by a U.S. Department of Education Assistance for Arts Education grant. In August of 2025, MDE received a notification of discontinuation for the grant. This was a year earlier than the original grant ending period of September 30, 2026. Due to this notification, the CRAE cohort came together one last time in September 2025 to share and plan for how this work could continue in the future.

The Minnesota Department of Education remains committed to ensuring every student, of every ability and background, has access to an equitable arts education, and we will also continue to find ways to support the CRAE cohort as well as culturally responsive arts education throughout the state. Learn more at:

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/stds/Arts/culture/>

# A Sample of CRAE-Funded Projects:

## **Justice Alan Page Elementary (Maplewood) – *Student Choice and Voice through Project-based Music Education and Adaptive Music***

“We are incorporating project-based curriculum and instruction in our grade level music classes. With 4th and 5th grade, we are focusing on a modern band approach. This idea is supporting a K-12 holistic model. We are also doing this modern band model with our new Adaptive Music. Adaptive is working on the same tunes and instruments, with differentiation, as 4th and 5th grades. This PAI has already had a profound impact on our students, teachers and school community. There is great buy-in and optimism for where this program can go utilizing the methodologies we are now using. We are hoping what we are doing can spread across our district in coming years, and beyond our district borders after that.”

-Michael Bjork

## **Minneapolis South High School – *World Drumming with Dr. Tim Berry***

“What an amazing professional development experience to be given resources to vision, write, create, and revise a World Drumming curriculum with Dr. Tim Berry, and then to experience him teaching it with our students at Minneapolis South High School. This was a once-in-a-lifetime professional development experience, the students and I are so very grateful and honored to be a part of it.”

-Laurie Meyers

## **Rochester Public Schools: *Implementation of Alternate Classroom Practices to Reduce Harm, Increase Student Voice/Agency, and Promote Community***

“This cohort has been a vital part of my growth as a teacher and the growth of my school community. It has brought instruments to my students that they have never had access to before. It has empowered my students to see themselves as leaders, teachers, and learners rather than only learners. It has increased the confidence that students have not only in their skills, but also in trusting their own voices and ideas. In short, this cohort experience has been revolutionary!”

-Tracy Youngberg

## **Rosemount – Apple Valley – Eagan Public Schools – *Increasing Representation in Instrumental Music***

“This project included hiring contemporary musicians with diverse backgrounds to collaborate and write music with beginning band students.”

-Jeff Culp & Bojan Hoover

## **Rosemount – Apple Valley – Eagan Public Schools – *Increasing Access to the ISD196 “Band for All” Program***

“Since 2007, the “Band for All” program annually provides 1000 instruments for students with financial barriers. Involvement with CRAE allowed us to improve the infrastructure of the program, repair broken instruments, and buy new instruments and supplies for students.”

-Casey Clementson, Laura Doeblner, Sara Friesseke

## **St. Louis Park Public Schools: *Minnesota Changemakers in Music Education***

“Highlighting eight music educators who are reimagining music teaching to be more inclusive, student-centered, and culturally responsive, and showing that systemic change in music education is not only possible, but already happening. This project has connected me with courageous educators across Minnesota who are challenging the status quo, and reaffirmed my belief that lasting change begins with community. I'm optimistic that, together, we can transform music education to be better for all students.”

-David Davis

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# Midwinter Convention 2026

As the end of the calendar year approaches and we are in the midst of concert seasons, busy wrapping things up for winter break, or completing many of the tasks on our to-do list, I invite you to take a moment to consider joining us for the MMEA Midwinter Convention (MWC) coming up in February. Our theme this year is Connect. Engage. Act. and we have sessions, performances, and informances that we hope can aid you in the processes of connection, engagement, and action.

## Connect.

Midwinter Convention is a wonderful opportunity to connect with colleagues and ideas. It provides a space to strengthen connections you already have with colleagues around the state, and also to forge new connections through your time in sessions, in the exhibit hall, or unexpected moments. We hope you remain open and receptive to all the ways in which you can connect through your time at MWC.

## Engage.

We hope you engage in conversations, engage with pedagogy and strategies, and engage with the ideas that can inspire your own teaching and learning. Engagement goes beyond participation; it is a process that allows us to experience, to question, to analyze, to challenge, and to dream.

## Act.

When the conference is over, we hope that you come away with knowledge, strategies, or repertoire you can immediately implement into your classroom. We hope you feel inspired enough by your experience at MWC that you feel empowered to try something new.

MMEA is committed to providing the music educators of Minnesota with a space for intentional and meaningful sharing and learning that seeks to honor the vibrant and dynamic ways of music making that occur throughout our state. We hope you can join us in meaningful, purposeful time at MWC to develop our professional skills, to support the great work in music education in our state, and connect, engage, and act. We are MMEA.



**Nicole Thietje** is currently serving as President Elect of MMEA. She is also Choral Director at New Prague High School, where she directs four curricular choirs, three extracurricular groups, including show choir, and serves as music director for NPHS musical productions. She is a native of Louisiana and has taught Pre-K-12th grade in both Minnesota and Florida. She received an undergraduate degree in Music Teaching/Performance from the University of West Florida, a Masters of Arts in Music Education Choral Concentration from the University of St. Thomas, and is currently working toward a PhD in Music Education at the University of Minnesota.

(Pssst! These graphics are also clickable hyperlinks to learn more about the headliners!)



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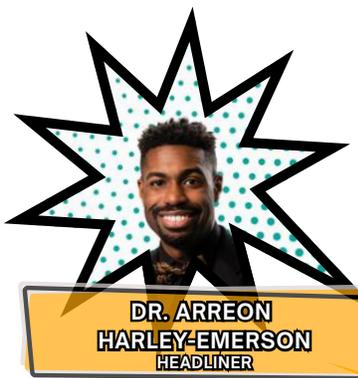
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# Five Fundamentals of Bassoon Intonation

By Ariel Detwiler

**Dr. Ariel Detwiler**, owner of ACDC Reeds, is a private bassoon teacher, reed maker, and freelance bassoonist based in Bloomington, MN. She holds three degrees in Bassoon Performance: a DMA from the University of Minnesota, a MM from Indiana University, and a BM from DePauw University. An advocate for music education, Ariel is a sponsor for many educational events and podcasts, and is often invited to present her work at music conferences.

**I will be giving a P.I.T. Stop session on this topic in more detail at the MMEA Midwinter Convention on Friday, February 13th, 2026 at 1:30pm in room L100C, and ACDC Reeds will have a booth in the exhibit hall. Please stop by if you can!**

Every lesson that I teach helps my students work toward the ultimate goal of getting the best possible intonation with the least amount of work. Efficiency is the name of the game, and there are five main factors to reaching that goal: the reed, the bocal, support, voicing, and fingerings. Finding a great private teacher to guide bassoonists in these fundamentals is ideal, but these are simple things that can help solidify your bassoonists' sound and allow them to play with more confidence.

## Instrument Check!!!

Before we jump into the three playing techniques, let's talk about two factors that help the instrument itself be in tune!

### Reeds

Buying great reeds is essential, even for the day 1 beginner. I always say: if the store you're buying reeds from doesn't rent bassoons or even have a resident bassoon specialist available, don't buy bassoon reeds there. A good reed has to play in tune at the least, and surprisingly, not all of them do that. Price has a lot to do with the quality of the reed you're getting (unfortunately), which is why I always recommend buying reeds from a professional bassoonist, local graduate student, or recommended private teacher/reed maker. The average price for a great quality reed is currently between \$25 and \$35 each, and they last up to 6 months with consistent playing and proper care. I recommend buying 2 or 3 at a time, 3-4 times per year, or at significant seasonal changes. The double reed world is small, but it is saturated with talented and welcoming professionals who will help you find great reeds. Don't be afraid to ask questions! There is a list of recommended bassoon resources on my website.

## Bocals

Every new bassoon comes with two bocals, paired specifically with that instrument, for the purpose of allowing every player flexibility in their intonation. Bocals are labeled with numbers: 1, 2, or 3, and usually some letters too. Though, if you have an older instrument, there may not be any writing on the bocal at all. The bigger the number, the longer the bocal. If a bassoonist is significantly sharp on all notes on a size 2 bocal [with a good reed] and it requires a lot of work to bring the pitch down, they probably need a 3 bocal to make them flatter. If they have tendencies in both directions (some notes are sharp, some are flat), the bocal is probably fine for their instrument. If the notes don't sound right at all for the fingerings on one bocal, but a different bocal plays properly, the first bocal is probably damaged and needs to be repaired or replaced. If you're not sure if your bocals pair well with your current instruments due to switching them around or losing bocals to damage, bring in a professional bassoonist to test your instruments for you to ensure your students are set up for success.

# Bassoonist Performance Techniques

Now let's talk about the three techniques that are controlled by the player in order to achieve great intonation.

**Support:** There are two types of support essential to intonation on the bassoon.

Embouchure support focuses on the corners of the mouth, creating a cushion with the lips that puts equal pressure on all sides of the reed. "Pinching" is the opposite: a bad habit where bassoonists put more pressure on the top and bottom of the reed, closing off the reed opening and causing unnecessary sharpness, nasal tone quality, and muscle fatigue. It's important to remember that intonation does not stem from changing of the mouth muscles alone, and the embouchure actually shouldn't move at all while playing the bassoon, except for the extreme high and low ranges. The function of the embouchure is to allow the reed to vibrate freely as the noisemaker, and to not allow it to move around in the mouth while playing.

Abdominal support is essential in helping build stamina. Doing a "mini crunch" at all times while playing helps the player allow for more flexibility and relaxation in the embouchure by supporting the pitch in a different muscle group. A good way to teach this is: play a low F loud and deliberately 20-30 cents flat with a tuner. While playing, do a "mini crunch" and watch the pitch stabilize without changing anything in the embouchure.

Pairing embouchure support and abdominal support removes the issue of over-adjusting with the mouth, and allows bassoonists to play long periods of time with more consistent intonation, avoiding exhaustion after short spans of time.

Voicing is the use of the syllables, "OH, AHH, EHH, and EE," to allow for intonation adjustment in specific registers while, again, keeping the focus away from the mouth muscles. These syllables are felt in the higher throat and in the mouth cavity, while a constant low feeling of "yawning" or "fogging up glass" is used in the lower throat. Voicing also makes it easier to accurately hit notes that span large leaps, which the bassoon is often asked to do!

The syllables are applied as follows:



“OH” is, ironically, best used for both the low register (getting wider for the lowest notes) and the high register, F # 4 and up, a range which is typically quite sharp. “EE” can be used instead of “EHH” if needed, especially in the tenor register D4-F4.

Teaching voicing: (typically taught when bassoonists learn the first vented/flicked note, the A on the top of the staff)

Say the syllables normally: “OH-AHH-EHH-EE”, all connected by your voice/air. Say the syllables again, but only with a very low voice pitch like you’re trying to fog up glass. Say the syllables again, both with that low pitch, and now with the shape of the bassoon embouchure. You should feel your tongue placement shift with each syllable.

Say the syllables again, with the shape of the bassoon embouchure, but now start on a low pitch for “OH,” and do a vocal slide up gradually (like a car engine in a single gear) while morphing through each voicing VERY slowly.

“OHHHH-AHHHH-EHHHH-EEEEEE.” This is what bassoonists do while they play scales to achieve the best possible intonation! Try it backwards, high to low, to simulate moving down in a scale: “EEEEEE-EHHHH-AHHHH-OHHHH”

With practice and experience, the use of voicing becomes a sort of muscle memory for the player, allowing for quick anticipation and adjustment of their own natural intonation tendencies.

**Fingerings** are essential for stability on the bassoon. Every fingering on a professional fingering chart will work together to help bassoonists achieve the best possible intonation with very little voicing or embouchure adjustment. If the fingerings are not exactly correct, the note might still sound correct, but will be out of tune. This will cause the bassoonist to adjust their embouchure and/or voicing significantly to “bend” the note to be in tune, which is more work than is necessary, and leads to mouth muscle fatigue.

Every bassoon instrument is designed slightly differently, and will have its own unique tendencies. Having a private teacher’s help is ideal to know which fingerings are the proper choice for any instrument: Middle E  $\flat$  has four different main options, middle A has two options, high F # also has two options, and high G # has four alternates. These fingerings need to be tested and reviewed regularly as a student progresses. Teaching these five fundamentals properly will enhance the sound of your bassoonists significantly, and make their bassoon journey much easier. Every student who learns this process after having previously learned to use their mouth to tune looks at me in awe and says, “that’s so much easier.” That’s the goal!

For many more free bassoon resources, please visit [www.acdcreeds.com/handouts](http://www.acdcreeds.com/handouts). You’ll find my full fingering chart, a concise explanation of voicing, and much more. Find my educational bassoon videos on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) by my name, Ariel Detwiler.

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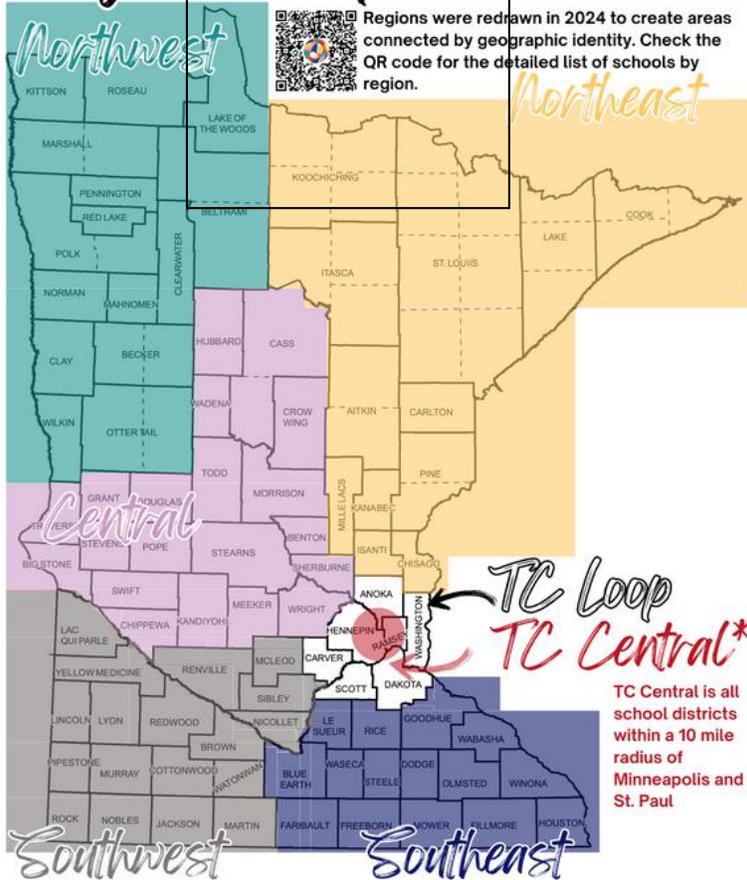
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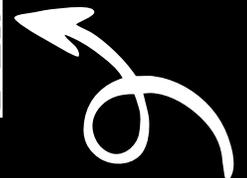
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## MMEA Region Representation



## MMEA IS LISTENING!



Tell us what you thought about this issue of INTERVAL (Pssst! The QR code is also a clickable hyperlink!)

# Midwinter SESSIONS!

## 2026 MMEA Research Poster Session

**Dr. Danni Gilbert, Zhongling Zhang, Louba Hammad, Shukai Huang, Michael Buck, Ellie Glenn, Juliana Becerra, Ziyue Tan, Whitney Mayo**

The Minnesota Society for Music Teacher Education (MNSMTE) will host a Research Poster Session for the arts community, teachers, students, and faculty who wish to share exciting and original inquiry projects at the 2026 Minnesota Music Educators Association (MMEA) Midwinter Clinic (February 12–14) Conference: Connect. Engage. Act. This is how we UNITE! Come and hear about and discuss colleagues' completed projects and works in progress.

## A Dance a Day Brings Community Our Way!

**Dr. Leigh Ann Garner**

Folk dancing provides students with opportunities to demonstrate musicality through movement, while building community with peers. Attendees will sing, dance, play, and learn how to sequence and integrate folk dances into their existing curricula.

## A.I. is Coming--But Not for Your Job!

**Dr. Jim Frankel**

Artificial Intelligence seems to be everywhere. Despite what you might read or hear, A.I. will not be replacing in-person, human-to-human instruction. Instead, A.I. is far more likely to be a tool to help save your precious time, leaving more room for 'the good stuff' like making music. For students, A.I. can assist with scaffolding to help with learning and creativity, not replace it. In this session, we will explore an array of A.I. powered tools for music and music education.

## Accessible Brazilian Colonial Choral Repertoire for Today's Ensembles

**Dr. Matheus Cruz, D.M.A.**

Brazilian colonial choral music (17th–early 19th centuries) offers an accessible, culturally rich repertoire for high school and college ensembles. Composers like José Maurício Nunes Garcia and Lobo de Mesquita blended European sacred forms with Brazil's unique heritage. This session highlights educational and musical benefits, promoting global awareness, cultural connection, and student engagement through historically meaningful and expressive works.



## **HEADLINER!**

### Achieving Cultural Authenticity in your Performing Groups

**Michele Fernández**

Michele will discuss the nuances and major differences between Afro-Latin styles that are most commonly found in school-based music. Concepts discussed will be applicable to both jazz and concert band. Attendees learn some of the major rhythmic patterns and learn techniques on how to teach them most effectively, and in the shortest amount of time.

## **Are You Paying Attention? Supporting students with ADHD in ensembles**

**Eric Elker, DMA**

This session will include strategies that can help support some of the difficulties students with ADHD can face, emphasize the strengths of these students, motivate them to engage and connect with others, and benefit ALL students in the ensemble. Band director and lifelong ADHDer Eric Elker will share his perspective which developed from years of experiencing how the condition affected his musical life.

## **Ask a Music Therapist: Panel Discussion**

**Jessica Nagel-Nnebedum, MA, MT-BC, Stephanie Holman Hubbard, MA, MT-BC**

**Melissa Hentges, M.Ed., MT-BC**

Join us for a roundtable with school and community-based Board-Certified Music Therapists. Bring your questions about adaptations, individualized student support, or any challenges that you may be experiencing in the classroom. We will share ideas, tools, and resources that align with neurodiversity-affirming practices and trauma-informed approaches to help you create a music classroom where all students can successfully engage.

## **BAND AND**

**Eric Songer**

Teaching music through a large ensemble can consist of a lot more than preparing music for a performance. Come to this session and get ideas of how to teach composition, improvisation, production, history, other instruments, other genres, creative warmups and much more!

## **Be a Better Jazz Ensemble Director, Know the Rhythm Section!**

**Russ Peterson**

You must know the rhythm section instruments, intimately! This session will help NON-rhythm section players become more familiar with typical mistakes our students make, and how we can fix them, even if you don't play them! We will teach you simple piano, guitar, bass and drum ideas that you can play, then show your students the right way to do it! There will be handouts and hands-on demonstrations for audience members!

## **Being Seen: Helping Your Students Feel Represented in Your Classroom**

**Dr. Bethany Amundson**

Student sense of "belonging" is fundamental to well-being and academic success. Through music, we as educators have a unique opportunity to provide a place of connection and belonging in our rehearsal spaces. Through an examination of data from NFHS, the Journal of Research in Music Education, and NASM, this presentation will focus on strategies and best practices to help all students feel seen and represented in your music classroom and in the music profession as whole.

## **Bit by Bit: Choral Musicianship for Young Choirs**

**Dr. Leigh Ann Garner**

Time is of the essence when preparing a choir for a performance! Session participants will explore opportunities for teaching musicianship and literacy skills that are embedded in choral music, maximizing your instructional/rehearsal time!

## **Build a Jazz Program that Really Swings**

**Dale Gunderson**

This session will be designed to help anyone looking to start a jazz program and/or develop their skills in teaching jazz concepts with or without prior experience. It will demystify the genre and provide simple yet effective ways to get your kids speaking the language, building section cohesiveness and improvising quickly and authentically.

## **Building Community and Excellence by Fostering a Holistic Music Department**

**Samantha Walters, Shannon Curtis**

Music students thrive when supported by their peers and their teachers. At Zimmerman Middle High School, we have worked to foster connection, community, and support across all grade levels and disciplines through regular positive interaction, collaboration, and mutual respect. Students are encouraged to participate in band and choir, incentivized to attend performances, and they regularly have opportunities to interact daily in class to build respect and trust.

## **Cello Set Up & Inclusion in Ensembles**

**Dr. Mallory Alekna, PhD**

In this PIT Stop session, we will demystify cello posture and set up. We will cover how to set up a cello player for maximum playing ease and go over several teaching tips that support great teaching for cello players along with ensembles.

## **Children's Music and Dance from Mexico**

**Karen Howard**

Participants will share in a new picture book in Spanish from the World Music Initiative series, “El Reloj de la Calavera”, a catchy chant for Dia de los Muertos. The tune was shared from the childhood of Gaby Montoya-Stier with vibrant illustrations by Adrienne Gaylord. Also included in this session is the dance “Los Machetes”, a finger play from “First Steps in Global Music”, examples for deep listening, and plenty of sociocultural and sociohistorical information for meaningful inclusion of Mexican and Mexican American musical traditions.

## **Choosing Repertoire That Does More Than Check The Boxes**

**Daniel Lee, D.M.A., All-State Concert Band Guest Conductor**

This session will explore the philosophical aspects of choosing diverse literature, while also offering tools and a system to help organize the process of choosing quality literature that reflects a diversity of composers, styles, lengths, cultures, time periods, and other aspects of music that our students should learn and love.

## **Choosing Your Ensemble Repertoire: Where to Start?**

**Dr. Glenn Pohland**

Many directors struggle with finding the right pieces for their ensembles to play. With this clinic, we will explore resources available to help you choose pieces that have proven to be successful for every level of ability. We will discuss strategies for developing programs that benefit students, audiences, and teachers.

## **Conducting and Directing: They're Not the Same**

**Dr. Arreon A. Harley-Emerson**

**HEADLINER!**

This session unpacks the distinct yet interconnected roles of gesture, interpretation, and leadership in sacred music of the Black Diaspora. Participants will explore how conducting spirituals and directing gospel music require different pedagogical, stylistic, and technical approaches. With interactive demonstrations and discussion, this session equips conductors, directors(!), and music educators with the tools to lead with cultural integrity.

## **Conducting for Context**

**Dr. Arreon A. Harley-Emerson**

**HEADLINER!**

Participants delve into the art of conducting, emphasizing its contextual nature and the powerful role of affectionate gestures. Conducting extends beyond technical mastery, requiring a keen understanding of communication and empathy. Attendees will explore gesture, its translation to musical expression, and the importance of understanding each genre's unique context—from Renaissance's precision to the emotive depths of Gospel and Spirituals.

## Connect, Engage, and Empower English Language Learners in Music

**RE-LICENSURE!**

**Erika Bierman**

This session will explore ways to connect and engage our English Language Learners in music classrooms at all ages, which will lead to empowering our students to flourish in not only our classrooms, but also their other classes and beyond. Erika Bierman is licensed in K-12 Instrumental Music Education and K-12 ELL Education and has taught a wide range of music and ELL classes.

## Connecting Kids with Creativity

**Jaye Mateyko**

The future is multimedia. Music, film-scoring, and audio editing skills are essential in all media. And you don't need to be an accomplished composer to use and teach with accessible, engaging creative tools. We'll explore tools for film scoring, podcasting, and more using a variety of kid-friendly interfaces, with options for traditional music notation too.

## Considering Graduate School in Music Education? Here's What to Expect!

**Dr. Danni Gilbert**

Geared toward anyone considering an advanced degree in music education, this interactive session will lead attendees through considerations when choosing a graduate program, what to expect as a graduate student in music education, and potential career pathways with a graduate degree in music education. A panel of current master's and doctoral students in music education will offer advice, facilitate discussion, and answer questions.

## Contemporary Vocal Techniques for Modern Music Educators

**Dr. Stephanie R. Thorpe, Vocologist**

In today's diverse and demanding musical landscape, music educators must know how to perform and teach students to perform across genres while maintaining vocal health. This session explores vocal cross-training and how to develop versatile, genre-appropriate vocal techniques to strengthen the voice. Participants will gain practical tools and exercises to incorporate contemporary vocal styles such as belting, mix voice, and speech resonance into their teaching and performing.

## Copyright Basics for Performing Ensembles

**Dr. Erika Svano**

Learn about music copyright basics and best practices that come up in the performing ensemble classroom. Topics include festival ensembles, making copies, creating arrangements, recording, live streaming, educational fair use, and more.

## Creating a Global Soundscape

**Siobhán Dotson**

Join us as we explore the value of integrating cultural music into everyday music education, offering educators practical strategies to celebrate and teach music from a variety of cultural perspectives. Attendees will gain insights into the history, rhythms, and instruments that define distinct musical traditions from across the globe, and how these elements can enrich students' understanding of both music and culture.

## Cultural Appropriation: Musical Melding or Cultural Theft?

**HEADLINER!**

**Dr. Arreon A. Harley-Emerson**

Appropriation is one of the most misunderstood and contentious topics in today's society, especially within the arts. This session seeks to demystify the concept, separating fact from fiction, and offering a balanced approach to cultural engagement in music. Attendees will explore the difference between appropriation and appreciation, and learn how to thoughtfully and respectfully incorporate repertoire from cultures outside of their own. Participants will leave equipped to navigate these waters

## **Development FUNDamentals!: Building Community, Funding All Programs**

**Dr. Beth Guerriero**

This session provides music educators with essential fundraising strategies to support their programs. Participants will explore the four pillars of fundraising: grants/foundations, events, corporate sponsorships, and donor cultivation. The session will offer practical tips and strategies to effectively harness these funding sources, empowering teachers to secure the resources necessary for successful programs. Time will be allocated for Q&A and discussion.

## **Diversifying Elementary Music: The Sequel**

**Karen Howard**

Continue to build your collection of repertoire, pedagogical strategies, and equity-minded practices! This session shares materials new to the World Music Initiative series including: a chant/picture book for Dia de los Muertos, songs/dances from the Middle East (in Arabic, Persian, and more), and Korean circle dances/songs.

## **Engage, Connect, & Express: Kinesthetic Experiences for P-8 Music**

**Dr. David Edmund**

Kinesthetic musical response provides a natural means for conceptual exploration and skill development. Kinesthetic experiences offer space for individual and group expression while deepening students' musical understanding. This session comprises rationales, planning processes, and recommendations for purposeful movement in P8 general music. In addition to the cultural diversity represented by the musical selections, inclusion is embodied through principles of Universal Design for Learning.

## **Everyone Loves A Good Story: How To Use Storytelling In Your Teaching**

**Chris Gleason**

Stories have deep meaning in our society. Studies show that students (and adults) listen to and remember the stories we tell. Storytelling can be used in our classrooms to engage our students effectively. Storytelling can also be used to advocate for our discipline and classrooms. This session will reveal the key components to a great narrative and how to construct everything from TED presentations to elevator pitches.

## **Examining MN American Indian Culture and History through the Arts**

**Iyekiyapiwiñ Darlene St. Clair, Michael Buck, PhD**

**RE-LICENSURE!**

Learning about the contributions of MN American Indian History and Culture is a requirement for teacher license renewal. The study of indigenous music requires careful thought and diligent study. We will explore the history and culture of the original caretakers of this land, both past and present. We will provide context for music educators to learn and make informed choices about curriculum resources and outline a framework for musical inquiry, using the MN Academic Standards for Music.

## **Expressive Conducting**

**Kirk D. Moss, Ph.D., Cassandra Bechard, D.M.A.**

Gesture rehab for busy teachers and college students. Give thought to your conducting gestures, improve your baton technique, engage all learners, and hear the results on Monday morning.

## **Flute Fundamentals: Hand Position Tips**

**Dr. Casey Clementson**

Early flute lessons can be tricky—for students AND teachers! This session shares simple, effective strategies for helping beginners hold the flute correctly from the start, with tips that work for both new learners and students with more experience.

### Focus on the Heart: HeartMath Breathing Techniques In Rehearsal

**Dr. Nicole Mattfeld**

Significant research has been discovered by the HeartMath Institute in the last decade, proving music and HeartMath breathing exercises can heal the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. This session will highlight the findings of a study conducted by the presenter, which discovered the ways these HeartMath breathing techniques affect students' heart rate variability, physiological coherence, anxiety or stress levels, their focus, and their connection to others in the choral ensemble.

### Fool-Proof String Bass Set Up

**Dr. Mallory Alekna, PhD**

In this PIT Stop session, we will demystify string bass posture and set up. We will cover how to set up a bass player for maximum playing ease, and go over several teaching tips that support great teaching for bass players along with ensembles. Bass players deserve quality teaching, too!

### From Hispanic Tradition to the Modern Music Classroom

**Dr. Beatriz Aguilar**

This clinic explores music's role in shaping values, unity, and cultural identity. Focusing on Hispanic songs and rhymes, participants will analyze rhythmic, melodic, and cultural elements from a Kodály-based approach. Attendees will sing, play, and engage with the material, gaining tools to integrate Hispanic traditions into their teaching, encouraging empathy, respect, and cultural awareness.

### From Zero to Groovin'

## **HEADLINER & ALL-STATE CONDUCTOR!**

**Michele Fernández, All-State Jazz Band Conductor**

Michele will share tips for starting a jazz band from scratch (or bringing a young group to a higher level), developed throughout her 30 years teaching band at both secondary levels. Topics discussed will range from rhythm section techniques, to cleaning up a horn section quickly, beginning, improv, and rehearsal tricks.

### Gems from My Journey-Deepening Musicianship Through Diverse Repertoire

**Brenda Bush**

Elementary music teachers will have an opportunity to learn folk songs and composed songs from diverse cultures and histories. We will sing, play, and move while we think critically about expanding the music we use to engage our students.

### Get A Mentor!

**Dr. Lia Snead, All-State Symphonic Band Guest Conductor**

## **ALL-STATE CONDUCTOR!**

Are you navigating the early stages of your career & are looking for advice? This session is for you! In this discussion, Dr. Lia Snead brings her passion for mentorship and years of experience in music education to help you discover why finding the right mentor is a game-changer. This session will give you the tools, confidence, and inspiration to cultivate meaningful professional relationships that will help invest in your long-term success, sustainability, and satisfaction in the profession.

### Growing an Idea

**Michael Vasquez**

## **HEADLINER!**

Kids are active and we all know they love to move. But are we giving them opportunities to grow as movers and embody the musical concepts we cover? Join Vasquez as we take a crash course into building a movement culture at your campus where students learn to be comfortable and expressive in their bodies.

## **Hearing Health for Instrumental & Vocal Music Educators**

**Dr. Stephanie R. Thorpe**

Hearing Health is vital to music educators. This session will cover the science of hearing and how we may protect one of our most precious resources as musicians. Our ears, brain, and central nervous system are responsible for how we process sound and proprioception. We will learn about OSHA standards relevant to music educators and entertainment industry professionals, along with practical strategies and tools to safeguard our hearing.

## **Help! I Teach Band in a Rural Community!**

**John Pohland, Heidi Polzin**

This session is designed to be a discussion opportunity for rural community band directors to get together and discuss and inspire each other regarding topics that can be tough in small, rural communities. Topics and potential breakout discussion groups may include: "Tackling the Pep Band Problem," "How Many Community Performances Should I Say Yes To," "What To Do When Your (only) First Trumpet Player is Sick," "My Clarinet Section is the Volleyball Starting Line-up," and many more!

## **Horn P.I.T. Gestopft +**

**Emily Borra, MM, MEd**

Join us for an engaging session on enhancing collaboration between band teachers & young French horn students. Designed for educators seeking innovative strategies, this session offers practical insights, interactive demonstrations, and collaborative techniques aimed at nurturing the musical development of budding French horn players.

## **I Almost Quit: Teaching with Impostor Syndrome**

**Christoph Dundas**

Most teachers think about quitting--some every day. For some, it is because of outside factors--school budgets, contracts, schedules, student attendance or behavior, or other things beyond our control. For many, it is because we don't feel like we are "good enough." Christoph Dundas nearly left teaching after 13 years, but stuck with it and was named a 2025 Minnesota Teacher of the Year Finalist just 3 years later. How can you--and how do you--cope when you feel like a failure or an impostor?

## **I'll Give You A Cookie If You Come: The Truth Behind Motivation**

**Chris Gleason**

This session will explore the truth behind what motivates people and our students. Do extrinsic rewards and praise work with students? What is the best way to motivate students according to research? Using resources such as Sir Ken Robinson, Alfie Kohn, Teresa Amabile, Daniel Pink, and Edward Deming the presentation will go over what research tells us about motivation. We will look at the importance of autonomy, mastery, and purpose and the effect they have in student work.

## **In Search of Tonal Bliss**

**Leigh Wakefield, DMA**

A discussion and demonstration of the skills necessary to create a resonant tone on the clarinet. Topics include embouchure formation, oral cavity, equipment and tonal color.

## **Indigenous Music in 21st Century Minnesota**

**Elizabeth Jaakola, MM, Oshkii Giizhik Singers**

Join Lyz Jaakola as she shares knowledge of Indigenous music in Minnesota from 3 decades of teaching music in the Fond du Lac Ojibwe community and sharing across Minnesota in a variety of classrooms since 2008. Lyz grew up on the Northern reservation in a mixed family and quickly learned music could make a space for multicultural enjoyment and understanding. Becoming an educator after studying voice at UMD, she now uses her voice to share songs and traditions from the Ojibwe-Anishinaabe culture.

**HEADLINER!**

### **Innovate with Courage! A Session for Future Music Teachers (MFME & Collegiate)**

**David Davis, (Panelists) Lyz Jaakola, Gillian Desmarais, Michael Bratsch, Ruth LeMay, Bojan Hoover**

Do you feel called to teach music differently, but worry you'll be pressured to follow the status quo, or told you're not "experienced enough" to innovate? You're not alone! Join a Q&A panel discussion with 6 Minnesota Changemakers who are proving that music education can be more inclusive, student-centered, and relevant!

### **Instrumental Music is for EVERYONE!**

**Christoph Dundas, Leah Motl, Gene Schott, Ethan Wightkin**

Instrumental Music is for EVERYONE! 2025 MN Teacher of the Year finalist Christoph Dundas, along with colleagues from Austin Public Schools, share ideas about creating equitable learning opportunities that lead to inclusion and diversity. We will discuss ways that we have overcome financial barriers to create a 5-12 Band & Orchestra program that includes over 60% students receiving educational benefits, and the 10-year process of grantwriting that led to an inventory of 850 school instruments!

### **It's All In the Deets: Writing Consideration for Young Musicians**

**Michael Kamuf**

This session focuses on effective practices in writing for young musicians. Topics include technical considerations of young musicians, basic orchestration concepts, percussion writing, planning, structuring and constructing the piece, and more.

### **Jazz Inspired Dances- Movement, Music and Fun!**

**Mary Harding**

Learn a variety of vernacular jazz movements that explore shapes, levels, pathways and timing and connect to current popular dances. Explore music and movement that engages students in rhythm and syncopation. Have fun with movement and support your students as they create their own combinations and their own line dances!

### **KCM Jam Session**

**Kodaly Chapter of Minnesota**

Come and join the Board of the Kodaly Chapter of Minnesota in an instrumental Jam session! Playing pop tunes on Ukulele and Orff instruments! Let's make some beautiful music together!

**NEW AT MWC!**

### **Learning to Improvise: Readiness and Harmonic Audiation**

**Dr. David Potter**

In the session, we will explore a roadmap for teachers who are striving to help their students learn to audiate harmonically and express their own ideas through improvisation. Participants will engage in carefully sourced lesson plans rooted in a sequential model, its application to major and minor tonality with tonic and dominant functions, the addition of subdominant functions, and supplemental materials, including harmonic tapestries and folk/popular music.

### **Let's Start at the Very Beginning: Rethinking Beginning Band**

**Dr. Glenn Pohland**

Drawing on 38 years of instrumental music teaching, this clinic explores the evolution of effective methods for beginning instrumentalists. Participants will gain insights into teaching fundamentals like tone production, audiation, the mother-tongue approach, rote learning of the first five notes, and echo playing. Providing a strong foundation for beginners is key to developing excellent ensembles.

## **Making Good Choices: Selecting Repertoire for Young Jazz Ensemble**

**Michael Kamuf**

This session will focus on tips and strategies to help directors of beginning and intermediate-level jazz ensembles select the best performance music to motivate and inspire their students. Topics covered will include knowing your ensemble, personalizing criteria for your literature selection, characteristics of quality literature, evaluation of literature choices, and composers and arrangers of quality literature.

## **Making it Your Own**

**Michael Vasquez**

Nothing can make a student more engaged than when they have ownership of their work in class. Join Vasquez as they delve into improvisation opportunities of different experience levels. Come sing and play in various tonalities to discover how freeing it can be to improvise modally.

**HEADLINER!**

## **Making the Bassoon Less Scary through Fundamental Technique**

**Dr. Ariel Detwiler**

The bassoon can be an intimidating instrument, but there are certain fundamental techniques that can make sounding better easier for every bassoonist. Dr. Ariel Detwiler will give an explanation of bassoon fingerings, embouchure, and voicing, and how these three things together make intonation a breeze. Your bassoonists will look at you in awe and say, "Wait, that's a thing? That's so much easier!" Come on over for WW techniques 2.0, and stay for the free fingering charts and bassoon resources!

## **Mental Imagery and Story-Telling**

**HEADLINER & ALL-STATE CONDUCTOR!**

**Michele Fernández, All-State Jazz Band Conductor**

An immediate way to improve musicality and emotional connection: Michele will share highly engaging visual examples as well as rehearsal experiences and anecdotes on how to help students create a strong mental image to enhance performance and emotional connection. Many years of conducting various Regional and Allstate groups using these techniques have proven to enhance the quality of music in a very short amount of time.

## **Middle School Magic: Music for Developing Voices**

**Andy Beck**

Looking for choral music that will engage your middle school singers and is also pedagogically appropriate? Join Andy Beck in reading through a complimentary packet of new music designed specifically for developing voices. Music in this session will address your big concerns, like choosing music for changing voices, balancing fun selections with educational repertoire, motivating students, and more.

## **Mixed & Mingle: A High School Reading Session**

**Andy Beck**

Discover solid concert, contest, and pop repertoire designed to bring out the very best in your mixed choral ensembles. But it's not just about the literature—we'll also explore new choral resources designed to build musicianship and spark joy. Join fellow directors in an atmosphere of collaboration and inspiration. A complimentary music packet will be given to each director in attendance.

## **More than "Just a Treble Choir"**

**Dr. Adrianna L. Tam, All-State SSAA Choir Guest Conductor**

**ALL-STATE CONDUCTOR!**

Are your trebles ready for something new? Join Dr. Adrianna Tam (Luther College) as she shares some of her favorite pieces for treble voices, varying in theme, style, and language. Defying the stereotype of the treble choir as a group of "leftover" sopranos and altos, selections will feature exciting challenges appropriate for an advanced high school or collegiate ensemble.

## **Motor Learning & Exercise Physiology for Vocal Music Educators**

**Dr. Stephanie R. Thorpe, Vocologist**

Integrating motor learning principles and exercise physiology into the classroom and studio is essential in music education and vocal pedagogy. This session will inform educators how we learn complex motor skills, to optimize motor skills and exercise physiology to assist students with vocal performance, skill acquisition, and vocal longevity. Attendees will gain practical tools for developing sustainable vocal techniques, preventing vocal injury, and enhancing agility, strength, and endurance.

## **Music Advocacy: Building Strong Students, Schools & Communities**

**Bradley Mariska, Erin Holmes**

Equipping all music educators with strategies & activities to highlight the benefits of music ed in your school & community. We will explore 7 key themes - academic achievement, social-emotional learning, equity, community impact, intrinsic artistic value, unplugged human connection, and physiological growth. Gain advocacy language & classroom tools to inspire colleagues and administrators, and celebrate the transformative impact of music education!

## **Music for Social Impact**

**Bret Amundson, DMA**

Choral music has the power to change hearts—and communities. This session explores how to select socially relevant repertoire, guide reflective discussions, and design performances that inspire action. Learn from examples of choirs that have addressed topics like equity, empathy, and environmental awareness through song. You'll gain tools for navigating difficult conversations and creating performances that move beyond entertainment toward transformation.

**ALL-STAR CONDUCTOR!**

## **Music Listening Contest - 2026 Championship Contest**

**Music Listening Contest**

Welcome to the 2026 MLC Championship Contest! Come and spectate (and even play along) while the top-scoring high school students from all over Minnesota and beyond put their critical listening skills and music history knowledge to the test. MLC is a social and competition-based program for high school students that helps them explore the world of classical music through an immersive study guide and contest format. A rewarding activity for serious musicians to curious non-musicians alike!

**NEW AT MWC!**

### **Opening Session: WARMUP! The MMEA Get-Together**

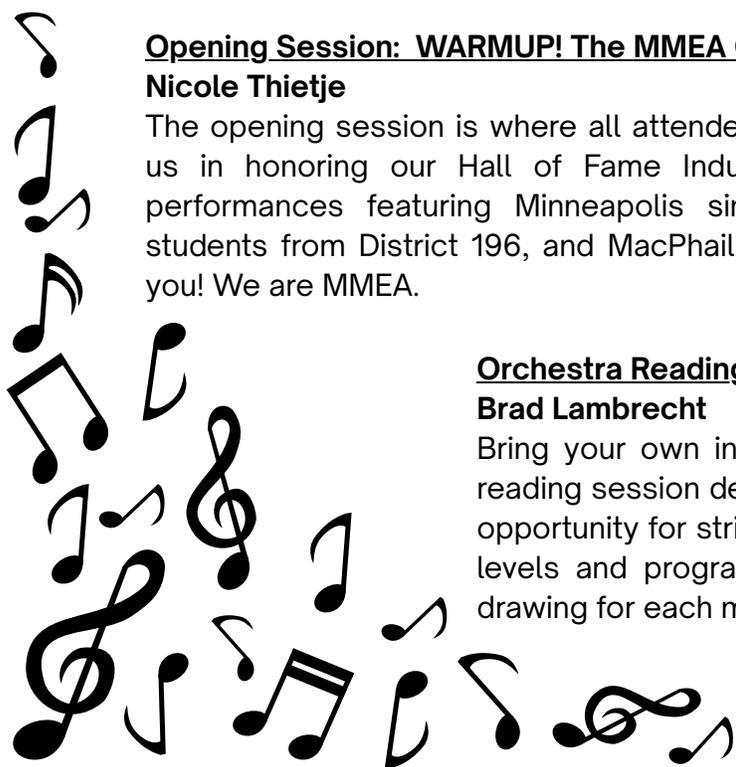
**Nicole Thietje**

The opening session is where all attendees are welcomed to celebrate music and students! Join us in honoring our Hall of Fame Inductees and Music Educators of the Year. Enjoy live performances featuring Minneapolis singer-songwriter Jeremy Messersmith performing with students from District 196, and MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra. We look forward to seeing you! We are MMEA.

### **Orchestra Reading Session**

**Brad Lambrecht**

Bring your own instrument or play one provided by Schmitt Music for a reading session dedicated to string orchestra. This session will serve as an opportunity for string teachers to explore literature for a multitude of ability levels and programming purposes. All attendees will be entered into a drawing for each musical work at the end of the reading session.



## Out of the Body

**Michael Vasquez**

Join us and see how far your curriculum can go using body percussion as a primary instrument in class. Snap, clap, and pat along with your colleagues as we progress through k-5 possibilities of composition, improvisation, and group ensemble that are pulled from the body.

**HEADLINER!**

## Percussion for the Non-Percussionist Band Director

**Dr. Jefferson Grant**

Using the time and materials you already have, this session will provide effective and proven strategies to immediately and drastically improve the musicianship of your percussion students in any Middle School or High School ensemble.

## Redefining Community: Choral Music at the Margins

**Elena Cressy**

What does “community” choir really mean? This session explores music-making at the margins, drawing on the presenter’s work in a women’s prison. Learn how choral music can restore dignity, build connection, and foster artistic expression. Topics include starting programs in nontraditional spaces, building trust, and rethinking access, justice, and belonging. Gain tools and inspiration to expand your definition of who gets to sing.

## Reframing Classical Music Education for the Age of AI

**Aaron Lohmeyer**

As AI has encouraged many of us to think more deeply about generative intelligence, a line from Guardians of the Galaxy states our anxiety well, “a civilization that cannot think that which has not already been thought will die on the vine.” Learn how focusing on the classical trivium of grammar, logic, and rhetoric promise to rejuvenate the generative side of musicianship to support a future where human generative intelligence still matters.

## Reimagining Music Education Together: A Panel of Changemakers

**David Davis, (Panelists) Lyz Jaakola, Gillian Desmarais, Becca Buck, Michael Bratsch, Ruth LeMay, Bojan Hoover**

"I'm not a musician." Too many have internalized this after being excluded by outdated, change-resistant models of music education. It's past time to reimagine our field to be inclusive, relevant, and centered on student voice and creativity. Join a panel discussion with 7 Minnesota Changemakers challenging the status quo.

## Saxophone Articulation: Common Pitfalls and How to Fix Them

**Dr. Emily Brewer, DMA**

Achieving clean, responsive articulation can be a challenge for many young saxophonists, often resulting in an unfocused sound. This presentation will address common pitfalls in saxophone articulation—such as overly heavy tonguing, lack of tonguing, improper tongue placement, and lack of coordination between air and articulation—and provide targeted strategies for correction.

## Say “Yes and” to Modern Band

**Jaye Mateyko**

The future of our profession rests on increasing program enrollments. By engaging ‘the other 80%’, we remain relevant and vital to both the school and larger community. But how do we get there? Together we will explore tips, tools and pedagogy for live performance, contemporary music theory and composition, studio production, career-readiness and robust assessment.

## **Serving as a Cooperating Teacher: Paying it Backward and Forward**

**Dr. Danni Gilbert**

Geared toward current and prospective cooperating teachers, as well as university music education students, this interactive session will lead attendees through strategies aimed at improving partnerships among pre-service educators, in-service educators, schools, and universities. A panel of seasoned cooperating teachers and current student teachers will offer advice, facilitate discussion, and answer questions.

## **Short-Circuiting the Anxious Musician: Mindfulness as a New Tool**

**Dr. Cullan Lucas, All-State Orchestra Guest Conductor**

Performers, students, and educators all live in a world that thrives on distraction ratcheting up our collective anxiety to 100. In this session, Dr. Cullan Lucas will explore how mindfulness techniques can effectively provide much-needed space between stimulus and response and give musicians of all levels tools to become more effective collaborators. Session participants will walk away with an accessible start to mindfulness both for themselves and their ensembles.

**ALL-STATE  
CONDUCTOR!**

## **Sing Today, Read Forever! Let's Launch a Musical Fitness Movement**

**Ann C. Kay**

Come to be inspired! This session will share substantial research that has revealed that auditory processing is the key to language and literacy, and singing and basic music skills help develop it. With 39% of MN 4th graders unable to read at a basic level, let's confront the injustice of illiteracy by taking new actions to help all children become musically competent.

## **Sing, Dance, Play, Create: Transform Your Elementary Music Classroom!**

**Melanie Alexander**

Make your music classroom engaging, creative, and easy to manage! In this session, you'll learn how technology can elevate your teaching and keep students learning, creating, and engaged, even with minimal device use. We'll explore classroom-tested, teacher-created solutions; fun, movement-based activities; and kid-friendly tools like YuStudio, Rhythm Grids, and more. Don't miss this opportunity to simplify your planning and energize your music classroom!

## **Song Types in the World of Musical Theatre**

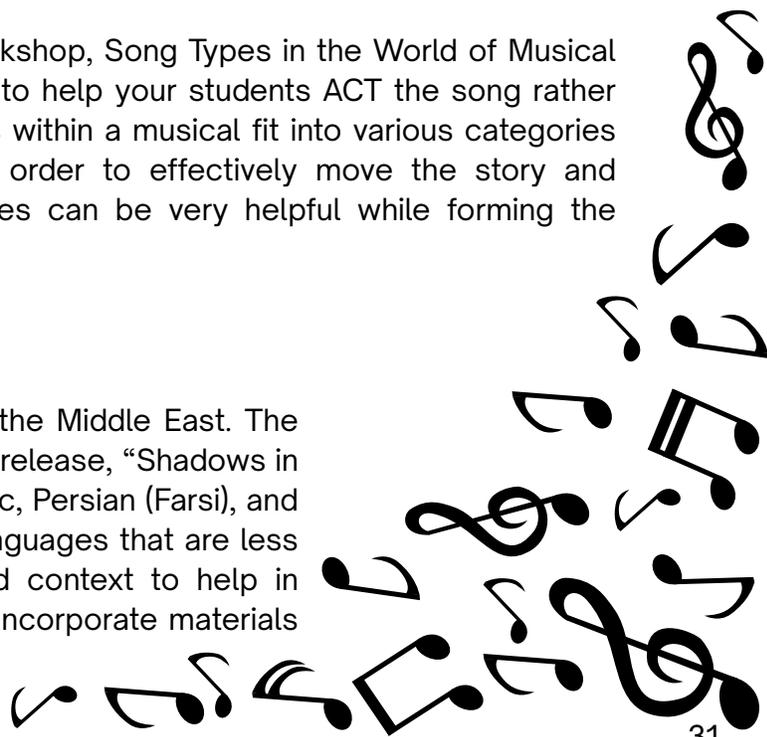
**Nicholas Wayne**

Are you music directing a musical this year? My workshop, Song Types in the World of Musical Theatre, I will offer a step by step process on how to help your students ACT the song rather than just SING the song. We will analyze how songs within a musical fit into various categories (Charm, Character, Comedy, Ballad, and more) in order to effectively move the story and characters forward. Understanding these song types can be very helpful while forming the narrative of the play.

## **Songs from the Middle East**

**Karen Howard**

Participants will partake in songs and dances from the Middle East. The selections come from the new World Music Initiative release, "Shadows in the Moonlight" by Joan Litman. Join in a song in Arabic, Persian (Farsi), and Kurdish. Also included are strategies for teaching languages that are less familiar to some, and sociocultural information and context to help in building our confidence to craft clever lessons that incorporate materials from this underrepresented region of the world.



### **Start with Success: Clarinet Tone**

**Dr. Aileen Razey, DMA**

Empower your clarinet students with the fundamentals they need to make their best sound and feel successful! We will explore how aspects of clarinet technique, fundamentals, and equipment influences clarinet tone and expressive capabilities on the instrument. Whether you are introducing beginners to the clarinet or refining the skills of advanced players, this session offers valuable tools to enhance musical proficiency and enjoyment, helping your students feel successful. Bring your own clarinet (some will be available to use at the session) to play along as we dive into techniques.

### **Supporting Music Educators in Coping with the Loss of a Student**

**Steven D. Mick**

This presentation equips music educators with tools to navigate the emotional and professional challenges of losing a student. It explores the impact of grief on both educators and students, offers strategies for self-care and community support, and provides meaningful ways to honor a student's legacy through music. Attendees will leave with practical guidance for creating a compassionate, resilient music program that fosters healing and connection.

### **Teaching with Mariachi Music: Elementary and Choral Settings**

**Beatriz Aguilar, PhD, Dr. Matheus Cruz**

This session explores integrating mariachi music into elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. It covers musical elements, cultural context, and traditions while offering strategies for arranging mariachi music for choral settings. The session emphasizes pedagogical goals, expanding students' understanding of Mexican music and adapting mariachi for various educational levels.

### **The Barriers and Benefits of Programming Music of the African Diaspora**

**Dr. Kenneth Green II**

This session will cover the musical characteristics of the African diaspora, explore the contributions African Americans have made to the world through music, examine historical barriers and current challenges for African American composers, and why programming compositions from underrepresented composers is beneficial for your students.

### **The Choral Warm-Up: Making Every Second Count**

**Dr. Bradley Miller, All-State TTBB Guest Conductor**

The warm-up period is critical for any ensemble to prepare for the demands of the day, yet it is often one of the least effectively implemented aspects of the choral rehearsal. This presentation encourages attendees to think about the "why" and "how" of what we do during the first few minutes of our rehearsals. Topics will include the warm-up's purpose, sequential design, and strategies to incorporate singer movement.

**ALL-STATE  
CONDUCTOR!**

### **The Double Helix of Ojibwe Music**

**Elizabeth Jaakola, MM**

The stuff of life. Vibrations create the world we know and organize, rearrange, transfer the energy to shift the vibe, evoke an emotion, heal a relationship... Ojibwe Music has always been recognized as a means to purposefully shape the lives of singers, drummers, dancers and listeners. Lyz will break down the difference between ceremony songs and social songs in Ojibwe-Anishinaabe culture. Participants will learn songs that are appropriate to incorporate into the average Minnesota classroom.

**HEADLINER!**

### **The Dynamic Conductor: Reduce Tension and Injury while Increasing Ease**

**Dr. Amy K. Roisum Foley**

Conductors move for a living. Our primary mode of communication is nonverbal in nature. Join me as we explore movement through Body Mapping. Discover common patterns that can lead to tension, increased stress on muscles and joints, and ultimately, injury.

**The Emotionally In-Tune Director** **HEADLINER & ALL-STATE CONDUCTOR!**

**Michele Fernández, All-State Jazz Band Conductor**

After 3 decades of teaching in underserved schools while also navigating some very difficult life experiences, Michele shares very unique anecdotes that helped her to gain an unexpected level of awareness regarding how to truly build strong community within a band program. She will share some “out-of-the-box” (and sometimes humorous) ideas that helped her increase enrollment almost overnight and solidify retention.

**The Illusion of Inclusion**

**HEADLINER!**

**Dr. Arreon A. Harley-Emerson**

In our earnest journey toward equity in choral music, it's crucial to recognize and challenge the "illusion of inclusion." This keynote presentation delves deeply into the intricate roots of music education in America, a legacy often unexplored. We will confront the often-overlooked aspect of music's objectification and how it plays a role in our understanding and teaching. The illusion of inclusion presents itself as a solution, while subtly continuing the cycle of marginalization.

**Unlocking the Auxiliary Cabinet**

**Alli Mottaz, Justin Schramm**

When students choose percussion, they often think of just drums and sometimes mallets. However, our percussion students are expected to perform on many different instruments. These small instruments add important color effects needed to complete the musical performance. This PIT STOP session will review performance techniques for commonly used auxiliary percussion instruments and tools to help you teach your students.

**Using My Story to Prevent Suicide in the Music Classroom**

**RE-LICENSURE!**

**Sam Eaton**

Join former choir director and suicide prevention advocate Sam Eaton for an uplifting workshop on fostering resilience and hope. You'll discover strategies for understanding depression and suicide, and learn how to create a supportive environment that encourages open conversations about mental health. With personal stories and actionable advice, this workshop aims to empower teachers to become champions of mental health, both for themselves and the wonderful young people entrusted to their care.

**What is Native American Music for?**

**HEADLINER!**

**Elizabeth Jaakola, MM**

Have you wondered why Minnesota Native Americans make music? Is it for the same reasons as others in America? or other tribal peoples? Answers to these questions range from the personal to collective cultural norms, but often music is considered utilitarian in Native America. Lyz Jaakola will present on a few of the many genres of music in Indian Country while also sharing about moments in Minnesota history where more recent arrivals impacted Native Americans' music practices.

**What's in Your Choral Tool Box or Everything Drawer?**

**ALL-STATE CONDUCTOR!**

**Timothy Sawyer, All-State SATB Choir Guest Conductor**

A fun and wide-ranging presentation of choral strategies, warmups, techniques, humor and fun ideas that every director should have in their choral "tool or tackle box" or "everything drawer!" What tools are helpful to adapt to the ever-changing climate of learning and community building in the classroom or rehearsal room. The ultimate "I always wondered if I needed one of those?" collection for just about every situation!

# MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERTS

MAKE PLANS FOR YOUR NEXT FIELD TRIP TO ORCHESTRA HALL!  
(FOR GRADES 1-6)

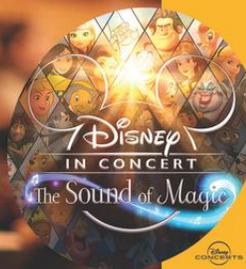


### *Peter and the Wolf*

FEB 3, 4, 5 AT 10AM AND 11:35AM

Cosette Justo Valdes, *conductor*

Join us as we bring back Sergei Prokofiev's classic symphonic tale! Beautifully narrated by local Twin Cities artist Lady Midnight, this story will teach students about the instrument families as each animal is portrayed by a different instrument playing each animal's unique theme.



### *Disney in Concert: The Sound of Magic*

APRIL 14, 15, 16 AT 10AM AND 11:35AM

Sarah Hicks, *conductor*

Your favorite characters and music from across the Walt Disney Animation Studios catalog come to life on the Orchestra Hall stage and screen to create a cinematic concert experience like never before. Beloved songs and scores are combined into exciting new medleys and suites, including music from *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Moana*, *The Princess and the Frog*, *The Lion King*, *Lilo and Stitch*, *Encanto*, *Hercules*, *Frozen* and more.



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### Affinity Space for BIPOC Music Educators/Performers

**Christopher Rochester**

BIPOC Affinity Space: Meet in room L100H to Network

### Affinity Space for LGBTQIA Music Educators/Performers

**Jerri Neddermeyer**

This affinity group is organized to cultivate a supportive network and safe space for Minnesota music educators identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, or Asexual. This affinity group is designed to connect and network with music educators that identify as LGBTQIA.



### Band Open Forum

**Andy DeLuca, Jonathon Knutson**

Join Andy DeLuca and Jon Knutson - MMEA Band Vice Presidents - and fellow band directors for discussions about all things band related in the state of Minnesota. Topics will likely include the All-State Band experience, band related offerings at Midwinter Convention, and any other programs MMEA provides - or could provide in the future. Bring your ideas, comments, concerns...and coffee!

### Choir Open Forum

**Jacob Kempenich**

Join Jacob Kempenich, MMEA Choir Vice President, and fellow choral directors for discussions about your programs in Minnesota. Talk about All-State, the Midwinter Convention, festivals and all of MMEA's programs. Bring your ideas, comments, and concerns.

### Elementary Open Forum

**Michael Bjork**

Join Michael Bjork, MMEA Elementary Vice President for a discussion about classroom music issues in Minnesota.

### MSHSL Open Forum

**Mark Gitch, Tim Leighton**

This session will focus on items generated by the League's Music Advisory Committee and session attendees. Come to learn more about the League's music activities, the Advisory Committee's recent accomplishments and future goals, and to share your ideas, comments, and concerns about directions and policies related to MSHSL music activities. There are TWO sessions so that you can have more opportunities to plug in!

### Orchestra Open Forum

**Craig Peterson, Brad Lambrecht**

Join Craig Peterson and Brad Lambrecht, Former MMEA Orchestra Vice Presidents, and fellow orchestra directors for discussions about your programs in Minnesota. Talk about All-State, the Midwinter Convention, festivals and all of MMEA's programs. Bring your ideas, comments, and concerns.

### Retired Members Gathering

**Erin Berg**

Join Retired Members Chair, Erin Berg, to discuss how retired members can be of help to music educators in Minnesota. Bring your coffee (breakfast) to get to know each other and to brainstorm with other retired MMEA members!

**APME - Eric Songer**

**MCUCM - Dr. Nathaniel H. Dickey**

**MBDA Board Meeting & Open Forum - Pam Redlinger**

# MacPhail

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From lessons and ensembles to school partnerships, MacPhail Center for Music helps students—and teachers—grow through music.

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- Tuition-free advanced youth ensembles
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### **Noteworthy**

Coaching and resources that help teachers strengthen and sustain music programs.

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# PERFORMANCES! INFORMANCES!

## **Valley Select Chorale (Apple Valley High School) - Reid Larsen, Joel Beyer**

Valley Select Chorale from Apple Valley High School will perform a diverse collection of music that celebrates the reasons why music helps us to connect and build community.

## **AHS Concert Choir (Austin High School) - Kalle Akkerman**

Students in concert choir come to rehearsal each day with the utmost character, capability, and commitment, living up to the long-standing tradition of musical excellence. We make the most out of every rehearsal together: making “big M” Music. Concert Choir is all about making those Musical moments together every day, so that our souls are fed by the sounds we create. We focus on the eye of the composer: empathizing with the story, the people, the culture, and the emotion.

## **Bemidji High School A Cappella Choir (Bemidji High School) - Gunnar Aas**

The Bemidji High School A Cappella Choir is an ensemble of students committed to artistic excellence, personal growth, and the unifying power of choral music. The A Cappella Choir performs a diverse repertoire that spans cultures, genres, and time periods. The program fosters expressive singing, and inclusive music-making, empowering students to grow as musicians and as individuals through meaningful, shared artistic experiences.

## **Brainerd High School Wind Symphony**

### **(Brainerd High School) - Christopher Fogderud, Michael Sommerness**

"Musical Gems: Known and Unknown." The BHS Wind Symphony will present a program of "tried and true" pieces that have impacted students in the BHS Band Program both personally and musically. Music featured will be from a broad range of difficulty, by composers from a diverse perspective, and include recent commissions by the BHS band program.

## **Buffalo High School Concert Choir (Buffalo High School) - Zack Carlson-Giving**

The Buffalo High School Concert Choir is an auditioned 60-voice SATB ensemble of juniors and seniors. As the most advanced vocal group in a comprehensive and inclusive 9–12 program, the choir performs annual major works, newly-composed music, and collaborates regularly with community ensembles. All members participate in Solo/Ensemble Contest, and CIS college credit is offered. The Buffalo High School Concert Choir was honored to perform at the 2020 MMEA Midwinter Clinic.



## **Winds of the North: Canadian Perspectives on Wind Band Repertoire** **(Chaska High School) Dr. Darrin Oehlerking, Mr. Timothy Beckler**

This session will use excerpts of Canadian wind band music to highlight information and topics that will benefit educators and conductors attending the Midwinter Clinic. Topics covered include North American wind band history, examples of appropriate use of Indigenous content, and the positive aspects of featuring diverse composers throughout your band program. Chaska High School Wind Symphony under the direction of Tim Beckler will serve as the demonstration band.

### **Grand Symphonic Winds (Civic Wind Ensemble) - Dr. Matthew J. George**

Grand Symphonic Winds will perform a variety of works representing countries and cultures from around the world. Music from underrepresented cultures within the US will also be featured. GSW regularly performs repertoire that is cutting-edge, unique as well as music from the historic canon within the wind band field.

### **College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University Orchestra**

**(College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University) - Dr. Andrew Towsey-Grishaw, D.M.A.**

The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University Orchestra, conducted by Dr. Andrew Towsey-Grishaw, is proud to present this performance at MMEA MWC 2026. The Orchestra is one of CSB and SJU's largest and most recognized performing ensembles. Membership includes music majors, music minors, as well as many students from a wide variety of other disciplines who continue to passionately pursue string playing at the collegiate level.

### **East Grand Forks Senior High Concert Choir (East Grand Forks Public Schools) - Donovan Hanson**

The East Grand Forks Senior High Concert Choir is a group open to all singers in grades 10-12. Students are offered the opportunity to grow as individual musicians through voice lessons and collaboratively through frequent performances in concerts, contests, and festivals. The Concert Choir aims to promote a high standard of musical performance and explore a rich variety of choral works spanning diverse texts, cultures, and historical contexts, welcoming all to enjoy the power of song.

### **Edgewood Middle School 8th Grade Band (Edgewood Middle School) - Nate Blinn, Alex Lyren**

Edgewood Middle School 8th Grade Band is part of the Mounds View School District and feeds Irondale High School. The district promotes music participation and does our best to make sure that there are no barriers, financial or otherwise, to starting and having access to instruments. The team of 8th Graders in band is the right mix of smart, compassionate, humble, and driven. We work together to perform our best, have fun, and communicate emotion beyond the page.

### **COACELLO@MMEA! Edina High School Concert Orchestra**

**(Edina High School) - Nick Gaudette (DJ Theory/lead director), Jack Reynertson (co-director)**

Step into the unexpected with Edina Concert Orchestra's COACELLO! where students transform classics using Ion Concert Media's groundbreaking StageSync software. Beethoven will blast with EDM beats while the Swamp Thang crawls out from the boggy peat. Vivaldi will vibe in the Winter time, and Bach will Rock with Sweet Child of Mine. This performance is not rock, pop, or classical. Join these talented string orchestra students as they break boundaries and redefine what it means to be in orchestra when given creative freedom in search of a collective unity.

### **Edina Concert Band (Edina High School) - Paul Kile**

The Edina Concert Band is just one of the many fine bands that represent the quality of music education in Minnesota-- a state known for its commitment to excellence and appreciation for the arts. Edina High School offers a comprehensive music program including a vibrant band program. The Edina Concert Band has earned superior ratings from the MSHSL Region 6AA Contest for 70 consecutive years and was most recently invited to present at the 2025 Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Illinois.

### **United in Sound: Celebrating AANHPI Composers in Band Music**

**(Hmong College Prep Academy) - Emma Grams**

This performance is a musical tribute to the rich and diverse voices of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander composers within the concert band repertoire. It highlights the unique stories, cultural backgrounds, and creative expressions of AANHPI artists who have contributed to the evolving landscape of American wind band music. Join us as we honor the composers who are shaping the future of music with voices rooted in resilience, creativity, and cultural pride.

**Innovative Elementary Adaptive Music (Justice Alan Page Elementary, ISD622) - Michael Bjork, Ruth LeMay**  
Ruth LeMay has been successful developing and implementing a secondary adaptive music methodology. Ruth and Michael have been bringing an elementary version of those methods to Justice Alan Page Elementary in Maplewood. We are excited to share and demonstrate how it is going, and to inspire you! This methodology appropriately scaffolds and gives choice and voice. It is a brilliant way to teach ALL students, is fast paced, and meets each student where they are at!

**Embrace the Middle: Featuring the Little Falls Middle School Band**  
**(Little Falls Community Middle School) - Ryan S. Tenold**

This performance gives attendees a glimpse into the journey of a Little Falls Middle School band student. Each piece is intentionally selected to showcase the pedagogical and philosophical ideas of student development- an approach of “this is what we feel is important, and here is a piece that demonstrates those ideas.” The hope is to offer attendees a deeper appreciation of middle school musicians, showing that even young musicians can play with joy and passion as they learn.

**Minneapolis Washburn High School Wind Ensemble and Orchestra**  
**(Minneapolis Washburn High School) - Tim Martin**

For this performance, we wish to continue our 100 year celebration, honoring the rich history of our school, city and of Minnesota. Our program will include “Mill City Sketches” by Nathan Jones, and “The Minnesota Portraits” by Carl Schroeder. We wish to feature Minnesota composers and arrangers, and music that connects our Washburn High School community to the greater Minneapolis and Minnesota landscape.

**United in Rhythm and Song: Music for Choir and Percussion Ensemble**  
**(Minnesota State University Moorhead) - Dr. Michael Johnson, Dr. Kenyon Williams**

The MSUM Concert Choir and Percussion Ensemble come together to share a program of works featuring works written expressly for voice and percussion. The powerful uniting of these two ensembles will feature works that expand the sonic pallet of the human voice and create new musical experiences for performers and audiences alike. The program will also feature a new world premiere composition for choir and percussion ensemble by MSUM's Director of Choral Ensembles, Dr. Michael Johnson.

**Harmony Unbound: Contemporary A Cappella with Maverick Vocal Precision**  
**(Minnesota State University, Mankato) - Dr. Stephanie R. Thorpe, Professor Nicholas Wayne**

Experience the dynamic artistry of Maverick Vocal Precision, a contemporary a cappella ensemble from the Department of Performing Arts at Minnesota State University, Mankato. In this performance session, the group will showcase genre-spanning repertoire that blends innovative vocal arrangements, tight harmonies, and captivating stage presence and choreography. Attendees will leave inspired by the group’s commitment to creative musical exploration and the unifying power of the human voice.

**MNsota Middle Level All-State Orchestra (MNSOTA) - Sarah Finn-Sommerfeld, Daniel Ericksen**

The Middle Level All-State Orchestra is for students in grades 7–9. The most accomplished young string players from around the state will join together for a day of rehearsals and then perform at the Minneapolis Convention Center as part of the MMEA convention.

**Owatonna Orchestras Present a Journey Through Time**  
**(Owatonna Public Schools) - Jen Bellefeuille, Sandra Justice**

Owatonna is a rural community located 60 miles south of the Twin Cities. Amazingly, it has the longest running continual orchestra program in the state. Our string program begins the summer before 4th grade and branches into three high school orchestras. This program will provide a glimpse of our beginners, middle level and symphonic orchestras.

## **Experimental Approaches to Composition for High School Students**

### **(PiM Arts High School) - Alessandro Rovegno**

Students in the PiM Arts Modern Ensemble will model a live collaborative composition session with a focus on using experimental techniques to spark creativity and create a more equitable composition process. Performing Institute of Minnesota Arts High School (PiM) is a tuition-free public charter school located in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, serving students in grades 9 through 12. Students in our Modern Ensemble engage in collaborative composition, analysis and learning contemporary repertoire.

### **Prior Lake High School Wind Ensemble (Prior Lake High School) - Keith Koehlmoos, Justin Schramm**

Our mission at Prior Lake High School is to give students the highest quality musical education while connecting as a community of musicians. The Prior Lake High School Wind Ensemble is co-directed by Keith Koehlmoos and Justin Schramm. Time in front of the ensemble is split equally between the two teachers as a team. It is our belief that the students' education is stronger by getting multiple perspectives and working together as educators and students in the classroom.

### **Richfield High School Singers (Richfield High School) - Eugene Sandel**

The Richfield Singers are a mixed voice choir comprised of grades 9-12. This choir meets everyday during school to prepare for concert performances, as well as performances in our elementary schools, local community center, and regional competitions. The students in the Richfield High School choir get a high sense of fulfillment from the community centric focus of the choir. Our choir accepts and supports all people both within the group, and outside of it.

### **Richfield Middle School Singers (Richfield Middle School) - Eugene Sandel**

The RMS Singers are the smaller advanced choir from Richfield Middle School. Richfield Middle School has two choirs in the program with over 140 students combined. Students in the middle school choir program explore music from all over the world and get experience writing their own music collaboratively with one another. Each year, the choirs grows and evolves both socially and musically and the RMS Singers are excited to present their program to you.

### **Sartell High School Jazz Band - "One Groove, Many Roots" (Sartell High School) - Dave Lumley**

A performance that celebrates the power of jazz to unite voices from across cultures, genres, and generations. From Swing to Soul, Latin to Funk, and Classics to Contemporary, a showcase of the diversity of jazz and the students who bring it to life.

### **Sauk Rapids-Rice Concert Choir (Sauk Rapids-Rice) - Steven D. Mick**

The Sauk Rapids-Rice High School Choirs have had a longstanding tradition of choral excellence. Members of Concert Choir are dedicated to the excellent performance of the best in choral music. These students are also active in sports, academics, theatre, and outside employment. Students engage in singing a challenging list of repertoire, performance schedule and touring. The SRRHS Concert Choir last appeared at the MMEA Mid-Winter Clinic in 2016 and the 2021 MMEA Virtual Spring Performance.

### **Southwest High School Guitar Orchestra (Southwest High School) - Jared Waln**

Here's what the guitar can do! Build community within the guitar world. Give students a musical voice in addition to band, choir, and orchestra.

### **Modern Classical Music Explorations with Eighth Blackbird**

#### **(Sponsored by the University of Minnesota-TC) - Eighth Blackbird**

Eighth Blackbird [8BB] moves music forward through innovative performance, advocacy for music by living composers, and its legacy of guiding an emerging generation of musicians.

### **Springfield High School Concert Choir (Springfield High School) - Mr. Bailey Cords**

The Springfield Choir is a non-auditioned ensemble that rehearses two to three times per week for 46 minutes. The ensemble performs annually at the MSHSL Large Group Contest and participates in a performance tour every three years. The mission of the Concert Choir is to study and perform music of varied styles, periods, and difficulty levels while demonstrating the high level of artistry that can be achieved within a rural school district.

### **Empowering Student Voice: Collaborative Large Ensemble Rehearsal (St. Michael - Albertville High School) - Adam Sroka, Michael Bartunek**

This will be an explanation and live demonstration of collaborative rehearsal, presented by the St. Michael-Albertville High School Wind Ensemble. In collaborative rehearsing, the conductor steps aside while students rehearse a piece independently. Students take agency in their learning and ownership in the process and product. They work through differences, and share ideas and feedback respectfully. Attendees will gain ideas for implementation of collaborative rehearsing in their own program.

### **SPHS Fleur de Lis Singers (St. Peter High School) - Bri Bergstrom**

St. Peter High School has 4 curricular choirs and 2 extra curricular ensembles. Our 9th grade Saints Choir, 10th grade Varsity Choir, 11th and 12th grade (unauditioned) Concert Choir and our Auditioned Ensemble, which is performing for you today. These 50 students auditioned in May and have been working on creating this program since September. Within our choral program community building and student leadership and creativity are our priority,

### **2 Mallets, 4 Hands: Unified Band at Stillwater Area High School (Stillwater Area High School) - Dennis Lindsay**

Want to start a unified band at your school? You can do it! Come to our infomance on how to collaborate with your Special Education specialists to build a Unified Band/Percussion Ensemble. Members of the music department and Special Ed department of Stillwater Area HS show how we have built a program with the help of our "Rock and Rollers" and Trust Club!

### **Not a Jazzer? Not a Problem! Growing a Jazz Program Through Improv Dr. Charles Weise, Marya Haugland**

Jazz is for all - you can make sure of it! We'll cover how to recruit, hold auditions, plan for instrumentation (anyone can be in jazz band!), establish a rhythm section and run a young jazz band program through the year. Improvisation is one of the most important and helpful pathways to establishing the jazz band. We'll show a method to turn warmups into an opportunity for ear training, soloing and finding style! New at Jazz Band? Established in Jazz Band? There'll be something here for you!

### **Two Rivers High School Philharmonic Orchestra (Two Rivers High School) - Dr. Michael D. Scott**

ISD 197 (West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Eagan) is comprised of three secondary schools, Friendly Hills Middle School, Heritage E-STEM Magnet and Two Rivers High School. Three full-time faculty administer the orchestra program in the district. Each middle school offers both grade-level and extra-curricular ensembles. The high school offers three (3) ensembles, and chamber groups. Students with limited resources are provided with a school instrument at no charge.

### **"Vitality" presented by the University of Minnesota - TC Wind Ensemble**

**(University Wind Ensemble) - Emily Threinen, Jerry Luckhardt**

**Muhamad Yusri Bin Mohamed Ali, and Eighth Blackbird**

The University Wind Ensemble comprises some of the finest undergraduate and graduate student instrumentalists from the UMN-TC community. The UWE explores a wide variety of repertoire from cornerstone works inspired by the Renaissance Era through pieces composed today. As new music advocates, this ensemble consistently collaborates with acclaimed composers, professional guest and faculty soloists, student composers and soloists, professional guest conductors, graduate student conductors, and more. This concert includes performances of: Overture from *Dancer in the Dark* by Bjork Guðmundsdóttir/arr. Henry Dorn, *Scherzo alla Marcia* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Sweet Chariot* by Carlos Simon, *Molly on the Shore* by Percy Grainger/edit. Mark Rogers, *Poème Du Feu* by Ida Gotkovsky, and *Vital Sines: Concerto for Sextet and Wind Band* by Viet Cuong ~ featuring Eighth Blackbird as guest artists.

### **WBLAHS Mariners Choir (White Bear Lake Area High School) - Wendy Suoja**

WBLAHS Mariners Choir: We are creative, intentional musicians who believe in the transformative power of music to learn valuable life lessons, broaden perspectives, and foster empathy. We see the impact of making music every day in our school community and can't wait to share our passion with you. We warmly invite you to experience the power of music as it transcends boundaries and forges meaningful connections between us all.

### **White Bear Lake Area High School Wind Ensemble**

**(White Bear Lake Area High School) - Shannon Anderson, Matthew Pham, Joni Sutton (Guest Conductor)**

The WBLAHS Wind Ensemble: We are passionate musicians committed to musical excellence, creating beauty and building community. Many forces seem to isolate us from each other even while advertising that they keep us connected. Through music, we can become vulnerable and curious; courageous and empathetic and in the end, more authentically connected to one another regardless of any differences that we may have. Let's find common ground together so that we may Connect Engage Act and UNITE!

### **MBDA Young Band Literature Reading Session - Charles Weise, Paul Kile**

The Young Band Literature Session is an annual presentation at the Minnesota Music Educators Association (MMEA) Midwinter Convention in February. Each year, on Saturday during the clinic, we present pieces of music which are submitted by MBDA members as quality band repertoire, as well as pieces selected by our committee as an appropriate fit for young bands. The Minnesota Symphonic Winds will be performing selected music, directed by Paul Kile.

### **DJ "Informance" & Tryout - Jon Feulner**

Curious about starting a DJ program at your school? Come see a demonstration from Hopkins high school students, then try out try out equipment and software in an informal "petting zoo" setting. Discuss curriculum, sequencing, resources and standards alignment for DJ instruction in a high school general music setting.

### **We Are the Children: A Framework for Building Solidarity through Music**

**Paolo Debuque, Adrianna Tam, Shohei Kobayashi**

Arts organization A Thousand Tongues (ATT) recently presented "A Grain of Sand, Revisited", a program reflecting on the history of Asian American identity and activism. Building on this experience, ATT Artistic Director Paolo Debuque and Guest Conductors Adrianna Tam and Shohei Kobayashi will:

- Share community and solidarity building strategies used in the project
- Introduce choral repertoire by Asian diasporic composers suitable for advanced high school, collegiate, and community choirs.

### MBDA Jazz Honor Bands

Featuring the 7-8 Jazz Band and the 9-10 Jazz Band, under the direction of Ryan Frane (UMD) and Phil Ostrander (UWEC).

### All-State Bands and Orchestra Concert

Featuring the All-State Concert Band, Symphonic Band, and Orchestra, under the direction of Dr. Daniel Lee, Dr. Lia Snead, and Dr. Cullan Lucas on stage at Orchestra Hall.

### All-State Choirs Concert

Featuring the All-State SATB, Tenor Bass, Soprano Alto Choir, under the direction of Dr. Timothy Sawyer, Dr. Bradley Miller, and Dr. Adrianna Tam on stage at Orchestra Hall.

### All-State Jazz Band Concert

Featuring the All-State Jazz Band under the direction of Michelle Fernandez on stage at the Dakota.

#### **Purchase Tickets for All-State Concerts!**

100% of February Concert admission proceeds go towards MMEA Scholarships! In 2025, MMEA awarded a total of \$62,972.50 in scholarship funds and 112 scholarships to students for the 2025 All-State Camps and 2026 All-State February Event. Thank you for supporting our student singers and musicians! Get tickets at: <https://mmea.org/events/all-state/february/>



#### **Elementary All-Star Choir - Bret Amundson**

MMEA is excited to support elementary programs state-wide with the opportunity to experience esteemed music educator Bret Amundson! The Elementary All-Star Choir was created to provide elementary music students throughout Minnesota with a learning and performance opportunity at the annual Midwinter Convention. The Elementary All-Star choir is non-auditioned, with an emphasis on a musically diverse experience that is inclusive, engaging, accessible, and fun. Open to all 4th-6th grade students in an elementary school setting, music educators nominate five students per school to take part in the Elementary All-Star Choir. Students spend a full afternoon rehearsing with the Elementary All-Star Conductor, and end the afternoon with a live performance.

In 2025, MMEA awarded a total of \$3,415 in scholarship funds to 48 students for the 2026 Elementary All-Star Choir. This year's Elementary All-Star Choir hosts 251 students from 41 schools and programs around the state of Minnesota, with **11 NEW SCHOOLS** joining us this year. The Elementary All-Star Choir concert is free to attend, but your support allows MMEA to provide this special experience to students who may not be able to participate otherwise, and keeps our programming sustainable! Donations are a great way to contribute to this exciting program.

### **Minnesota Intercollegiate Honor Band - Dr. Erica Neidlinger**

The Minnesota Intercollegiate Band is comprised of some of the finest musicians from all the colleges and universities in Minnesota. The director of every band program is invited to nominate musicians from their programs, and the personnel are selected based on those nominations. Every school that nominates performers is guaranteed to have at least one representative in the group. This year's band will be conducted by Dr. Erica Neidlinger, Associate Professor and conductor of the Wind Symphony at DePaul University in Chicago.

### **MN - ACDA 9-10 Honor Choirs - Brandon Dean, Maria Wilson, Luke Miller**

The American Choral Directors Association of Minnesota (ACDA-MN) grades 9-10 State Honor Choir will feature over 400 outstanding young musicians representing all corners of the state. Students are selected based on a competitive audition process held in October. Guest conductors of the ensembles are Brandon Dean, Gustavus Adolphus College (SATB), Maria Wilson, Maple Grove & Brooklyn Middle Schools (SSAA), and Luke Miller, Spirit Lake High School Iowa (TTBB). The program will feature a variety of music, including pieces by Trey McLaughlin, Susan LaBarr, Andrew Steffen, and Minnesota composers Jocelyn Hagen and Kyle Pederson. In addition to the 9-10 State Honor Choir, ACDA-MN also offers the experience for students in grades 4-5-6, and 7-8.

### **The PLUG Showcase Concert**

**Clinician: Nick Gaudette**

- Cedar Island Bobcat Modern Band
- Eastern Carver County Garage Bands
- Fond du Lac Ojibwe School Band
- PiM Modern Ensemble
- Polar Drift(s)
- Edison Rock Band, Drumline, Marching Band
- SHS Advanced Modern Band

**Sonic (R)evolution** is a movement dedicated to dismantling barriers and empowering students. We champion the belief that every instrument, genre, and student deserves recognition and opportunity. We support the creation of new All-MN Ensembles such as The Plug, Digital Music Media, Adaptive Music Ensemble, Guitar Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, and more!

The logo for Sonic (R)evolution features the word "Sonic" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letter "S" is teal, "o" is orange, "n" is purple, "i" is red, and "c" is blue. The letter "o" is replaced by a circular graphic with a colorful, abstract pattern. To the right of "Sonic" is a large, blue, stylized letter "R" in parentheses. To the right of the "R" is the word "evolution" in a yellow, cursive script font.

### **Digital Music Media Honors**

**Clinician: Mickey Breeze**

Join us for a showcase session featuring student work for this NEW MMEA PROGRAM!

Today, Digital Music Media is the dominant mode by which people engage with music.

Electronic music media is now a critical component of a 21st century vision for arts education.

*This program will:*

- Promote the expansion of digital music courses in Minnesota
- Promote the integration of digital music media into existing courses
- Elevate project-based learning approaches in music education
- Celebrate the artistic diversity possible through electronic music media production

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