

THE VAULT

MSOE Weekly Newsletter-Dr. Erik Johnson, Director Heather Ewer- Editor

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No Time? Make Time!

Music education students are busy. This is a simple fact that all of us are well-acquainted with. Unfortunately, a lot of us tend to use this as an excuse for not accomplishing as much as we might want to. For example, I was frustrated at the amount of that I was practicing. I knew that it was not enough, but during the first semester I chalked it up to simply “not being able to find the time.” After winter break, I realized that I needed to kick my practicing up a notch, so I sat down and wrote out my weekly schedule, half hour by half hour, and I found the time that I could be using to practice. This meant that I had less leisure time, but that is what needed to happen in order for me to begin the journey towards being the violinist that I want to be. Embracing this rigorous new schedule was challenging at first, because I had to consciously break myself away from the schedule to which I had become accustomed. But, now that I have made these changes, I am a happier person. I am better at practicing. I am making intentional choices that allow me to become the musician that I want to become. It took a lot of hard work. I had to give up on the concept of “finding time.” I had to **make time** for the things that I valued the most and eliminate unproductive down time. My call to action is this: Stop waiting for your schedule to magically allow you the time to pursue all of your passions. Instead, eliminate the time that is not being used to better yourself and put it to use. Be aware of how you spend your time, and be okay with working harder than you are now.

-Corban Green, Violin Teaching Artist



Social Justice-Play it Forward!

Being new to MSOE has been quite the experience! I have learned so much that it is hard to put it all into words. Incorporating the Social Justice theme into the rehearsals can be a bit challenging, especially with middle school saxophones. However, it is quite inspiring to see all these wonderful kids “Playing It Forward” at home, in their schools, and here at MSOE. Throughout the MSOE season, I have heard a wide range of stories about how students have been “Playing It Forward.” One of them that really resonated with me was how a seventh grader stopped her friend from being bullied at school. It amazes me how someone, especially at a younger age, would step up and stop something as big as bullying. We may be inspiring the students, but little do they know, they are also inspiring us! Working with these kids has been an eye-opening experience. I am so ready to continue to work with kids and to grow as a teacher! - Emily Krogmeier, Saxophone Teaching Artist



Stand-Up Teaching: The Art of Laughing and Learning



What is something that is easy to forget that you should never leave home without? Well...your wallet, your keys, and your phone may come to your mind first and foremost, but never forget that if you are teaching, you also need.....a sense of humor! Having a sense of humor in the classroom can be the difference between your students being excited to come to your class or dreading it. How do we develop the right humor for a classroom? Well, to quote Shakespeare, “ay, there’s the rub”. We as teachers must form our humor to our audience which is in this case our students. Not only must we aim our jokes to reach our audience, but they must fulfill a purpose. The goal is to get students to learn the material in new ways. For example, let us say you’re teaching some elementary students the names of the instruments, and you are trying to think of a good introduction to the tuba. The following joke would not be a good introduction to that lesson, because it does not apply: My dog used to chase people on a bike a lot. It got so bad I finally had to take his bike away. It may be funny, but it is irrelevant, and a good way to get students off topic. A better way to start that lesson would be the classic: How do you fix a broken tuba? With a tuba-glue! Not only is it funny, but it can act as a springboard into your lesson and get students on track right away.

In addition, laughter is great for people! Laughter being the best medicine may be a slight exaggeration, but laughter does have significant medical benefits. For example, laughter leaves your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after the fact. It decreases stress hormones, increases immune cells and antibodies, and people who laugh often even live longer than those who don’t. So, not only can laughter help you physically and help your students be more engaged, but it is just plain fun. To end, here are some jokes to help you de-stress as we move towards the end of MSOE!

As I suspected, somebody has been adding soil to my garden. The plot thickens.

My friend said to me: “What rhymes with orange” and I replied “No, it doesn’t.”

Did you hear that Mr. Solfege had a dog? His name was Fi-Do.

You’ve heard about Murphy’s law right? It says anything that can go wrong will go wrong. But have you heard of Cole’s Law? It is thinly sliced cabbage.

The euphonium.

–Connor Marsh, Euphonium Teaching Artist

Have an Open Mind!

Hello Everyone!

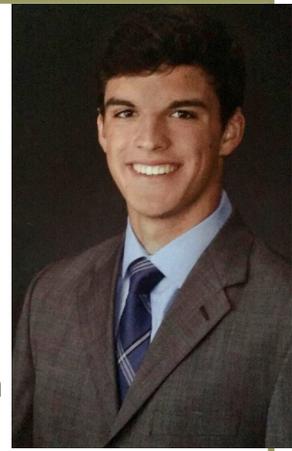
This week, I decided I wanted to share something that is not necessarily just related to music but is related more to being a great human being in general. In my personal opinion, I think that the most valuable quality that anyone can have is open-mindedness! It can be very easy to get tunnel vision and see the world only from our own personal pair of glasses. But what if we changed out our glasses to a fancy pair of X-Ray goggles?

Think of it this way: through just your glasses you can only see what is going on in your head, but if we swap those out with a set of X-Ray goggles (or mind reading goggles, I suppose) then your mind is now open to multiple perspectives and viewpoints that may not have been in your realm of possibility when wearing the tunnel glasses. Whenever an argument or conflict arises, it always has the potential to turn sour if both parties haven’t invested in a good set of X-Ray goggles. If one individual has X-Ray goggles on then that makes the situation a little better, but still the more stubborn individual will “win” an argument although it may not have resulted in an outcome that was best for everyone. If both parties have their goggles on’ then it allows them to walk in their partners’ shoes and see things from the opposite perspective and understand where they may be coming from. If everyone would try to understand and sympathize with each other then compromise can happen!

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Everyone is different and everyone has so much going on in their life, so it is incredibly important to treat people like people. The complex matrix that is running around in your mind exists in the person next to you in an equally complex way. The fact that the jumbled up mess of information that runs through your head is also simultaneously running through the minds of 7.6 billion other people on earth never ceases to amaze me. Each person's consciousness is jumbled up in their own complex way. As a human being, it is so essential to recognize this and to be open minded to what others are going through, what their context is, and where they are coming from.

Be humble, be caring, be open minded, be human. That is all. –Matt Shiley, Percussion Teaching Artist



The Dichotomous Line

As aspiring teachers, we are taught of an infamous line we must tread but never cross. This line divides the role of the teacher into what we should be and what we should not be. We are to be friendly but not a friend, counseling but not a counselor, parental but not a parent. We then take this line and integrate it into how we view our role as a teacher and how we want to connect with our students. Some of us wish for strictly professional relationships with our students while others want to be liked and to develop deep bonds with our students beyond the roles of student/teacher. Both are valid perspectives, but I wish to probe further and deeply explore this line and our roles as teachers. Before we begin, let us first make the distinction that in no way am I advocating for teachers to cross legal boundaries with students – this is a line that should stay.

When we talk about the line, it can be confusing when in addition to what we should not cross, we are also told from professionals in the field or other sources that we simply need to be whatever the students need us to be. So, which is it – is there a hard, fast line or do we need to mold to the needs of our students?

One of the best things I learned from MU286 was the Latin root “educere” – to draw out. We are taught that this is a way of looking at teaching material not as something we pour into our students, but something that we take from them and deepen and strengthen from within. Through this lens, every student has the potential to learn of and love music to some degree. Notice that “educere,” to draw out, does not specify what we are drawing out. As music educators our immediate answer is that we should draw out our students’ musical aptitude – but are we called to do more?

In eras before us, the teacher or educator was not nearly as specialized as we are today. Because of this, in the Old World, to educate truly meant to educate and draw out the potential of a whole, well-rounded citizen. Now of course this was usually preferential to wealth and status, but even in poorer populations the educator was meant to help a person develop into themselves fully – not simply academically. When we look at modern education, we are so specialized and divergent between our subjects. I will add on Dr. Johnson’s comments of Malala Yousafzai’s philosophy, that the answer to war, poverty, and inequality is not simply an education but in a *holistic education* – we must develop the person. So therefore, looking at our education system today and all of the specializations we have, we must ask: Where is the education on morality? On stress management? On human decency? Continued on page 4....

Trivia Week #10:

1. **What is the best instrument and WHY? (Your choice, but you must justify with more than just “because it is.”)**
2. **“The last....melon!” What movie is this from?**
3. **Name Heather’s favorite color.**

Dichotomous Line Cont....

(These are all very broad categories). We seem to have forgotten them amidst our fascination with STEM or our fixation on state finals in marching band. Both of those are very good things, but they only succeed in educating a portion of the student.



Now you may look at me and say, “Andrew...this isn’t our job to teach these things. It should be up to the parents, the therapists, life coaches, counselors, ministers, etc.” I would remind you of two things: 1) Acting under this assumption is dangerous because, even if it is only supported by our experiences going through the education system, we leave the responsibility of this to external sources which we know are rarely utilized to their fullest extent; and 2) We have weekly professionals in the field coming in and telling us that most often the best thing we can do is “be real and be human.” So why should it be our responsibility? Because if we don’t, who will? There is no guarantee of holism in our students’ education unless we take it upon ourselves to integrate it. This task is daunting. How can we effectively teach music and still develop our students’ humaneness? Well what if we utilized our specialization to our advantage? We don’t have to sacrifice music to help educate our students in this way; we can use it as a lens through which to show our students a path to this goal. What this does mean, however, is expanding our knowledge base into areas of music we might have never considered. There is a relatively new branch of music education philosophy known as a Therapeutic Music Education (an article link is posted below) which is about integrating psycho-therapeutic techniques into the music classroom to aid in students’ emotional and mental growth. There are wonderful clinics at CMEA about integrating the non-religious spirituality of music into the classroom or even employing mindfulness techniques in the music class (the specific clinic I observed had teachers who employed mindful meditation in **elementary** class and it actually worked!). All of these things develop the individual in ways that are not reached by classical academia and all of them help the student interact better in the world and become more connected to the humanity around them. And best of all, we can use music to achieve this!

I advocate that the line regarding the role of the teacher should be more flexible. We must embrace our humanity, the emotions, the wisdom, and the personal experiences that come from who we are. We are all wise and offer many nuggets of truth simply because of the hardships we have endured in our lifetime so far. Do not shy away from who you really are – if you expect your students to be real with you, you must be real with them. Just because you are young, does not mean you do not have wisdom to offer – you do. During this final week of MSOE, if you have yet to lower your guard and show your students who you truly are (beyond the teacher persona), then do it. Be who your students need you to be, extending into the realm of music beyond academia. If we all helped our students grow as people, I can only imagine where our world would be in the years to come...and it’s a very happy place. –Andrew Dutch, Saxophone Teaching Artist

Mitchell, Elizabeth. “Therapeutic Music Education: An Emerging Model Linking Philosophies and Experiences of Music Education With Music Therapy.” *Canadian Journal of Music Therapy*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2016, pp. 19–41.,

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