



South Carolina MUSICIAN

Vol. LXXV

Spring 2022

No. 3



This issue features:

Conference Highlights
Job Application Tips
String Review
The Essence of Kodaly
Parts 4 & 5



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Why is it important for students?

How does music education make a difference?

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South Carolina Musician | Volume 75 Number 3

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Call for Articles

The SC Musician is looking for original articles regarding music education from teachers, researchers, or administrators for the 2022-2023 school year. Please submit your articles to Jake Henjes at jhenjes@dorchester2.k12.sc.us

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Editor's Note

While it has brought me joy serving as Editor of the SC Musician, I am stepping down from this position at the end of this school year. It has been my pleasure to serve as the Editor of the SC Musician these past six years, and I hope to continue to be a resource not only for the new editor but to all the music teachers of South Carolina. I'm only an email away (susana.lalama@converse.edu).

It is my pleasure to introduce the new editor of the SC Musician, Jake Henjes! Please welcome Jake to this position and send him articles for the magazine. His email address is jhenjes@dorchester2.k12.sc.us

Sincerely,
Susana M. Lalama, Ph.D.



Save the Date for the 2022 NAfME National Conference

We look forward to seeing you at the 2022 conference at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland, near Washington, DC. Registration will open in April.

The theme of the 2022 NAfME Conference is **NAfME is ME!** NAfME is Music Education, a vibrant diverse community of music educators. **NAfME is ME!** is the unique, valuable contributions, perspectives, and participation that all NAfME members embody every day at the local, state, and national level.

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President's Message

Joe Gulledge, SCMEA President

What a fantastic meeting we had in February in Columbia! It was wonderful to see everyone in person once more! Even though our annual SCMEA professional development conference was only a few weeks ago, it feels like a lifetime ago. The Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center served as a center for professional growth, allowing us to immerse ourselves in music and broaden our teaching repertoire. Alexis Hatch and the division leaders did an outstanding job of planning the sessions and offering numerous opportunities. At the conference, every division and committee had events, and I admire their efforts in bringing in the top artists, clinicians and instructors. Please make sure you provide feedback on the conference so we can continue to provide sessions that are relevant to your needs. Your opinion matters and your experience is important to our success, especially as we gear up to celebrate SCMEA's 75th Birthday in 2023!

As we approach the close of another school year, I encourage you to reflect on both your students' as well as your own achievements. We frequently focus on what our pupils have accomplished (achievement), when we should be focusing on how far they have progressed (success). Achievement refers to achieving a goal or obtaining a prize, whereas success refers to succeeding in a task or improving oneself. Take a look back at where you and your students started and how far you've come. Celebrate your accomplishments in helping your students become better musicians, problem solvers, and people. Music does have the power to affect people's lives, and you are a catalyst for positive change in a lot of people's lives.



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Band Division

Chuck Deen, *President*

Music in Our Schools

Month dates back to 1973, and began as a single statewide Advocacy Day and celebration in New York.

It has grown over past decades to become a month-long celebration of school music dating back to 1985. March certainly provides the SCBDA with many celebrations! To date, we have enjoyed the return of Marching Band Championships, Region Band Auditions, All-State Auditions, All-State Jazz Auditions, SCMEA In-Service Conference, and Region Band Clinics. This week brings the return of All-State Jazz, Jazz Performance Assessment, and SCBDA Indoor Championships. Our All-State Band Clinic and Concert Performance Assessment are right around the corner! I am so proud of your perseverance and dedication to “saving band” for your students, schools and communities. Let’s also not forget the impact that you continue to have upon the SCBDA.

Your contributions have created a true celebration of musical triumph. It could not be more fitting, in my opinion, that we are also celebrating the 85th Anniversary of the SCBDA. So many have led the way over the past decades and they have been at the forefront of my mind. I often think back over my 34 years of teaching and recall the influence of so many. I am thankful for these men and women. Without them, the SCBDA would not be what it is today. What is it today? I believe that the SCBDA has grown into one of the most respected musical organizations in our country.

I would like to encourage you to reach out to your former directors and retired colleagues and thank them for their contributions to your musical education. I believe that Music in Our Schools Month is not only about celebrating the present, but also recognizing the past and the roads we have traveled.

Consider shifting your focus from the rating your ensembles may or may not receive in the coming weeks to the realization that we are returning to Jazz Performance Assessment and Concert Performance Assessment. The fact that we are holding live, evaluated performances is monumental for our student musicians. Enjoy your performances and what you have programmed for this year. Many col-



leagues have told me how excited their students have been for the return of region clinics, and I’m sure that this excitement will be present at JPA, All-State Band, Indoor Championships, and CPA.

Piano Division

Hunter Cox, *President*

At the SCMEA Professional Development Conference, the piano division sponsored some wonderful conference sessions this year. There was one session on the piano music of Florence Price. There was another with the piano division board members all discussing their favorite pieces to teach. I got to meet lots of new people who were teaching piano, and I hope that we can continue to make meaningful connections to better support our piano teachers within SCMEA.

The SCMEA Fall Piano Festival was conducted virtually and concluded on November 13th this year. The SCMEA Honors Piano Recital and SCMEA Piano Masterclass, featuring festival participants, were held during the SCMEA Conference on February 5th. Dr. Soohyun Yun did a superb job working with our students, and the recital performances were excellent. We hope that everyone who teaches piano, either in a group or individual setting, will consider participating in the festival this spring. I know that my students who participated this past semester were able to learn so much by receiving feedback from the judges and participating in the masterclass and recital. There are no technical or theory requirements for this festival, students perform their choice of one to two standard piano repertoire selections. It’s a wonderful performance opportunity for our students. The deadline for video submissions is April 15th. This may be near spring break for your students so please plan accordingly.

I hope that everyone has a smooth end to the school year as they prepare for festivals and recitals. As always, if you have any questions or suggestions about the piano division or would like to talk about anything related to piano teaching, I’m available via email at joseph.cox@lcsd.k12.sc.us.





Higher Education Division

Patrick Casey, *President*

This springtime, the Higher Education division is piloting a scheduling survey that should reach other divisions for distribution to members soon. Perhaps more urgent for our attention are the issues of continued teacher shortages, and the state legislative responses sweeping the nation to address these ongoing shortages. State departments of education and teacher's unions continue to illuminate several conflating factors hindering teacher recruitment and retention; such considerations as low pay and/or benefits, lack of respect and esteem for the profession, fewer students entering and completing traditional teacher preparation programs, and inadequate supports for teachers once they enter the profession. Alternative certification programs are expanding, and emergency teacher certification measures are being signed into law by governors in a host of states.

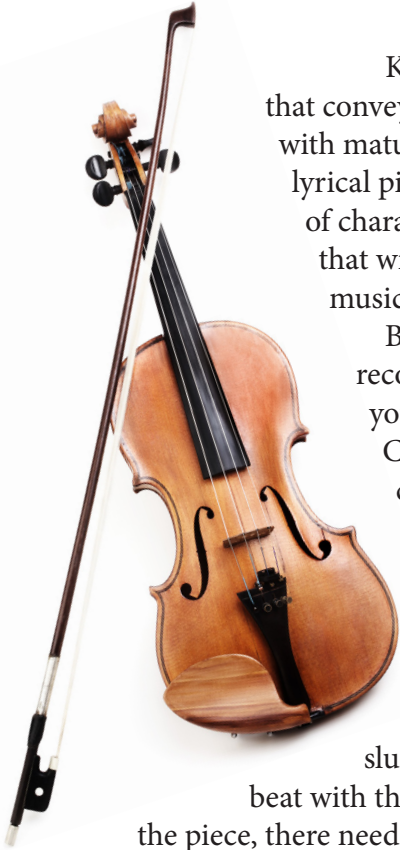
To be sure, at the South Carolina statehouse it is also a very dynamic time in education policy-making. No fewer than forty-five education-related bills have been introduced in this General Assembly. The weekly LAN (legislative action alert) from the Palmetto State Teachers Association and the Legislative Newsletter from the South Carolina Education Association are very informative. Under discussion in Columbia right now, for example, are voucher bills, restrictive curriculum & instruction bills, and statewide open-enrollment legislation, each separately holding much potential influence on our state's music education programs. Patrick Kelly, the PSTA governmental affairs director is urging teachers to get engaged in adding their voices: "What comes out of this General Assembly could truly transform education in South Carolina—for the better or for the worse....there are powerful voices involved in education policy discussions this year, many of which have not been in a classroom or a school setting since their own school experience. And, they are taxpayers, so of course they can speak into the process. But, if teachers and educators don't speak out in this Session, then the policies passed will reflect only the views and the input of those who haven't been working with students on a daily basis in South Carolina schools...." He then goes on to describe some very useful advocacy tools for educators to let their voices be heard (PSTA advocacy tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lw2HhvK0ZSQ>).

Finally, for this column, and very much related to the above, I would like to recommend a recent publication of a fellow South Carolinian. Dr. Derek Brown is an education history scholar and constitutional law professor at USC (Columbia) who has studied and compiled a comprehensive history of public education and education law in America. His most recent book, "Schoolhouse Burning: Public Education and the Assault on American Democracy" (2020, Hachete Book Group, Inc.) details how the story of public education "goes hand in hand with democracy and voting." In the prologue, Brown states, "My first conclusion should worry you: The last decade aligns better with the darker periods of our history than the brighter ones. The trend is alarming not just for public education. It is alarming for democracy itself. But my second conclusion is that the power of the idea of public education remains strong enough to persevere. In fact, public education may be the one institution that helps rebind this nation's wounds, just as it has in the past, and moves us once again closer to our democratic aspirations." (p. 12). Throughout its 262 pages of well-cited research and detailed observations, Dr. Brown makes a compelling case for reaffirming the constitutional and democratic imperatives of public education, citing both the founders' valuing of it (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison all asserted education's utmost importance and called for its expansion in those early years of the nation) and the post-Civil War Reconstruction-era state legislative assurances for public education. He concludes with this: "I do not know how many additional losses our schools can take on top of the last ones [referring broadly to the education budget cuts that state legislatures enacted during the 2008 recession] or how much online learning is appropriate, but I do know one thing. A century and a half ago citizens began approving state constitutions that made public education an absolute priority of every state—and the first priority in several states. They did it for a very good reason. They knew times like these would come. They knew the foundation of society had to be solid. If the coronavirus demands cuts to state services, so be it. But education has to be the last, not the first, place states look to make them...."(p. 259) In my opinion, "Schoolhouse Burning" is an illuminating, inspiring, and provocative read.

With encouragement here to join the chorus of educators voicing your thoughts towards strengthening our state's public schools, here's hoping the springtime sentiment of renewal, hope, and agency is still quite present in your work days and weeks ahead!

STRING REVIEW

Beneath the Autumn Sky by Sluder



Kevin Sluder's "Beneath the Autumn Sky" is a beautiful strings ensemble piece that conveys the imagery of an Autumn day. This piece will challenge students to perform with mature rhythmic precision and meaningful tone quality. Furthermore, this being a lyrical piece, it easily elicits the opportunity for students to push his or her own boundary of characteristic musicianship. "Beneath the Autumn Sky" is a string-ensemble piece that will challenge the ensemble's rhythmic accuracy, characteristic tone qualities, and musical maturity.

Before discussing some of the ensemble challenges of this piece, it is essential to recognize the initial technical checkpoints. This piece is written in D Major, and you will have to address F# and C# as necessary for all instruments (even on the C String!). Tonally, there are moments of dissonance and relief which requires careful listening skills from both the ensemble and the conductor. At m. 39, there is an intensive violin solo that goes up to an A four ledger lines above the staff. Every part gets lyrical melodic passages and slightly rigorous rhythmic ideas throughout the piece. Essentially: this piece requires a very well-equipped and balanced ensemble with the appropriate skills to make this piece meaningful.

Slower lyrical pieces tend to have a rhythmic formula: the melodic line with slightly complex rhythms layered upon longer rhythms (the harmony), slurs/ties, and of course a slow tempo. Getting the ensemble to line up on the down-beat with the correct rhythms at all times is one of the first layers of this piece. Throughout the piece, there needs to be careful attention to the dotted eighth slurred to the sixteenth, and ensuring that it is both accurate within a section but when shared, done precisely amongst the rest of the ensemble. Furthermore, at m. 31 specifically, the viola and cello sections share the melody with rhythm combinations of dotted eighth with sixteenths and slurred triplets. Ensure that your ensemble has the appropriate rhythm skills to do this tactfully and with precision.

The second layer of this piece is maintaining a delicate and characteristic ensemble tone. In lyrical pieces, tone is more exposed as an ensemble. One would also need to effectively address sustaining the longer durations with the correct bowings and rhythms. The tone must be balanced as an ensemble. The hotshot players cannot be the only students projecting and carrying your group to the finish line; all ensemble members must contribute to create (and sustain) a balanced and characteristic tone. Simultaneously, if the tone is consistent and clear, then the tuning will be more achievable; "if you can't play it in tone you can't play it in tune."

Interpretation/Musicianship

In Kevin Sluder's conductor notes, he states that "music [has the] ability to conjure an image, even if you can't exactly say why. [Sluder has] always felt that this piece sounds like a crisp and cool autumn day." After hashing out the major learning concepts such as rhythm, intonation, and tone, one can share the conductor's notes verbatim with the students. Ask the musicians to picture Sluder's idea as "One of those days where the leaves have turned, a handful already fluttering to the ground; a sky paler blue than usual." As for the conductor, using the composer's notes can be helpful to make musical decisions for harmonic clarity and phrasing. The interpretation of an autumn day, however, could also be left to the students.

It is necessary for the conductor/teacher to establish what the autumn sky conveys for their own interpretation to share with their students. Does it elicit certain emotions or imagery? After determining and sharing one's interpretation, then encourage the students to picture their own picture of "Beneath the Autumn Sky".

Continued on page 10

STRING REVIEW

The String Review are orchestra pieces that were reviewed by members of the SCMEA Orchestra Division. Thank you Susan Wines for organizing the review!

Inishowen by Siegler/arr. Law

Written by Sarah Siegler and edited by J. Cameron Law, Inishowen is a delightful two-movement work reminiscent of the incredible beauty of Northern Ireland. Both movements provide growth opportunities for your second or third year players to include shifting or the work can be performed entirely in first position for violin, viola, and cello. There are also many occasions to practice proficiencies with dynamic changes, accents, string crossings, and slurs. Set in the accessible key of G major, the lyrical first movement contains beautiful harmonies woven through the various ensemble voices. The beginning of this movement also contains a brief violin solo where a performer can be featured. The second movement is composed around a characteristic Irish jig but adds a hemiola effect to provide a powerful rhythmic treat for the performer and the listener. Students will enjoy the challenges of learning and playing in 6/8 time and your audience will have their toes tapping along with this challenging yet rewarding addition to your middle-level repertoire. Inishowen is published by Grand Mesa Publications.

Review by Dr. Anne Matthews

Andante Festivo by Sibelius

One of my favorite pieces that grows musicality in an orchestra is Andante Festivo. Students grow in finessing bow technique, shifting and vibrato. The piece begins with the cellists in fourth position and the other instruments in lower positions, highlighting the cello section. Basses are underscored next with a separate entrance after the rest of the orchestra. Violas are brought to the foreground as they double first violins and cover the melody. Full bow usage is employed in both piano and forte sections. At first glance, students think this is an easy piece to play because of the half notes and quarter notes, but it encourages them to count well and relax their bow hand and left hand technique to bring about a beautiful warm tone, if this is emphasized by the instructor. Vibrato technique is easily encouraged in fourth position for the cello and the other strings can play notes in higher positions as well. At the nucleus of the story that is unfolding, the beautiful clandestine cello and bass pulsing gives a beautiful rhythmic palette on which violins and violas can paint their melody. These sections can be propelled forward a little giving the ensemble some variation. The chord structure is a wonderful teaching tool to a group of students who love the academic side of a piece. It ends with a beautiful plagal cadence giving students an introduction to a very popular cadence. Finally, the piece is on IMSLP which gives teachers an opportunity to unlock the world of music to their students by teaching them how to use this valuable, public resource. This piece is a staple in my pedagogy. Students love the way they grow as musicians when they play this piece.

Review by Kathleen Katy Martin

String Review

Continued from page 8

The interpretation of the conductor, as well as the musicians in the ensemble, can be so personal. Every ensemble member is entitled to have his or her interpretation. More importantly, each member should be given permission to hear this piece in his or her own way. The goal is to make this piece a living entity every time in rehearsal and even more so at the concert. The slightest fluctuation of tempo or balance can change the atmosphere; this is similar to the ending of Copland's *Appalachian Spring* where the music lies within the living moment!

Lastly, a strategy one can use to enhance student musicianship was for us to sing the parts together. Try this at m. 19 (sorry basses!) where the students were allowed to simply sing their part as beautifully as possible. You may be surprised as some students will just "go for it" and show vulnerable musicianship. It can get the tune in their heads and even empower the students to play more confidently. Then imagine what sounds can happen when you add the singing back to the instrument!

Review by Christine Arroyo



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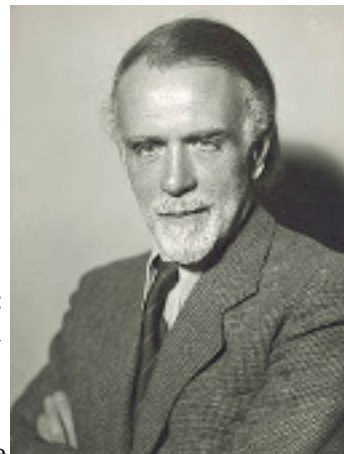
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THE ESSENCE OF THE KODÁLY APPROACH

By Pattye Casarow, DMA



In the previous SC Musician, you read Parts 1, 2, and 3 of the Essence of the Kodaly Approach, which focused on the Philosophy, Materials, and Planning. Now let's flesh this out for the lesson.

Part 4: The Daily Lesson Plan

Zoltán Kodály said, "A well-conducted lesson is not a burden, but a recreation: the source of joy and cheer." Intentional, advanced planning is required to have excellent instruction. Thoughtful lesson planning guided by sequential goals for learning established in the scope and sequence is liberating. You know how everything fits together in the long and short term. Teaching at a relatively fast pace is possible because you've planned what the class is to do next, which might even result in a decreased need for classroom management. Students can thoroughly practice their newly acquired skills because learning is efficient and there is time for more. It's a win-win-win combination.

Here is the basic outline of the Kodály-inspired lesson.

1. Opening
 - a. Greeting
 - b. Rhyme
2. Primary Focus
3. Change of Pace
4. Secondary Focus
5. Closing

As I discuss each part, I have included examples from a second-grade lesson plan. The plan is preparing mi, re, do and practicing quarter note, rest, and eighth notes. The objectives are as follows:

1. I CAN sing so-mi on pitch.
2. I CAN pat a steady beat and clap the rhythm of the words.
3. I CAN read and write quarter notes, rests, and eighth notes.

During the **Opening** first five minutes, the teacher welcomes the children, establishes a joyful rapport, and awakens their musical minds. The teacher sings a short greeting. Once the students know the tune, they can sing along with the class or alone. The teacher can take attendance or assess individual pitch matching through the opening song. The astute teacher will focus on acceptance and encouragement of what each child can do during this musical conversation. Subtle voice training begins here. It is also the place where children learn whether or not it is "safe" to make music in this classroom community. As the students learn to appreciate and affirm each other, they also learn they can take risks and freely participate in the music-making

Welcome Song

Pattye Casarow



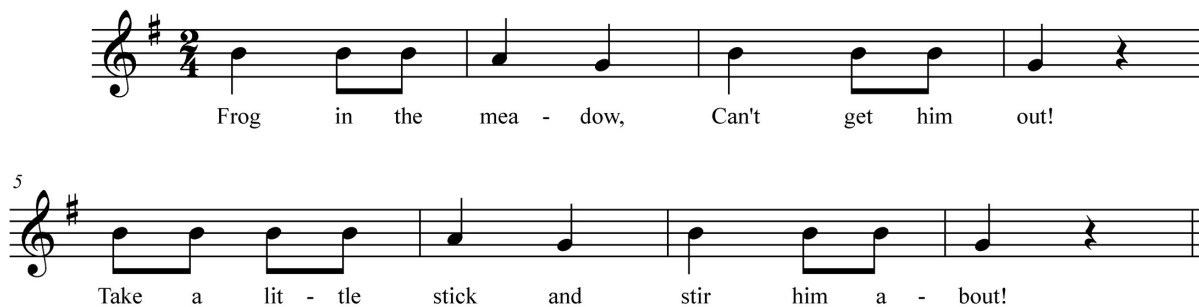
Continue calling roll on pitch; each child should individually echo teacher's pitches singing, "I'm here" or "I'm ready." Assess pitch matching with + (on target) or - ("half a plus" - not quite matching).

The greeting is an opportunity to sing pitches that are being prepared or practiced in the lesson. The rhyme brings attention to rhythm using just the speaking voice. Students can clap, pat, or move in other creative ways as they recite a fun metric verse. Here's Umpie the Frog [in 6/8 meter]. I scrape a wooden frog rasp when I use this poem.

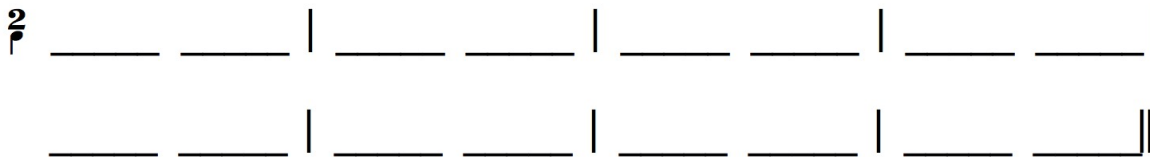
Umpie the frog sat on a log,
Looking for something to eat.
A nice juicy fly captured his eye,
To Umpie it seemed quite a treat. Galumph!

The **Primary Focus** is the “meat” of the lesson. For the next 10 to 15 minutes, a specific concept is introduced or practiced. As the focal point, this is the segment that requires the most intense concentration from the students. Research has shown that once students are warmed-up mentally, the next 15 minutes or so is the optimal time for thinking. Activities during this time could include decoding rhythms or pitches from familiar tunes, singing with hand signs, discovering a new musical element, or taking melodic or rhythmic dictation. If this is a **Presenta-**
tion lesson (the second P of the three), it is important to use a known song to introduce the concept.

Frog in the Meadow



1. Review “Frog in the Meadow.” Have the children pat the steady beat on their legs. *“What animal are we singing about?”* Bring out puppet Freddy Frog.
2. While one student taps **steady beat** on the hand drum, ask the class to clap the **rhythm of the words**.
3. Chart out the rhythm of the song on the smart board by placing ♩ and ♪ on the board as the children identify the rhythms. They must identify one clap per steady beat or two claps per steady beat. At the end of each phrase the children will realize that there is a beat but no word. Children will identify that beat as ♩ (ta rest).



4. Sing the song again while a student points to the rhythm on the board.
5. Practice drawing ♩ in the air, on the white board, or on paper.

Students have probably been sitting and thinking hard during the Primary Focus. In the interest of child-centered, developmentally appropriate pedagogy, the children need to get up and move. The Change of Pace provides 15 minutes of active learning. Movement activities, singing games, or play parities furnish a less intense and fun interlude where familiar material can be reviewed and enjoyed. Often the students don't realize they are practicing concepts. They just know they are having fun.

Change of Pace

Play the Frog in the Meadow game.

Students form a circle with one chosen to be the "frog" crouched in the center, holding Freddy the Frog puppet. The players sing and circle around the frog stepping to the beat. Players in the circle stop, put their hands over their eyes, and step to the beat while singing the song once through "inside their heads" (no sound; AUDIATION). While the circle is stepping to the beat and has their eyes closed, the frog runs away and hides (child hides Freddy Frog). As silent singing ends children take turns guessing where the frog is hiding in the room. Child with correct answer gets to be in the middle next and hide Freddy.

A second, shorter period of concentration takes place in the **Secondary Focus**, usually about 10 minutes. This portion of the lesson is flexible. It could involve learning a new song, flashcards, a song tale, reading a book, playing instruments, improvisation or composition, listening, curriculum books, sight-reading, or a myriad of other possibilities. This section can serve as a time for preparation for future lessons or practice of knowledge or skills. Students also have an opportunity to calm down and re-focus after their lively Change of Pace.

Secondary Focus

Read *The Very Quiet Cricket*. Children join in on repeated phrase. Vocal sounds are explored with the different creatures.

The Closing. Finally, the lesson is concluded by a three- to five-minute closure. This low-key time puts a wrap on the day's lesson and should leave the children feeling satisfied with what they've accomplished in music today. A favorite song could be sung; a much-loved simple game could be played; a summary or review could take place, just to name a few possibilities.

Is this process a lot of work? Without a doubt. However, lesson planning like this allows your creative spirit to soar, provides intentional scaffolding of musical concepts, and gives clear direction to your daily pedagogy. Is it too much to write a curriculum for every grade level in one year? YES! I have a teacher friend who concentrated on one grade level per year. After a few years, he had a tailor-made curriculum that perfectly suited his teaching goals, his strengths as a teacher, as well as the needs of his students. Who benefits? Everyone! After several years of being in your music program, your students will be well on their way to independent and comprehensive musicianship. They will be evidence of your expert planning and teaching. Moreover, you will teach with confidence because you have worked your plan and impacted your students' musicality and a lifetime love for the art.

Part 5: The Wrap Up

I wish you all could see a master Kodály-inspired teacher in action in a real classroom. It is a beautiful thing to behold. The joyful learning, the bright eyes and smiles of the students, the delightful atmosphere – it's exhilarating! While an in-person observation is better, you can see much of this in Nick Holland-Garcia's video Kindergarten-Fast and Slow, Lesson 4 on YouTube. Look it up! If you search, you can find other fine examples as well.

When planning lessons for grades four through eight, the same structure outlined in Part 4 can be used. Finding age-appropriate songs and activities is key. As the learners mature, their attention span lengthens and writing skills are more advanced. The pace of sequence can be faster. You might want to substitute a rhythmic or pitch activity in place of the greeting and rhyme. Keep everything developmentally relevant. Older students

enjoy being challenged and value the ability to read music on their own.

I have used the Kodály approach to teach sight singing to middle, high school, college, and church choirs. Yes, these lessons look quite different from elementary general music but consistent, brief, engaging, fast-paced, and sequential instruction CAN make a difference in the musicianship of your choristers. Robert Cutietta said, "Sight singing is possibly one of the most frequently neglected aspects of music education, yet just the opposite should be true. Sight singing provides each choral student with a rewarding skill usable both now and in the future." Cutietta investigated the value of short, daily drills in sight singing to middle school choristers. He contended that method and content are essential factors in sight singing pedagogy. Cutietta appraised five different variables: melodic recognition; melodic, rhythmic, and composite sight singing; and confidence in singing ability. Subjects were members of two middle school choruses, one receiving daily two-minute sight singing instruction and the other none. The results of the pretests and posttests indicated that the experimental group showed significant improvement in all five areas, while the control group showed improvement only in rhythmic sight singing.

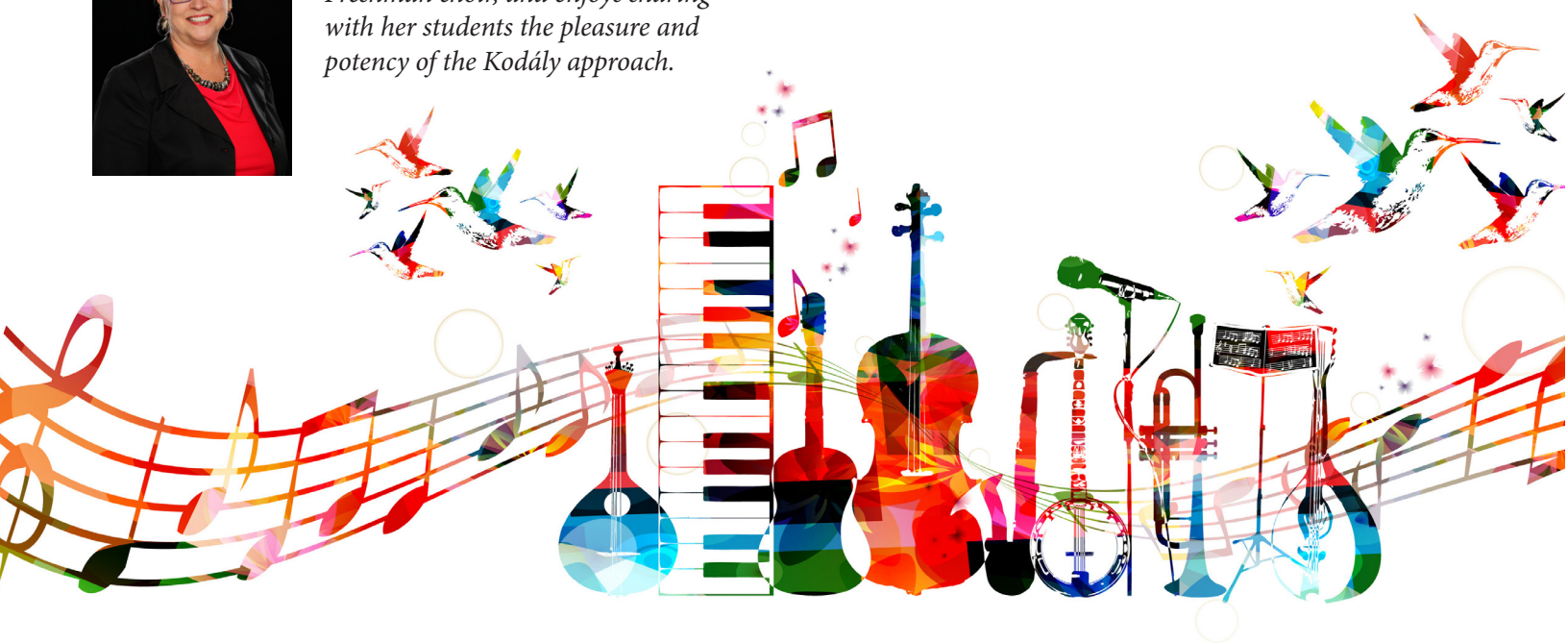
Did you get that small, but significant detail? Even when the daily lessons lasted only **two minutes**, the choral students significantly improved their sight-reading ability. Have you ever heard, "I don't have time to teach sight singing; we need to work on our concert rep!" Can we not all find at least two minutes in each rehearsal for sight singing instruction for the long-term benefit of our singers?

What music to use? Folk songs, a hymnbook, or your performance music make excellent teaching materials. If your choir can only sight sing four measures of a piece of choral music they are working on, then have them sight sing those measures. As instruction continues, they will be able to read more and require less rote help. Furthermore, go a cappella as much as possible to wean the choir off a dependence on the piano. A well-planned and scaffolded approach to sight singing will improve any choir. Investing in the future of singers reaps dividends for everyone involved.

If this series of articles on the Kodály approach has intrigued you, I highly recommend that you find a university where levels training is offered and enroll in the two- to three-week summer program. It truly can transform your teaching. From philosophy (Part 1), to materials (Part 2), to the 3 P's (Part 3), to specifics of the daily lesson plan (Part 4), the essence of the Kodály approach is a valuable framework that facilitates intentionally planning, sequencing, and scaffolding of instruction while students savor the joy of music as they learn.



Pattye Casarow, DMA, heads the Department of Music Education at Bob Jones University, directs the 100-voice Freshman choir, and enjoys sharing with her students the pleasure and potency of the Kodály approach.





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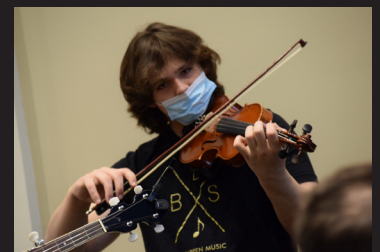
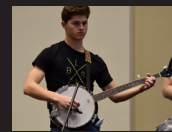
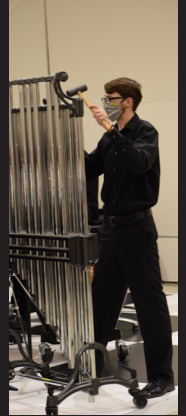
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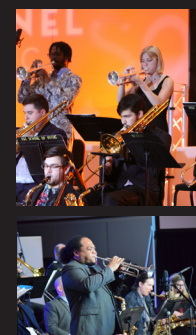
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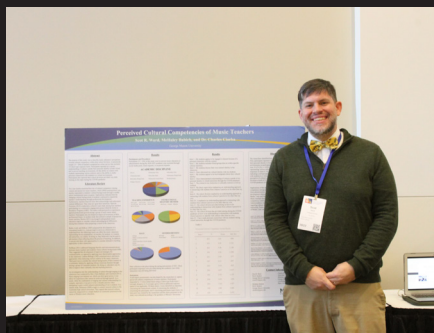
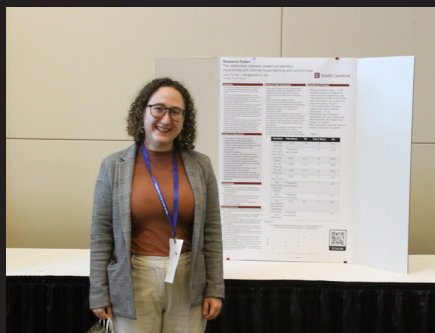
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Job Application Tips

by Matthew McCutchen, Ph.D.

University of South Florida

Throughout my years at the University of South Florida I have been fortunate to have served on several search committees. While some find this service to be time consuming and tedious, I always enjoy being involved. It is critical that academic institutions hire outstanding people to teach and guide its students; I consider it a privilege to be a part of that process.

Over the hundreds of resumes, cover letters, curriculum vitae, and supporting materials that I have read, several common themes have emerged that either help or harm a candidate's chances for serious consideration. Much of what I am going to discuss will likely be a review of things you have been taught or have known for quite some time. However, it does us all good to be reminded periodically. Please note that while some of these are specific to higher education, I believe most are relevant to any level of employment you seek.

Formatting is crucial.

Application materials need to be organized, complete, and professional. It is important to note that a great-looking resume won't necessarily get you a job, but one that is poorly put together will cause you to be knocked out of the running almost immediately. Here are some formatting hints.

- Academic resumes should begin with your academic history first. List the schools you have attended from most recent at the top to least recent at the bottom. This is also true for any jobs you are listing.
- Unless you had a truly exceptional GPA, there's no reason to list it. You may have worked extraordinarily hard for that 3.4, but if the next person has a 3.6 you've just put yourself at a disadvantage.
- Misspellings and incorrect grammar send the signal that you lack attention to detail and will likely disqualify you from being considered for the position.
- All dates should be listed chronologically from most recent to least and should be easy to find. My personal preference them to be right-justified, but if you have a different method of keeping them organized, that is fine. The important thing is to avoid making committee members jump through hoops to figure out your history. Along those lines, very rarely do you need to include months. Instead of July 2020- August 2021, 2020-21 will suffice in most cases.

Spend a lot of time thinking about your references.

One can generally assume that everybody on your reference list is going to say nice things about you. Therefore, I am often struck more by who is NOT on the list than who is. If I see a person applying for a Band job at USF and they don't list their most recent Band Director, that sends up a red flag. I recognize the fact that sometimes personalities clash and relationships that should have been positive are not. I also concur that you are the person who gets to choose your references, not me. However, if the person who is supposed to have been a guiding force in your academic progression is not listed, that does give me pause.

Everybody on your list should be willing and able to talk directly about your ability to do the job to which you are applying. While your manager at Publix will undoubtedly talk in great detail about your personality, work ethic, friendliness, and customer service, committee members need to talk to someone who can tell them how you function in front of a classroom. Several years ago, I was on a search committee and was assigned to call a reference of a highly viable candidate. It turned out that this person had been the candidate's boss in a completely unrelated field, and while he thought they were "one of the friendliest people with whom I've ever worked", this discussion was ultimately unhelpful for our purposes.

Finally, and this should be a given: make sure that everyone on your reference list is still alive. Twice now I have seen names of people whom I knew to be deceased show up on reference lists. My thought was not “Oh, this person would have said wonderful things about the candidate”, but instead, “this candidate didn’t even take the time to look at their completed materials before submitting them.”

Read the posting thoroughly.

I get it, there are lots of people looking for jobs and some of them will throw their hat into the ring of anything that looks even remotely interesting. This methodology is rarely successful. Rule #1, if you don’t meet the minimum requirements, don’t waste your time. If the job has a large marching component and you have no marching experience I am not going to be so impressed by your saxophone playing that I’ll be willing to teach you how to glide step.

Your cover letter should address all of the points of the posting. If there is one which is not a strength of yours, mention it anyway. “I am not an experienced guard instructor, but I have several contacts who are willing to help me learn...” is preferable to ignoring the component that explicitly describes teaching guard as an expectation of the job.

Your cover letter should be a direct window into your personality.

I heard Clifford Madsen (FSU) on many occasions say “Once they have invited you for an interview, they have already decided that you are competent. The primary goal of the interview is to determine if they like you.” This is especially true when you are being interviewed by a non-music person which is often the case in K-12 situations. Since you have a music education degree they assume you know what you’re doing and they often don’t have the knowledge to ask content questions. The more prestigious the program the more likely it will be to have music content specialists participate in the interview process. Either way, your cover letter is a way to get a jump start on making the committee like you.

As mentioned above, the cover letter should be tailored to the job to which you are applying. This does not mean that you have to start from scratch every time, but at least one paragraph should have information that is geared for that specific position.

Do your homework, find out something about the history of the program, the community, and even about the people on the committee. We had an interview once in which the candidate spoke at length about how much they resonated with the mission of our university. I remember being tremendously impressed – particularly because they knew more about our mission than I did.

Your enthusiasm for the profession, job, and students should be blatantly obvious throughout the letter. It needs to be clear that you want “this” job, not “a” job. Whatever you do, do not imply that you are doing the school a favor by applying for their position – even if that happens to be the case.

Find something positive that makes you stand out from the crowd.

The more competitive the job, the more important it is to stand out. Anytime you apply for a position you should assume that there will be lots of candidates, they will all be qualified, and some will have better resumes and more experience than you. Therefore, you need something in your application to make you stand out from the crowd.

If the committee requests a sample of your drill design – make it special. I’ve looked at a lot of drill through our various searches, and most of it looked like it was done by the same person. This is a great place to make yourself stand out – not by the complexity of the drill, but by the creativity. If the posting asks for drill and you don’t have it, that’s fine. Write some. We’ve had several people send Pyware renderings of drill that they wrote specifically for us for their application.

If they ask for a conducting video, this is a place you can really shine. You don’t have to conduct Stravinsky’s *Les Noces* by memory, (which is impressive), but please don’t look boring and stare at the score the whole time. Far too often people decide to apply for a job and then scramble to get their materials together at the last minute. To avoid that, video every concert you do and you’ll have plenty of material to choose from. Along those lines, the days of sending in one-camera videos from the back of the ensemble (or worse, from the audience) are

rapidly coming to an end. It is just too easy now to have multiple camera angles and edited videos, and if you don't, it looks like you are not keeping up with current trends. By the way, it is absolutely 100% possible to put together a great recording conducting level II and III music!

Many places, specifically higher ed jobs, will ask for rehearsal videos. Again, don't wait until the last minute. Record yourself twice a week. Not only will you have plenty of footage to choose from, it will keep you real-life (and sometimes brutal) feedback of what is actually happening in your class.

Rather than sending in lists of organizations that you have joined, I am much more impressed by leadership positions you have held. This is a personal bias based on the fact that I believe I learned more about how to teach by being President of Phi Mu Alpha than I did from any class I ever took.

Another personal bias is that I am always impressed by first-year teachers who include a list of programs with whom they have volunteered over the years. I don't mean to open the discussion of volunteering vs. being paid, but when I see someone who has spent hours donating their services and expertise to local middle and high school programs, I see someone who is willing to do whatever it takes to learn as much about the job as possible before ever stepping foot into their own classroom. This shows passion for your craft and your ability to be a team player, both important traits in education.

Just a few more things to keep in mind:

- Whatever you do, do not over exaggerate the significance of anything in your resume. Stretching your experiences does not impress anyone. I was "Bagger of the Week" at Food Lion at one point in high school. That did not appear on my resume as "Recognized by a Fortune 500 Corporation for Excellence in Engineering Proclivity". Nothing makes me put away a resume faster than when somebody is clearly stretching the truth.
- Don't use a five-dollar word when a fifty-cent word will do. This goes for the written and spoken portions of the interview process.
- Don't talk too much during the interview – make sure to listen. Be certain listen carefully to the questions as they often provide a glimpse into the type of person they are looking for. For example, if they ask a question about your attendance policy there was probably an issue in the past.
- In the interview, it is effective to answer questions with a personal story/example rather than a generic "idealistic" answer. Rather than saying "I believe recruiting for my middle school band program is important," talk about the time you went and did an instrument petting zoo for 5th grade classes at an elementary school, and the students' reactions when you played all of the instruments for them.
- If the interviewer asks if you have questions, have some ready to go.
- Be careful not to be too specific when answering a question about your philosophy on teaching. A general philosophy has a greater chance of aligning with the school philosophy than a specific one.

On a final note, getting "a job" is easy. Getting "the job" you want is considerably more difficult. Many great educators started their careers in situations that were less-than-ideal. Wherever you start, be grateful for the employment and do the best job you possibly can. Instead of focusing on the problems in that job, take steps to create growth for your students and yourself, and always search for ways to improve. One day the right opportunity will present itself, and if you've worked hard and paid your dues, you'll be ready.



Matthew McCutchen is the Director of Bands at the University of South Florida where he conducts the Wind Ensemble and teaches courses in Conducting, Wind Band Literature, and Music Education. He is also the Artistic Director of the Florida Wind Band, and the Founder and Conductor of the Bay Area Youth (BAY) Winds.



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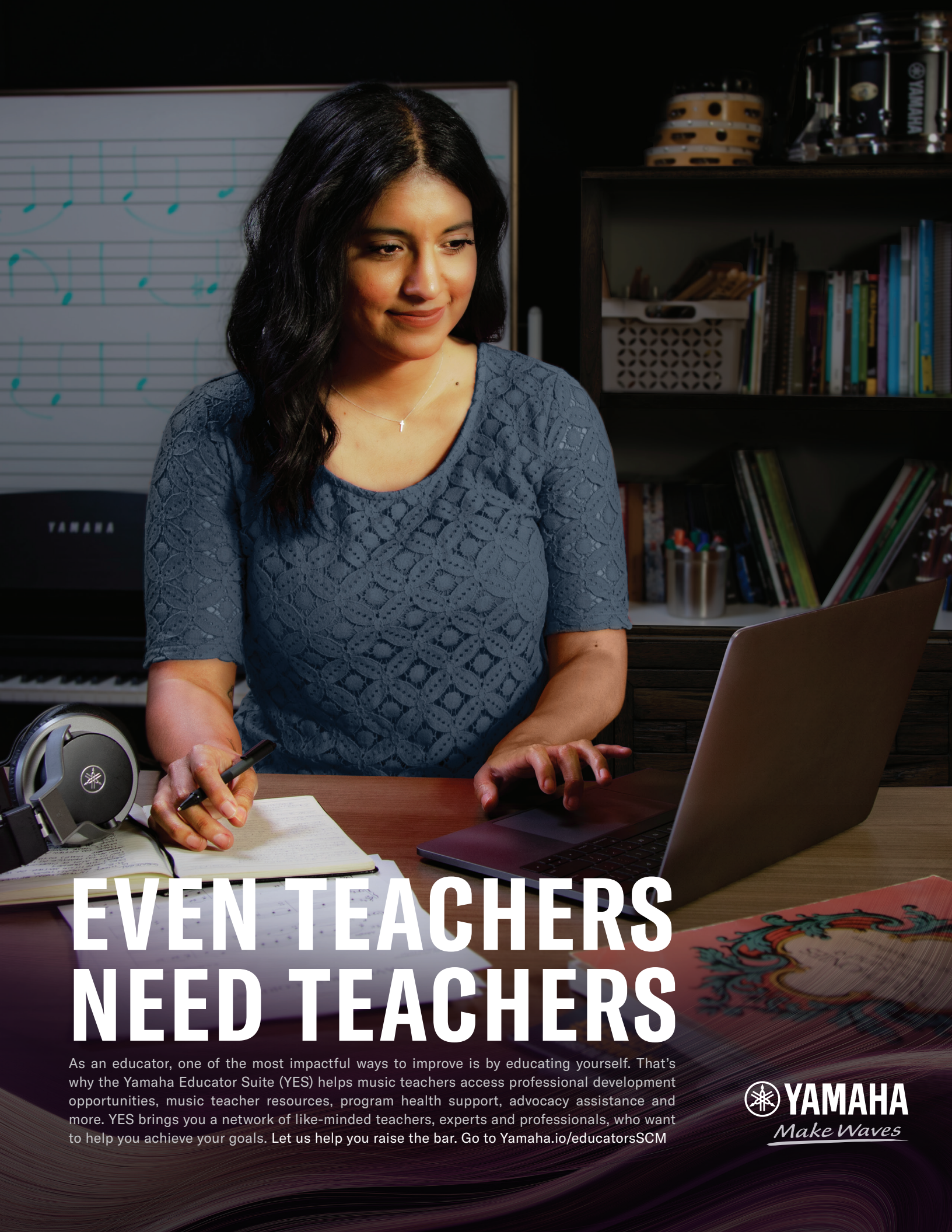


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