Join IMEA Today!

Inside —

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Who isimea?
The Idaho Music Educators Association is a non-profit educational organization of current and former music teachers and administrators across Idaho in public/private schools and universities and colleges, including private studio teachers and music educators living in retirement. IMEA is a state affiliate of NAFME: The National Association for Music Education, a 120,000 member organization representing music educators across the United States.

Our goals include the advocacy of music with government, school boards & administrators, parents & society; betterment of conditions for teaching music to our students; recognition and opportunities for outstanding student musicians; exploration of better and alternative teaching materials and methods; and mutual support through meetings, conferences, mentoring, and individual advice.

The IMEA sponsors a State Solo/Ensemble Contest every May, an All-State Inservice Conference and All-State Choirs, Orchestra, Band, & Jazz Groups every year, and we participate in the Northwest Division Conference and All-Northwest Honor Groups in odd-numbered years. This year's events will be adjusted due to the Covid-19 situation. All-State & Inservice have been cancelled.

Throughout the state we sponsor various district clinics and festivals, Fall inservice programs, and we provide resource people to help any teacher who asks. Contact any of the officers listed to the left.

President of IMEA is Dr. Thomas Kloss of Pocatello; Past-President of IMEA is Kathy Stefani of Moscow; President-Elect is Aaron Marshall of Arimo. IMEA Secretary is Christy Taylor of Twin Falls and State Executive is Karen Goodrich Randolph of Twin Falls. The state is divided into seven activity districts, each one with a District IMEA President and officers. The IMEA governing body, the Board of Directors, meets annually in the Fall and as needed throughout the year. Chairmen are appointed from throughout the state over various interest and subject areas.

The IMEA publishes a Fall Newsletter and three issues of Idaho Music Notes, a 24-36 page magazine with help and communication columns, ideas and reports, and feature articles. Your membership in IMEA automatically entitles you to all state publications and NAFME magazine publications. We also have an outstanding website, www.idahomusiced.org, where forms, information, music lists, and links to music businesses, colleges & universities, and online resources may be found.

Visit the IMEA website today: www.idahomusiced.org

We invite you to join or re-join IMEA today
See information on the page opposite and go online to nafme.org/join-renew/
Or call 800-336-3768
Active - $128 Retired - $66
Introductory - $61 Collegiate - $41
President’s Page

Black or White Swans?

Imagine, if you will, that the year is 2000, and a young senator proposes that we make all airline cockpits secure enough so that if there is ever a situation where someone tries to break into a cockpit during a flight, they would be unsuccessful.

Two outcomes could have happened. First, the senator’s suggestion would have been laughed out of the committee, for being too expensive with no real benefit. Or, the bill would be accepted, and yet still thought of as a waste of time and money with no real benefit to air traffic safety. The senator looks bad in either of those situations.

We all know what happened on September 11, 2001. But in 2000, this situation would have been called a “Black Swan,” as coined by author and economist Nassim Nicholas Taleb. His simplified theme is “our blindness with respect to randomness, particularly large deviations.” In English, September 11 was a massive outlier that we were unable to predict. I believe we are living in the time of another dreaded Black Swan, which is affecting how we react and respond to teaching music in the time of COVID 19.

Idaho teachers are being asked to do the impossible: Teach an activity that is fairly known to spread the virus and is rather difficult to do well remotely. If our schools jump to remote learning, our music students may suffer greatly. If we continue to teach as if the virus isn’t there, the health of our students (and ourselves) may suffer greatly.

It’s the word “may” that is the real Black Swan. It’s the reason that we are all having great difficulty planning for this school year. Will schools open on time? Will they be online? Will class size be changed? What is my school doing to protect me? What about the health of my students? It’s a challenge for all of us.

The big question is how to change this Black Swan to a White Swan and change this uncertainty into a positive. Ultimately, the answer to this question lies in the amount of research and creative thinking we all do. The most relevant information to find solutions to teaching music comes from the COVID coalition housed at the NFHS website.

This study is looking at how to mitigate the aerosol production “which has the potential to spread the virus.” Many of the recommendations are partnering with the CDC guidelines of wearing masks, social distancing, and washing hands/disinfecting spaces. You can find all of this information and updates online.

I am inspired by many of those I’ve talked with about the creative solutions being implemented and developed. As schools open, we want to know what is working and share those ideas with others. Many of you are developing smaller ensemble groups, taking musicians outside (until the weather becomes an issue) and rethinking what is important to you as music teachers. These creative changes and adherence to doing what is safe for students is our White Swan.

Another way of approaching the year is to ask yourself, “What would I teach if I didn’t have to prepare for that next concert?” We have a fantastic opportunity to teach musical concepts that inspired us to become musicians. Fostering the community aspect of musicians is also going to be of great importance this year.

Due to the virus, the IMEA Executive Board had to make the hard decisions to cancel our Conference and All-State Festivals for this school year. We will be developing a virtual Solo and Ensemble festival and are in discussions about hosting a statewide Virtual Concert Festival.

We are still accepting ensemble submissions so we can honor our outstanding students. The Northwest Division will be making announcements soon about their 2021 events.

The Board also acknowledges that teachers need as many resources and opportunities quickly, so we are developing a Professional Development site so you can get credit for the virtual workshops you attend. This site will be available after September 1, and you will be able to access it through the IMEA website. If successful, we will continue this into the Spring.

If you have information about quality sessions to include, please forward them to me. I will be making a call for workshop submissions or calls for hosting zoom discussions soon. We want to be able to share what is working.

IMEA continues to represent you and advocate for our music programs and teachers. Please make sure you continue to be a member and support our NAfME organization. It will be more important than ever to have support at the national level. NAfME has created a library of workshops and webinars about teaching music in a pandemic. Your IMEA membership supports so much.

Above all else, stay healthy and stay safe this school year. Let us know how we can help with resources, workshops, or ideas.

Dr. Thomas Kloss, IMEA President
Klosthom@isu.edu
A Message from NAfME Leadership for Fall 2020

We Will Get Through This — Together!

Dear Music Educators,

Our profession is facing unprecedented challenges. The only thing that seems certain is uncertainty. But no matter what teaching looks like in the coming months — whether face-to-face, online, or hybrid — the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and your state music education association are committed to supporting you in your efforts to safely and effectively teach music to your students.

As a member of NAfME, you have access to many new and exciting ways to reimagine music education for you and your students during this challenging time, including:

- Virtual learning resources
- Current guidelines on how to keep yourself and your students safe
- Tools to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in music education
- Online continuing professional development clock hours
- Ideas for how to advocate for music education via social media and beyond
- And so much more!

We know you are passionate about your profession and committed to ensuring all students have access to equitable experiences in music education, regardless of background or circumstances. NAfME and your state MEA are on this journey with you! We know that you need even more from us now than ever before. You’ve told us you expect augmented and innovative support from your professional association so you can make it through — and even flourish — in this pandemic crisis.

We are here to listen and to help in any way we can. Now more than ever, we must work together for the benefit of all. Whether you are a career-long music educator, a first-year teacher, or a new teacher, we are in the business of helping others, our students, families and fellow teachers. Perhaps you are newly retired or no longer teaching directly in the classroom as a veteran teacher who can help directly in the classroom as well as a new teacher who has just a few years invested in the classroom. Several IMEA members signed up at our last conference to help with the mentorship program and will be asked for help throughout the year. Bob Wicks and Kathy Stefani attended sessions last year to better develop the program for future groups of incoming teachers.

Mentors will be paired with both a veteran teacher who can help directly in the classroom as well as a new teacher who has just a few years invested in the classroom. Several IMEA members have volunteered to be mentors and are in similar teaching assignments. In addition, mentees can connect weekly through virtual zoom meetings held by the mentorship committee, offering guest speakers and opportunities to ask for guidance.

Your help is needed! Please pass on updated contact information as new teachers begin the year. Consider volunteering as a contact for a specialty area, tech help, or professional development.

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Check Out the New IMEA YouTube Channel

Check out the new IMEA YouTube Channel. To help us all navigate this new world of virtual music classes, various virtual professional development opportunities are being held around the state. These are being recorded and will be posted on our YouTube channel so that they can be accessed at any time. Work is also going forward to provide PD credit for these. More will be posted about that in the near future. The channel can be accessed from the “Teachers” menu.

IMEA Mentorship begins Year 2

A new cohort of music directors is gearing up for the coming year and IMEA is prepared to offer support. Bob Wicks and Kathy Stefani attended sessions last year to better develop the program for future groups of incoming teachers.

This year will include a fall seminar for members to connect, ask questions, and find others who are in similar teaching assignments. In addition, mentees can connect weekly through a virtual zoom meeting held by the mentorship committee, offering guest speakers and opportunities to ask for guidance.

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Contact for the mentorship/networking program is at mentorship@idahomusiced.org

- Saturday, Sept. 26 — Networking/Mentee Seminar (half day) Zoom/Google Meet
- To Be Determined — Weekly mentee support Zoom

Are you an educator that likes to help others? Of course you do, we are in the business of helping others, our students, families and fellow teachers. Perhaps you are newly retired or no of someone who is whose expertise is needed. Please consider being a mentor to a brand new music teacher in your area. This

IMEA NEWS

IMEA Board Meeting goes Virtual Monday, October 12

The IMEA Fall Board Meeting is tentatively set for Monday evening, October 12. Contact President Tom Kloss if you have ideas or concerns that need to be discussed.

October 9 = Performing Group Deadline!

Kathy Stefani, IMEA Mentor Chair

We are now accepting applications and recordings for performing groups for the 2021 IMEA All-State Inservice Conference. Selected groups will be featured virtually due to the cancellation of the live event. We would like to see a balanced representation from all levels of Music Education in our State; Small, Medium and Large sized High Schools; Middle Schools; Elementary Schools; and University level performing ensembles. There is also an option to be considered for the “showcase feature” for groups who would like to exhibit a particular project or performance perhaps created in this Covid year. Modern Band and Marching Band will be considered as well.

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is a great way to help inspire these novice educators and be a support system for them as they navigate through the first stages of teaching on their own.

Therefore, if you are interested in being a novice teacher mentor please contact mentorship@idahomusiced.org

- **Saturday, Sept. 19** — Mentor training (half day) Zoom/Google Meet

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**Let there be Stomping, Root Beer Floats, & “Listen to the Music”!!**

*Kathy Stefani, IMEA Past-President*

In 1916, Margaret Ann Coyle married James “Peter” Murphy, the brother of her childhood best friend. All three grew up in Idaho’s Silver Valley, Wallace, to be specific. Peter was a railroad engineer and had a promising career with an income to keep he and Margaret well cared for. Soon after their wedding, they were blessed with a son, James Joseph Murphy.

But by this time, the flu pandemic of 1918 had found the mining town. Peter, Margaret and baby James all caught the flu and were hospitalized together. Peter and baby James did not survive, but my grandmother, Margaret, was released from the hospital in time to bury her husband and only child.

Though it was rarely, if ever, spoken of in our family, I learned that tragedy changed the course of her life and laid the path for mine. Grandma married my grandfather who was not a railroad engineer and who offered her a comfortable life, but her world was vastly different than before. I remember her with a constant smile on her face, a soft, warm hug when we came to visit, a delightful sense of humor, and a strong faith.

She was never bitter, in my memory, but made every visit special and was best known for her root beer floats. Though we tried to emulate her famous floats at home, there was just something about Grandma’s that made it taste so much better. She learned to keep living and I was the recipient of that attitude.

This summer I attended the Little Kids Rock Summit, logging in early to catch Ollie Tunner’s Stomp-style “The Beat Goes On” workshop. Only 30 minutes long, he demonstrated a body percussion pattern to be repeated in real time…... and really FAST time.

He moved on before I was ready, so I had to sit up, pay attention and concentrate. It was complicated, fast paced, difficult and delightful. I was about 10 minutes into the workshop, smiling and laughing, hollering to my husband, “Hey, come see this! This is my day 1 lesson this year, you’ve got to see this.”

And for some reason, I just put my head down and began to cry. For the first time since March 13, the day my school closed, I was enjoying music, loving the rhythm, remembering why I wanted to teach music in the first place. I realized I hadn’t laughed nor enjoyed making music for months and it was time to set a new course, if only mentally.

I was to have seen *Hamilton* at the Kennedy Center this summer. I was supposed to have attended the Little Kids Rock Summit in Colorado in person, not virtually. Both events were canceled and my money returned. Summer is when I see my sister and my kids. All of that has to wait.

My one event that still remains on the books is the rescheduled concert of the Doobie Brothers, which is to happen in October, 2021. I passed on purchasing Eagle’s tickets when they did their last tour, thinking I’d buy tickets for their next one. With the loss of Glenn Frey, there will not be another. My sister and I enjoyed the Doobies “back in the day”, so I bought us tickets this last Christmas. We will wait another year, but I look forward to being at their concert, singing “Black Water”, “China Grove” and so many more that make me smile.

This fall, one of my bulletin boards will feature all of the items above and I will share with my students the things I missed, but more importantly, all the things I’m looking forward to. I am going to laugh and sing and enjoy the outdoors.

I will put limits on the news I watch, the number of new tech programs I learn and the time spent on lesson plans. I will consciously embrace life and work through the pandemic of 2020 with a perspective I learned from my grandmother.

As you return this fall, whatever that may look like, let there be “Stomp” and “Root Beer Floats” as you also “whoa - oh-oooh---, Listen to the Music!”
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Please support our Institutional Members—
Their membership shows their support for us!
Become an IMEA Institutional Member — Email thadley@cableone.net

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Become an IMEA Institutional Member
Email thadley@cableone.net
Grow where you’re planted.

Braedon and Annaliese (Fereday) Gerdes (2017 Music Industry grads) are living their dream. These freelance production contractors based out of Nashville, TN tour the country with multiple Christian artists. Read their story at nnu.edu/nashville.
Exciting Orff Workshops!

October 2-3, 2020: Kate Bright Workshop, Location TBA
Kate Bright is a music teacher at Lincoln Charter School in York, PA, where she teaches approximately 700 kindergarten through fifth grade students. She is past-president of the Greater Baltimore Area Orff Chapter and the Philadelphia Area Orff Chapter, and has presented at the American Orff Schulwerk Association National Conference. In 2015, she received the Spotlight Award from the American Center for Elemental Music and Movement. She currently serves on the board of both ACEMM and the Harrisburg Area Contra Dance Association.

Content of Workshop: Kate’s presentation will include recorders, composition, movement and the Orff Process.

Otto graduated from Berklee College of Music with a degree in Music Education. He taught General Music, Band, Chorus, Jazz Band, and Percussion in Massachusetts, Maryland, and Tennessee. He is a Certified AOSA Orff-Schulwerk Educator. Otto has performed with artists including Bobby McFerrin, David Sunborn, and Cecé Winans and toured internationally as a music director, pianist, bassist, and drummer. He currently serves as the Creative Director for QuaverEd as a producer, songwriter, clinician, actor, and music curriculum developer. Otto has a passion for bringing people together to experience and create music.

ONE WHO USES TECHNOLOGY TO MINIMIZE THE WORKLOAD AND TIME SPENT ON A FUNDRAISER.

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/ˈfərdʒərzNG/ /ˈwɔrər/

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Greg - 208.371.6924
idahosole@gmail.com
Boise - Idaho

IMEA Fall Newsletter 2020
Nobody knows your program like you do

You know your students’ needs and put in the time and effort to make sure they get the best possible care and instruction. But you shouldn’t have to do it alone. That’s why Pepper is here to support you when you need us. We’ll help you get started with repertoire suggestions, new music, and tips from our editors and other directors. You’re the expert. We’re here to help.

J.W. Pepper Positions
New Sales Teams to Meet the Evolving Needs of Music Educators, Even in Idaho!

One of the largest print music and music resource companies in the U.S., J.W. Pepper announced a plan over the summer to realign its sales teams to best meet the current and future needs of music educators across the country. These changes were made to ensure that we can continue to effectively serve your needs while remaining flexible and efficient as a company.

In recent months, J.W. Pepper has provided industry-leading support for music directors and educators who are seeking new ways to engage with their ensembles and classes. Sales teams continue to host webinars and virtual meetings, bringing educators together to share best practices and tips. Through its many robust social and email platforms, Pepper provides practical information and digital solutions to edify the customers they serve and address the highly specific needs of those in arts education, performance, and worship.

So, what does this mean for you? Idaho is now part of our Northwestern Region which means that you have a dedicated team as your go-to contacts for anything you need. Your team consists of myself, Ashli Rulien and my associate, Katie Nishimori. Both Katie and I have been with Pepper for over 10 years and are currently working from our home offices in Northern California. We’ve both dedicated our careers to supporting you, building long term relationships and lifelong friendships with music educators from all over the country. We’re thrilled to get to know everyone in Idaho. Please feel free to email me at arulien@jwpepper.com or Katie at knishimori@jwpepper.com any time with questions, concerns, thoughts, or if you’d just like to chat! We’re here to help and would love to connect with you.

All the best, Ashli Rulien, Regional Account Manager
J.W. Pepper & Son, Inc.; 925-828-4299 x2822; jwpepper.com

Learn Why
#ArtsEdIsEssential
Advocate for Your Arts Program
Collegiate Feature
Kaylynn Hammond

I am a non-traditional student currently preparing to student teach in the Jefferson School District this fall. I have been given the amazing opportunity to be the band director for the new Farnsworth Middle School. I am both excited and nervous about this journey, which is exactly how I felt 4 years ago as a new student at Idaho State University.

I am still in shock that my dream of being a band director at either a middle school or a high school is coming to fruition. I have always wanted to share my passion for music with a class full of young musicians. As a child music was a reprieve from the world around me. I started piano at age 5.

My real excitement for large ensembles started after I attended a concert at the age of 8. My Uncle played trombone in the local college and I attended two of his concerts. Their performance of Holst's "The Planets" and also Prokofiev’s "Peter and The Wolf" left me speechless and made a lasting impression. I then knew after I wanted to play trombone and my love for music was solidified.

In 7th and 8th grade I was bullied, and the band room became my haven. During lunch I would practice piano, trombone, and listen to my teacher, Jan Eddington, who had a contagious enthusiasm for music. I knew at that point that I wanted to be a band director. After going to Blackfoot High School and participating in an amazing band program under Allen Tripp, I knew music would always be a part of my life.

I taught private piano lessons for 16 years, making it possible for me to stay at home with my 5 children. I then worked as a Para Music Educator for the Blackfoot School District, after which I decided it was time to go back to school. My coworkers and good friends John Randall and Eric Skidmore convinced me it was time to fulfill my lifelong dream of becoming a band director.

I enrolled at ISU in the Music Education program. The music department was welcoming and amazing! I was excited and scared, but once I met the staff and started classes I realized I was exactly where I needed to be.

While at ISU I have been able to further my education and have been given amazing opportunities. When I was younger, I was very interested in composition. Unfortunately, because of circumstances I fell out of practice, and thought the opportunity had slipped away. I soon discovered that it was not too late for me to grow as a composer. I had two Jazz charts premiered at the ISU Jazz Festival two years in a row. My composing even gave me a chance to give back to the local community. I arranged music for a small brass ensemble that included players ranging from 12 years of age through accomplished college professors.

Even though my schedule is tight due to taking 18 credits, teaching private piano lessons, raising 5 children, and working for the music department, I still make sure that I give service when I can. I volunteer as an organist and choral director for my church and help with music festivals at ISU.

I cannot believe that I have made it to this point in my college career, and that my lifelong dream of being a band director is here on my doorstep. I am excited to open the door and start on my new voyage: to bring the amazing world of music into the lives of my students.

Perseverance in a Pandemic

Lori Canlon-Khan, IMEA Higher Education Chair, University of Idaho

As I contemplated what to write about in this article, I found myself coming up empty. No words came to mind; no clever phrases or quotes that might inspire or educate; no latitudes filled with hope or passion. For those of you who know me well, not being able to think of something to say or write is unusual for me. I love to talk with others, especially about topics near and dear to my heart. A big blank enveloped my thoughts for a few weeks and then, naturally, I turned to a friend who suggested I concentrate on what brings us, all of us, to teaching music. Why do we do what we do? What keeps us doing it for years? What hope do we hold in this current pandemic?

I thought about all the “love notes” that I received throughout my years in the classroom. The notes from students, parents, colleagues, and administrators that kept me going, validated my efforts and reaffirmed my determination to reach all of my students. Those were pieces of paper or saved emails I took out to reread time and time again on the low days when everything possible had gone wrong. This seemed like something I could write about! An article that might speak to others as we face a future that feels very different from what we have known.

I have had the pleasure of collecting quotes and remembrances from music educators across Idaho and share them with you now. May the following words of our students of all ages and their parents touch us and inspire us in ways that my words cannot at this moment in time.

“Thanks to your constant encouragement and the structure of the group, I grew as a musician in ways I never thought possible…there were days when it was the only class I felt strong and safe enough to attend.”

“I just wanted to tell you that I will always remember your kindness and your encouragement in music, and you had a very positive impact on my life.”

“Music is my daughter’s favorite subject and she wants to be a singer, mom, and teacher when she grows up!”

“Thank you! You make kids love music!”

“I know for a fact that I wouldn’t be doing what I am doing for a living now, and more importantly, I would not be the person that I am if I wouldn’t have had a teacher like you. My parents say the very same of you, not only of the positive influence that you had on me, but also of the influence you had on my sister. I know that you have affected so many people in the same way:”

A student came back to class saying that they missed my class because, “I was very consistent and a hard ass...”

Two former students have said if it was not for me they would never have picked up an instrument. “You got me started and taught me everything. All the other teachers after you just helped me polish.”

“Thank you for teaching me how to read music. It never made sense before.”

I had a mom tell me this past spring she learned how to read music from my online lessons for her son!

When we opened our new elementary school, I wrote a school song and named it "We’re the Wildcats.” A parent just sent me a video of her youngest daughter (now in high school) playing the song on guitar and singing every word with a big smile on her face! She and her mom remembered it with joy in their hearts. Music teachers teach a lifelong love of music in so many ways!

Here’s to a positive and successful 2020-2021 academic year! It will look very different from years past, but we will continue to inspire and educate the students entrusted to our care.

Stay Well and Happy!
How to Stay Safe, Sane, & Sassy during the Pandemic!

It's always something. Right now, in the summer of 2020, there's a virus out there that's dangerous to many of us, but especially those who have diabetes or a respiratory illness like asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). It's also risky to be in the senior category, or to be immuno-compromised. A substantial number of Americans have already become infected, and a lot of them show no symptoms. Eventually, we'll all likely brush up against this invader.

My family does the physical distancing thing. Except when we're far from others, we wear masks in public, and we keep moving. We wash our hands frequently—every time we come in from the outside world. We are wary of others, although we may pet a dog while staying 10 feet from its owner. We wipe down surfaces with antibacterial wipes or a paper towel soaked in bleach or white vinegar. We keep our hands to ourselves, trying not to touch surfaces that others may have. We stop our arms in midair, trying not to bring fingers to faces. But we know it's out there.

If contact with COVID-19 is practically inevitable, what can a person do to pump up his or her immune system to be able to take on this coronavirus?

Experts suggest five things to help the body’s defenses:

1. Get to bed early. Sleep does more than anything else to help us stay strong against microscopic attackers. Americans, a notoriously sleep-deprived and overcaffeinated crowd, are especially encouraged to hit the hay an hour earlier than usual to power up.

2. Eat a healthful diet that includes fruits, veggies, whole grains, lean protein. Yogurt and onions might enhance your intestinal flora. A little chocolate occasionally might cheer you. Once in a while, try something new. And it's okay to have a pizza or another comfort-food meal once a week: Enjoying the foods we love helps us stay a little saner.

3. Drink plenty of water (perhaps with a twist of citrus or another water enhancer) to flush your system and keep your brain cells firing. Green tea can help you hydrate, as can foods like watermelon. By the time you feel thirsty, you may already be dehydrated, so enjoy more liquids!

4. Exercise at least 5 times/week for 30 minutes. Moving enhances our circulation, makes us happier, and helps us sleep better. If things are not going to get any easier for the foreseeable future, we just have to get stronger. And don't dawdle as you walk—get your heart rate up!

5. Lower your stress levels. Deep breathing, meditation, animal-petting, reading positive articles, and doing kind things for others can help the mind focus on the up side of life during turbulent times. A positive attitude can help you stay healthy! And don't forget to get out into the wilderness for a hike or bike ride if you can—green space relaxes us in important ways.

Bottom line: You can't control what comes at you, but you can control how prepared you are. Power up so you can be as physically and mentally strong as possible.

And remember: Better times are ahead.

By Ella Wilcox,
Falls Church, Virginia, after consultation with the medical professionals of Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, July 2020. A positive person by nature, Ella just tested negative for COVID-19.

Photo of Ella Wilcox by Miriam Kimer © 2019 RisingDove.com

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Back to School?!  
Let’s Look at  
What We CAN Do!

Students can sing, and students can play instruments safely — even if it’s only by themselves at home for now. They can create, learn and share. Teachers can, and will, continue to be mentors, inspiring students to engage, and challenging them to grow and excel.

What is different, and evolving this fall, is our model for instruction. In searching for information on what is safe for students, and teachers, we’ve had a steep learning curve in research methods, aerosol particulates, spray patterns, HVAC exchange rates, etc. Our daily reading includes reports of the CDC and our local health districts. I don’t recall these topics being covered in Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians!

We want to be safe.  
We want to make music.  
We want to be together.

Some districts have decided that singing or playing an instrument isn’t safe, and have canceled classes, laying off music teachers or reassigning them to assist with other subjects. This isn’t okay, and devalues the role of music education as a part of a well-balanced education. We need the arts more than ever as a way to connect with our humanity and to share that with others. Our national and state organizations are working to advocate for the value of music education at every level. This is an ongoing job, and part of the role that we all share.

Some districts will be returning to school remotely, delving into the myriad of online tools that will engage students and help them to grow as musicians. This is a great opportunity for teachers to stretch their experiences and abilities to rethink how music education can work. It can also be daunting and a bit overwhelming. If we take a deep breath, focus on the things that we can do effectively, we will be successful translating these into a new model.

Some districts will have hybrid schedules, seeing only small groups at a time. Accommodations will be made that may include social distancing, masks, outside rehearsals, ramped up cleaning procedures, etc.

Whatever structure you’re looking at in the fall, take heart in the fact that you can do it. Remember that as a music teacher, you have already proven yourself to be a valiant warrior, clad with a shield of innovation, a sword of experience, and a helmet girded in patience and a good sense of humor. You have the flexibility and creativity to ignite connections with students in helping them to grow in their love of music.

This is a great opportunity to rethink how students learn and connect with music and music making. While we may not be able to rehearse as full ensembles, students will be able to take ownership of their learning by practicing at home, or in chamber ensembles. They will have the opportunity to be creative in composing, and remixing music in ways that we haven’t been able to focus on in large group ensembles.

But before we think about academic rigor, we need to address the basic human needs of our students and teachers. More than ever before, we all need to belong to a group and feel connected. The Social/Emotional Learning component of being a musician is a lifeline that needs to be extended to all students. Social connections have been limited, and students are craving the opportunity to interact and belong. Music is uniquely situated to address this need as we are a community first, and musicians second. We need to take the time to build these emotional connections.

As music teachers, you have a rich network of support. NAfME has worked diligently to provide virtual resources to help connect music teachers, and to provide ideas for best teaching practices in different models of instruction. On the NAfME.org website, there are numerous webinars designed to connect, support, and encourage educators. The Amplify platform is a communication tool that enables teachers to ask questions, and get feedback from the field. It is more important now than ever to belong to your National and State Music Education Associations.

We Will Get Through This – Together!

Let difficulty transform you.  
And it will.  
In my experience, we just need help  
in learning not to run away.  
—Pema Chödrön

It's better to create something that others criticize than to create nothing and criticize others.  
—Ricky Gervais
AUDITION DATES
See website for in-person audition dates
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DEADLINE FOR ALL MATERIALS
February 1, 2021
Moving Forward in a Time of Uncertainty

Lori Gray, Boise State University

K-12 school districts and higher education institutions have created “Reintegration” or “Re-Opening” plans for the fall. As COVID-19 case numbers change daily, the plans for fall have been altered and revisited by school boards and university committees throughout Idaho and across the Nation.

Some school districts and universities plan to start the year in-person, while others will begin virtually. These changes in the types of schooling that can be offered in the fall, though necessary, make the planning and preparation process even more challenging for teachers.

The stress felt may be overwhelming if you are a teacher with children who are also anticipating a strange new school year. If you are like me, you’d like clear answers and a path forward for your school and the schools your children attend, so that you can prepare for the year and for the new safety procedures that will be in place (though I realize that navigating a global pandemic is not nearly that simple when the health of our community is at stake).

I have received emails from college students who are concerned about what the fall semester will be like. They wonder about postponing classes until the following semester or year so that they can have the “full experience” of the course as originally planned in a face-to-face setting, rather than the potential for an online or hybrid experience. Others would prefer for all classes to be online to ensure safety for everyone this fall.

My responses to students tend to include the current reintegration plan for our university, a statement about the support and flexibility students will receive from the Music Department and the faculty, and then my personal statement about how I plan to move forward with my own life as our society navigates this global pandemic:

I choose to move forward with my life in the safest way I can, putting as little “on pause” as possible (whether that means activities are virtual or if it is safe to be in-person).

I plan to be present and adaptable in each moment. I accept that I cannot control much of what happens with the pandemic or how it will impact my professional or my personal life (beyond making sure that I am following safety protocols at school and in my community). I need to take care of myself, my family, and my students.

I want to prepare the best courses possible for students while also ensuring that we engage with our work safely— and that means that I will need to be flexible and make compromises on how I present content to students. If something doesn’t feel right in the moment, or I disagree with how something is being done within my professional setting, I need to follow my gut.

I need to find a reasonable solution for moving forward in my work by clearly and professionally communicating my concerns with my colleagues and administration. I want my students to feel comfortable to bring up issues they may be facing during the semester as well, to make sure they are taking care of their own needs and health, and I will assist them and adjust our coursework accordingly.

We need to work together as a community to safely navigate this pandemic.

Living during a global pandemic is physically and mentally exhausting. As teachers, I believe we need to be gentle with ourselves this year. While we are working incredibly hard to provide the best education possible for students, we are working under new constraints and in new teaching environments. At times, it may not seem like our best work, but it is the best work that we can do right now.

We need to be mindful of the fact that just like our students, we also feel uncertain, scared, and worried about this new way to live and interact with the world. I have had many hard days this past spring and summer, where I wake up from bad dreams and struggle to find the motivation to move forward in this uncertain future. I know that I have colleagues in K-12 and higher education who have had similar experiences to mine.

I also have students who admitted that their motivation was low and they struggled with mental health issues during the spring semester. Teachers need to set a healthy model for students by taking care of ourselves both physically and mentally during these uncertain times. With this in mind, I plan to openly communicate with students about self-care routines, to remind students about the resources we have on-campus and in the community (i.e., food pantries, counseling and healthcare services), and to ask students to inform me of challenges they face in the semester so that I can provide support and make changes to the course assignments, if needed.

The abrupt shift to online learning this past spring was certainly a challenge, but it forced us to look at our profession, content taught, and our classes in new and often positive ways. I made some changes to the delivery of content and coursework for students this past spring, and some of those changes were positive shifts in how students engaged with learning.

This summer, Boise State offered flexible teaching institutes to provide training in online teaching, and I am aware of similar courses for other universities and K-12 districts across the state. For me, it was incredibly useful to take this course, and I experienced submitting assignments to the online course shell, just as I ask them to do on our learning management system (we use Blackboard). It was helpful to view my grades for the class assignments and to see how feedback is viewed by students.

If it is possible for you to experience assignments and coursework from the student perspective in some way, I found it quite valuable as an opportunity to evaluate my own courses. Part of the flexible teaching institute also involved reflecting on the assignments themselves and whether students could choose alternate methods for demonstrating knowledge.

I especially enjoyed the opportunity to design assessments for my own courses that allow students to present their understanding of content in a variety of ways, which gives students ownership in their learning and also the chance to process information through their preferred learning styles. For example, instead of submitting typed notes for a reading assignment, students could submit a response to the reading in the form of an audio or video recording.
Students could use Flipgrid or Panopto to submit a video response. Once a student posts a video in Flipgrid, other students can submit video responses to the original video post. Panopto allows students to also show their screen if they want to present something along with their discussion of the text. Students could also use a cloud-based application like VoiceThread to record audio-only or audio in addition to sharing a document or a slides presentation (i.e., PowerPoint, Google Slides, Keynote, Prezi). I believe this change to how I ask students to demonstrate that they have read the assigned source will provide more flexibility in how students process information and will allow for better engagement with the content.

The Idaho Music Educators Association and the Idaho State Department of Education, in addition to other music and music education organizations, have already offered free online professional development opportunities for teachers to assist us during these uncertain times in our teaching profession. I hope that we can move into this new school year with a solution mindset, seeking healthy ways (physically and mentally) to provide safe, creative learning environments for our students.

At the same time, we need to ensure that we are maintaining a healthy approach to our profession as teachers, keeping in mind that we need to take care of our own health and well-being to best provide for our students. I believe there are positive changes we can make to how we deliver content to students that can allow us to adapt to the current pandemic while also taking into consideration the variety of learning styles within our classroom. Through music and community, we will find a way to move forward in this time of uncertainty.

Dr. Lori Gray is Associate Professor and Director of Music Education at Boise State University. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in Music Education and supervises student teachers. Lori joined the Boise State Music faculty in the Fall of 2017, after her position as Associate Professor of Music Education at the University of Montana. Prior to her experience in higher education, Lori taught in public and private PreK-12 schools in Texas, primarily as a general music specialist.
Rethinking Teaching & Learning during Covid-19

Camille Blackburn, Choral Music Educator
Hillcrest High School, Idaho Falls

March 16 — the last in-person day of the 2019-20 school year.

Of course, none of us knew that. None of us had any idea what was to follow and no one was prepared. All we knew was they were closing school early for Spring Break to help slow the spread of some new virus. We all thought we would be back together again after Spring Break. We had no idea that everything we had planned for the rest of the year would be canceled.

It’s incredibly ironic that my mixed choir sang a new piece of music on that last day, a traditional Spiritual “This May Be the Last Time”, arranged by Tawn B. Thomas. I’m not certain what prompted me to choose that song to sight-read that day. Later when I realized how significant this was, I wept.

Moving to online school was a big adjustment. I had no experience or skills in teaching online and students had no experience or skills in learning online. My students, in general, had far less knowledge about technology than I thought. They had a lot of challenges and a steep learning curve in how to follow online instructions and complete and turn in assignments. It was such a new experience that it emotionally paralyzed many of them, which affected their ability to respond. I tried my best to help them, constantly adjusting my expectations and creating alternate assignments. It was hard and it was frustrating.

And then I realized this was not about me!

That realization started me thinking about… “what I had been doing,” “what I was trying to do,” “what I could be doing,” and “if any of it was related to learning?”. So, I signed up for several free webinars provided by NAfME, https://nafme.org/my-classroom/nafme-online-professional-learning-community/

“Music Education and SEL During COVID-19: Resiliency and Empathy Now more Than Ever” by Scott Edgar was transformative for me. I learned a lot and it changed my thinking about my career, my students, and my influence in their education. It opened my eyes and my heart.

It’s hard to take an honest look at yourself and assess whether or not you are giving your students what they really need. It’s easy to think of yourself and your music program as proof of your own fantastic musicianship and teaching abilities.

This is what online teaching has allowed me to do and what I was surprised to learn...

1. I was able to connect with students in individual ways which allowed me to feel compassion for them and the circumstances that affected their ability to be successful online.

2. I saw their individual skill levels and their confidence or lack of confidence in demonstrating those skills.

3. It was very clear to me that “The Choir needs some singers, and some singers need the Choir.”

4. I learned that I have students who need a lot of assistance and encouragement.

5. I learned that a good number of students are self-directed and can easily be successful.

6. I was sad to learn that some students are terrified of singing alone and recording themselves.

7. I learned that my previous expectations and methods were not very relevant under these circumstances.

I have a much different mindset now which includes the following ideas:

1. While Standards are still important, they are not the first priority.

2. Measurable outcomes may be the least important result of learning.

3. My plan for classes this Fall is “Culture Before Curriculum.”

4. It's important to meet students where they are, let them know who you are, and work together.

5. To be successful we must TRY and to keep TRYING. Online teaching takes a lot more time and thought, and it's exhausting mentally and emotionally.

6. We have trained our students to “jump through hoops” and some of them are very good at that.

7. Many students are more interested in “getting the assignment done” than in learning. More learning takes place when students have to think through the process and make decisions about how to successfully complete an assignment. Allow students to make decisions.

The Final Project for my Musical Theatre class was to “Record your performance of a 16-bar Theatre Audition Piece.” There are several steps in this process:

1. Select a song that best fits your voice type.

2. Find or have someone make a recording of the accompaniment.

3. Learn and Memorize the song you selected.

4. Plan what the background of your video will look like.

5. Plan what you will be wearing in your video.

6. Plan and rehearse how you will introduce yourself and the song you have chosen to sing.

7. Record and submit your audition.

If we had been in school under “normal” circumstances, I likely would have been more “hands on” in this assignment, thus depriving students of an opportunity for learning. Students and teachers alike need to see themselves as “Thinkers and Problem Solvers”.

We all have access to the same information. How we interpret that information and what we do with it can make a big difference.

Who knows what teaching is going to look like this school year? I have no idea, but I can’t afford to spend my time and energy worrying about “what if” scenarios. I have an obligation to take charge of my own thoughts. I need to be a “Responder”, not a “Reactor”. Our students are depending on us and I think they should be able to do that. The first day, I plan to ask my students the following questions.

1. What do you need from me?

2. What would you like to learn?

3. What would you like me to plan for you?

4. What should I expect from you?

When all of this is over (and it will be at some point), all that will really matters is how we treated each other and how that felt, which is the most valuable thing you take away from any experience.
Our goal as string educators is to continue to provide meaningful and safe instruction for our students during these new and unprecedented times. It will be important to remember the values we strive to teach our students as we design our instruction for the 2020-2021 school year. Remember we want to teach the whole student. We work on creating positive relationships in our buildings and our communities, we teach teamwork skills, we teach students how to problem solve and think critically, and we teach them musicianship.

Thankfully, as string educators we have the unique opportunity to continue to play with few alterations. I encourage you to use this time to explore chamber music as much as possible with your late middle school and high school students. This will allow students to continue to progress on their instruments and teach them valuable lessons in musical independence.

It is critical that we teach students how to learn music and practice on their own to make progress in their own music when we are not together. For beginning classes I would encourage you to use manipulatives on the instrument and bow to help students know how to properly hold their instruments without having to come in contact with them. Using tapes, drawing dots on their hands, stickers, or other means will help alleviate this problem.

When setting up your classrooms, follow your district’s policies for spacing between students. Use tape on the floor to help students know where their individual chairs and stands will be placed. It should only be one person per stand at this time. Consider air flow and ventilation in your room and try to arrange your students perpendicular to the air flow in the space. Consider having your students face all the same direction and staggering your rows. When possible designate single entrance and exit locations to control traffic flow.

Before class starts require students to wash their hands for 20 seconds or use a disinfecting hand sanitizer. Encourage the use of face masks and teach coughing/sneezing etiquette. Build time in your lessons for disinfecting chairs and stands at the end of each class period. Avoid sharing instruments where possible. If you need to share instruments make sure to follow proper dis-infecting procedures so that you don’t ruin the varnish on the instrument. There are specific instrument cleaning tips on the ASTA website (astastrings.org) that you can follow. Also seek advice from a luthier you trust.

It may seem daunting as we embark on this new journey but remember you are the professional and you know what your students need. Advocate for your program and continue to make your students feel valued. We are all doing our best to navigate these new waters. I hope that this school year will be filled with valuable lessons and joyful musical experiences.
New Faculty and Staff
Committed to Supporting Music Educators and Students

The Lionel Hampton School of Music at the University of Idaho is committed to supporting K-12 music education and providing reinforcement for your music program in any way possible. If there are specific ways we can assist you and your students, please do not hesitate to contact us! music@uidaho.edu; 208-885-6231

A native of Commerce, Texas, Chris Clark, D.M.A., Instructor of Trombone, has enjoyed a career as a trombonist, educator, and as an audio producer and engineer. Chris’ love of music is shared through highly personal audio recording projects made for a growing and diverse list of clients and as a trombonist in “The President’s Own” U.S. Marine Band. Educated at the Curtis Institute of Music, the Juilliard School, Catholic University of America, and the Berklee College of Music (Audio Production Advanced Certificate), Dr. Clark has performed in just about every setting imaginable.

Giselle Hilyer, D.M.A. Instructor of Violin and Viola, performs extensively as a violinist and violist, both internationally and throughout North America. Some of her recent engagements include solos with the Washington-Idaho Symphony and recitals in Idaho and Washington. She is an active chamber musician in ensembles with faculty from the University of Idaho and Washington State University. Hilyer holds a D.M.A. from the University of Kansas, an M.M. and a Graduate Diploma from the New England Conservatory, and a B.M. from the University of Adelaide, Australia. Her early studies were in her birth country of New Zealand. Her teachers Ben Sayevich, Eric Rosenblith, Michèle Auclair, Beryl Adelaide, Australia. Her early studies were in her birth country of New Zealand. Her teachers Ben Sayevich, Eric Rosenblith, Michèle Auclair, Beryl

Josh Skinner, D.A., is an instructor of contrabass, directs the Symphony Orchestra and is the Manager of the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival at the University of Idaho. He has served as assistant professor at the University of Minnesota Duluth, and professor of Double Bass and Jazz Studies at Utah State University, and BYU-Idaho. Skinner has been involved with planning every aspect of jazz festivals for over 10 years, including the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival, the UNC-Greerlee Jazz Festival, and the Head of the Lakes Jazz Festival. Skinner received his Bachelor of Music in music education from Utah State University, Master of Music in performance and music education from the University of Idaho, and a Doctor of Arts in double bass performance from the University of Northern Colorado. He is fluent in both jazz and classical idioms, having performed nationally and internationally.

New Music Faculty at Boise State University

Dr. Rachel Becker is Assistant Professor of Musicology and Oboe at Boise State University. She previously taught at the University of Cambridge in the UK. Rachel received her PhD from the University of Cambridge, and her MM in Oboe Performance from the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. She completed her BA in Music with Highest Distinction at the University of Virginia. At Boise State, Dr. Becker teaches oboe, undergraduate and graduate music history courses, and graduate seminars. Her oboe students benefit from credit-bearing reed-making classes alongside their lessons and studio classes.

Dr. Becker’s research focuses on issues of genre, virtuosity, gender, popularity, and the development of woodwind instruments. Her publications include a chapter in Nineteenth-Century Programme Music (Brepols, 2019), an invited article in the July 2020 issue of the International Double Reed Society Journal, and a review in Early Music. Dr. Becker is active in musicological societies and has presented with the American Musicological Society, the Royal Musical Association, and the Biennial International Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music.

Dr. Jeffrey Seppala, bass-baritone, is an Assistant Professor of Voice and the Director of Opera and Musical Theatre at Boise State University. Prior to Boise State, Dr. Seppala was a faculty member at Truman State University and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, where he taught voice and directed the opera theatre productions. As a performer, Dr. Seppala integrates world techniques with modern pedagogical instruction to assist singers in classical and CCM styles. In addition, as a certified yoga instructor, he advocates for mind and body wellness through the use of yoga, body mapping, and Alexander technique. Dr. Seppala holds a Doctorate of Music in Voice Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Colorado at Boulder, a Masters of Music in Voice Performance from the A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and a Bachelors of Music in Voice Performance from Biola University. Outside of music, Dr. Seppala enjoys running, yoga, and exploring the world on adventures with his wife and three daughters.
Two New Books Encourage Students About Practicing Any Instrument

Music Teacher Becky Chaffee has created and illustrated two beautiful children's picture books to encourage good music practice habits. The points she makes about practice are illustrated with her humorous art. The first book can be found on Amazon or on her website at MusicTeacherGifts.com with related accessories. Have Fun with Your Music is a great book for students to have during Covid times when they have less accessibility to their teachers. Here are two music teacher reviews. (Many more reviews are posted on Amazon)

"Need Practice Tips? Great book for practice inspiration. (Doesn't everyone need this?) Great illustrations with creative practice tips. Love this book and want all of my students to see it and BUY it. Great job, Becky Chaffee!" — Fay Adams, 2016 Music Teacher of the Year by the Music Teacher National Association

叫 All Musicians: Send Your Fun Stories about Practicing!

Ms. Chaffee's second book, Passion for Practice: A Mindful Music Odyssey, is still in draft form. It has more advanced practice suggestions discussed a little more in depth. She is collecting fun, funny, and interesting stories from musicians to include in her book about practicing. If you have any stories or observations, she would love to hear from you. As an incentive, she would be glad to email you a draft of this book also for a preview.

Calling All Musicians: Send Your Fun Stories about Practicing!

Contact Becky Chaffee — Becky@MusicTeacherGifts.com. Her website is MusicTeacherGifts.com; Knoxville, TN; 865/850-9220.

Teach Recorder Online or in Class

Greetings from Your Friends At Macie Publishing Company! Many teachers are now just learning how they will be teaching for at least the beginning of the upcoming school year. We know that the uncertainty has been stressful and that you are trying to determine the best way to move forward. We are here to help!

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If you have questions, please call 888-697-1333 or email us at info@maciepublishing.com. We are also available on our website www.maciepublishing.com. We are all in this together and we hope you will use us as a resource. Please let us know how you are doing and how we may help! Thank you.

Best regards, Julie Sueta, Ed Sueta, Jr. & Your Friends at Macie
Navigating a Global Pandemic as a Collegiate

Livi Johnson, University of Idaho, IMEA Collegiate President

2020 has been a crazy year, to put it lightly.

Major events around the world have impacted so many people in so many ways, starting with the Australian bushfires. The trend continued with the death of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in a US drone strike; and then, the beginning of what we know now as COVID-19. While the novel virus spread, President Trump was impeached in the US. Additionally, Kobe Bryant, daughter Gianna Bryant, and other passengers died in a helicopter crash. Shouting “Kobe!” while shooting for that trash can three-pointer has a slightly different meaning now. By the end of January, the United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union.

Meanwhile, COVID-19 became a global pandemic that continues to impact billions of people worldwide.

For me personally, the university I attend (University of Idaho), and most others had to transition to online instruction around March, with only Spring Break to prepare. This was a huge challenge for schools across the nation, but especially for Arts majors and corresponding individual classes.

Teachers had to be creative with this new online situation. Because of that, this experience was not all negative, but it certainly was not the best-case scenario. Instead of preparing music for our final Wind Ensemble concert of the year, we listened to and learned about different composers as an ensemble. We put together a video recording of our Alma Mater. None of that would have happened if we were taking classes in person.

I would also like to think that many people learned more about themselves during this time. I know I felt like I had the attention span of a peanut trying to concentrate on Zoom lectures. It was strange to be locked up in a tiny apartment. At least going to school meant you had to go outside on a regular basis. This gave me a better idea for how I needed to prepare for the Fall semester. I need my own workspace and a schedule to stick to.

Another challenge is teaching future educators how to teach in a traditional classroom without the traditional classroom. Poor Dr. Conlon-Khan has lots to deal with when we’re in our normal 9:30 a.m. General Music Methods class, not to mention disruptions to the regular college experience.

Now try to imagine adding technological malfunction and taking away any sort of group interaction. Remember, this is a general music class that relies on singing, playing, and movement. I am sure many of you have tried but singing on Zoom just does not work! Another affected area at the college level is student teaching. Many of my friends did not get their full experience in their internship because the second eight weeks was online.

Fortunately, being online produced some new and creative opportunities for teachers and students to explore. In our Percussion Techniques class, students used household items to create a mallet instrument. One of my colleagues made his out of silverware!

A few other Collegiate NAfME members and I had planned on traveling with members of our IMEA board to Washington D.C. for the NAfME Collegiate Advocacy Summit this summer. This in-person summit was obviously altered, and that created an opportunity that many did not have previously. The online format meant that it was free and open to all collegiate students. Normally, this trip would be quite expensive depending on where you live.

The online format also offered the flexibility to leave the session if needed due to a conflict. Many other organizations and individuals offered similar events that normally would not be accessible. I personally attended a virtual summit regarding marching percussion.

During the spring semester, our Wind Ensemble hosted a discussion with the Director of “The President’s Own.” These opportunities will continue to appear and will be very beneficial. Keep an eye out for more! The online format also allows for future viewing. The Collegiate Advocacy Summit was recorded and is still available to watch if anyone was unable to attend or needs a refresher.

So, what did I take away from the Advocacy Summit and previous months of navigating a global pandemic?

Despite the craziness, this is such an important time to work with one another. NAfME provides so many resources for both the online and traditional classroom setting. It is a resource that I know I forget about. NAfME is not the only resource though. We have access to so much great information online. With these excellent websites come very knowledgeable people. I have learned to reach out more. Even if you do not have a new friend from across the country to talk with, there are many excellent educators involved with NAfME.

There are so many great educators in your area that you have worked with in some capacity. These are the people who will continue to help you even past the college level, and especially now.

For the collegiate members, you can still advocate for yourself and those around you. There were many wonderful stories about young college students doing important work for their local communities.

You do not have to have a degree to start making a difference because your voice does matter, especially now.

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I would teach children ——

music,——

physics,——

——— and philosophy;

but most ——

importantly

music,——

for the patterns in music—

and all ——

the arts—

are the keys to learning.—

- Plato
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It’s August!
And I am an Elementary Music Teacher!

Shirley Van Paepghem, svp@northstarcharter.org,
Past IMEA Elementary R & S chair

Ok, so….It’s time to move forward into the year.

But what will “forward” look like?
Should I read every article that I see?
Should I believe everything I hear?

Will I be able to adapt?
My mind races with these questions every day and it can drive me crazy. Some days I am filled with anxiety. Am I alone?

So here is what I am telling myself. Perhaps you have had similar conversations with yourself?

Breathe...

I am thankful I still have a job.
Should I panic about teaching in the fall? No. That won't help.
Should I spend hours this summer adapting lessons? I will spend some time on this, yes. I need to keep a balance as some things may be a waste of time and energy for a moving target.
Should I blame someone, look for fault, keep complaining, or let the frustration get the best of me? To what end?
Should I return to school at all? I have to follow my heart, so I will be still, long enough to listen.
Should I keep track of all resources that come my way for future reference? Probably a good idea.

History is watching us and so are our students. Perhaps the most important thing we are teaching them is not about music! What do I want them to remember about how I handled this situation? What might we discover in this process? We may be surprised.

Our students need US to focus on what we CAN do, and not on what we CANNOT do. Then they give themselves permission to do the same.

We CAN still build relationships with kids. We have more time to let them talk and share. They have the BEST creative ideas! What might we discover in this process? We may be surprised.

We have multiple resources of professional teachers willing to help us. Stay in touch with those forums.

We CAN still teach rhythm, history, steady beat, theory, culture, dance, … they just will look different. What might we discover in this process? We may be surprised.

We can still hum, chant and sing occasionally….if we are careful and creative about when and how. We have to come to terms with that. Let’s enjoy some sunshine outside while we can! What might we discover in this process? We may be surprised.

We CAN still bring joy to them…by loving them just the way they are.

We CAN TRUST that we are well trained professionals. We know what to do when we are put in front of our kids. Rely on those instincts. Our students trust us and need us. What might we discover in this process? We may be surprised.

We CAN move into this transition slow. “Ease on down the road” and take it a step at a time. Let’s be cautious and safe and then adjust as needed.

As our students are watching us to see how we adapt to challenges, let’s take it on and show them that we are willing to learn. We will figure more out as time goes on. What might we discover in this process? We may be surprised.

As for our own musical hearts, let’s do all the music at home that we can.

Sing, play and create for our own souls. Our music is what brought us to teach in the first place. What might we discover in this process? We may be surprised.

We are adaptable and creative.

We got this.

Focus on positive things.
Music is our superpower.

Look for the silver lining amid challenges.

“Through all the tumult and strife
I hear that music ringing
It finds an echo in my soul
How can I keep from singing”
— Robert Lowry 1869

I find it interesting to consider which personality type I am as well as others (see the compass chart below).

Perhaps it will help me to find balance, strength, courage and trust in the qualities of others as well as myself.

I am not trying to make it sound easy. It will not be. But I need to be in the mindset that I will succeed. And if not, it will not be because I did not try.

Stay safe, Friends, and keep singing!
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