

The Vault

MSOE Weekly Newsletter

Week 3

February 13, 2019

Hey You, in the Back!

Growing up in the back of the ensemble shows you exactly how many connections are missed when the teacher forgets to look beyond the clarinets, or assumes a given student is doing what they're supposed to and passes over them in favor of more pressing comments about the woodwinds' intonation. By neglecting the metaphorical "back row" - the students who are quietly doing their jobs, have less interesting parts, or are physically distant - a disservice is done to those students' musical learning and sense of autonomy within the ensemble. There is also great opportunity for increased student engagement - if the students in your sectional know you may call on any of them, at any time, regardless of ability or comfort level, they will feel more involved in the group and more willing to contribute. This replaces the sectional where the teacher always calls on the students who need the most help, while the advanced students look on in listless boredom. Likewise, if the conductor regularly calls on percussionists for answers or talks to the low instruments about their tone quality, it creates a whole new atmosphere in the ensemble - one where everyone is necessary and valued. This ensemble can replace the one where the first few rows are highly engaged, while tubists, percussionists, and other "back-row"-dwellers play hangman on their sheet music, oblivious to the musical goings-on of their oft-acknowledged peers. As both section coaches and conductors, it is our job to make sure all students are equally engaged - no matter the extra effort it may take on your part.

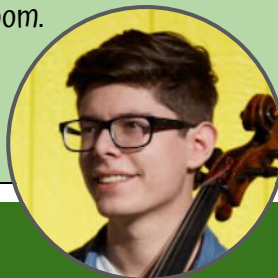
-Kelci Hartz, Undergraduate Program Coordinator



Teaching Tips!

Professionalism and teaching tactics should vary from lesson to lesson. I myself have known to fall into the chasms of referring to my students as "you guys" rather than a neutral term such as "everyone," or repeating the word "awesomesauce" as feedback after every successful playthrough of an excerpt. Vary your language next week--the more we do this, the closer we get to finding what is most comfortable for our classroom.

-Herman Chavez, Cello Teaching Artist



COMING UP

- **Saturday, February 16:** CSU Audition Day: help out the GTAs by volunteering :)
- **Friday, February 22:** Wind Symphony Concert, 7:30pm in Griffin Concert Hall
- **Wednesday, March 6:** Wind Symphony concert at American Bandmasters' Association Conference in Loveland!

REMINDER!

Ask your peers and mentors for help and feedback! We are all learners in the MSOE environment, and recognizing when you need help or someone to review an idea is a key sign of maturity. Ultimately, it will help both you and your students. -Herman

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SHOUT OUT!

I want to give a shout out to Anna Varosy for her diligence and enthusiasm as she took over the Social Justice Coordinator role on such short notice. I have full faith in her ability to make "On a Personal Note..." something special, and can't wait to see where her leadership takes us!

-Kelci Hartz

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"We're not laughing at you. She farted." (as two of my students were giggling loudly and uncontrollably during our sectional last week)

-Contributed by Kelci Hartz

Quote from a student when asked what happens during a fermata: "You hold us for forever and ever and ever and ever, and then you--(gestured something between flipping off a light switch and cutting off a note)--turn us off!"

-Contributed by Liz Richardson

Weekly Inspiration-

"Every day may not be good, but there's good in every day."

Teachers are people, too--something we often forget as we scramble to assemble lesson plans, practice repertoire, complete assignments, and reflect on our teaching every day. In the moments we are overwhelmed or perhaps even nearly defeated, it is crucial to remember that good can come in even the smallest of forms, from someone holding open a door for you to a little extra sunlight sifting in through a window. Try to hold on to the simple happiness in parts of our lives, so when we come out of our bad moments, we can still feel triumphant.

-Herman Chavez, Cello Teaching Artist

Honesty is the Best Policy #MODELIT

Be honest and humble! Were you nervous or a little anxious for the first night of MSOE, or your first time teaching? Your students were incredibly nervous for their first night, and their first sectional with you, and it helps them to know that they are not alone! Sharing connections with our students and letting them know that whatever they are feeling is acceptable is incredibly important. One of my students was incredibly upset and overwhelmed the first night and when I asked her what was wrong, she said she had never played in an band this big before and it was intimidating. I answered by telling her that I had never stood in front of an ensemble that big before, and that it is okay to feel a little intimidated! I also made

"Every Kid Needs a Champion" TedTalk by Rita Pierson is one of my favorite videos! I probably watch this two or three times a month.

-Liz Richardson



sure to tell her that the "giant band" is actually going to become a close-knit and connected community of musicians who all share the same goals and love of music.

-Liz Richardson,
Section Coach
Mentoring
Coordinator



TEACHING TIPS!

Ask your peers and mentors for help and feedback! We are all learners in the MSOE environment, and recognizing when you need help or someone to review an idea is a key sign of maturity. Ultimately, it will help both you and your students.

-Herman Chavez

Dr. Amy Martinson

Dr. Martinson is currently the Music Instructional Curriculum Specialist for Denver Public Schools. She also serves as an observer for student teachers in the music education program at Metropolitan State University. She received her Ph.D. in Music Education from University of Colorado at Boulder, Master's in Music Education from Northwestern University, and Bachelor's in Music Therapy and Music Education from Wartburg College. Her passions include making oboe reeds, 80s rock music, teaching recorder, accessibility of music to all students, and culturally relevant music education.



BE OUR GUESTS!



Phoung Nguyen

Mr. Nguyen received his Bachelor of Music Education degree from Colorado State University and learned from such greats as Dr. Charles Lawson, Dr. William Rungan, and Dr. J. Steven Moore. He also received his Masters of Music in Conducting at Colorado State University, studying with Peter Sommer, Wes Kenney, and Dr. J. Steven Moore. While at CSU, Phoung was awarded the David Paul Knight Scholarship for Jazz, the Award of Highest Distinction at the CSU Research and Creativity Symposium, and was a Senior Honors Recital recipient.

Phoung currently plays saxophone and performs with the Fort Collins Wind Symphony, Twelve Cents for Marvin, Choice City Seven, the Fort Collins Jazz Friends as well as a slew of side projects. With more than 20 years of experience performing in Colorado rock/jazz/ska/reggae bands, he has performed with famous rock bands, Vietnamese pop stars, and has even starred in a few short films! Aside from teaching at Boltz Middle School (the best middle school in the world!), Mr. Nguyen also teaches private lessons and coaches students in the Youth Music Collective, a group of high school rock musicians from all over Fort Collins. Phoung currently lives in Fort Collins, Colorado, with his beautiful wife Nicole Wilshusen and two lovely daughters, Claire and Ella. He likes to hike, ride motorcycles, snowboard, play basketball, and watch cheesy action movies. Oh, and he's a huge Star Wars nerd.

"Play more, talk less" are four words we hear nearly every week, from our fellow section coaches to our guest teachers in the field. There are many ways to put this into practice, though, and it may become overwhelming when there is so much instructional material to give! It can be as simple as starting with a non-verbal warmup right at the beginning of the class. Try having students play through a scale while watching you like a hawk for note length, articulation, or dynamics--even challenge yourself to use no more than ten words for the first warm up! By starting off with a nonverbal warmup, you can set an expectation for the class that they must be attentive for the duration of the lesson, allow yourself to gauge their participation and mood for the day, and make it easier to continue with playing more and talking less as the day continues. Our students are intelligent--take advantage of that, and say only what you need to. -Herman Chavez, Cello Teaching Artist

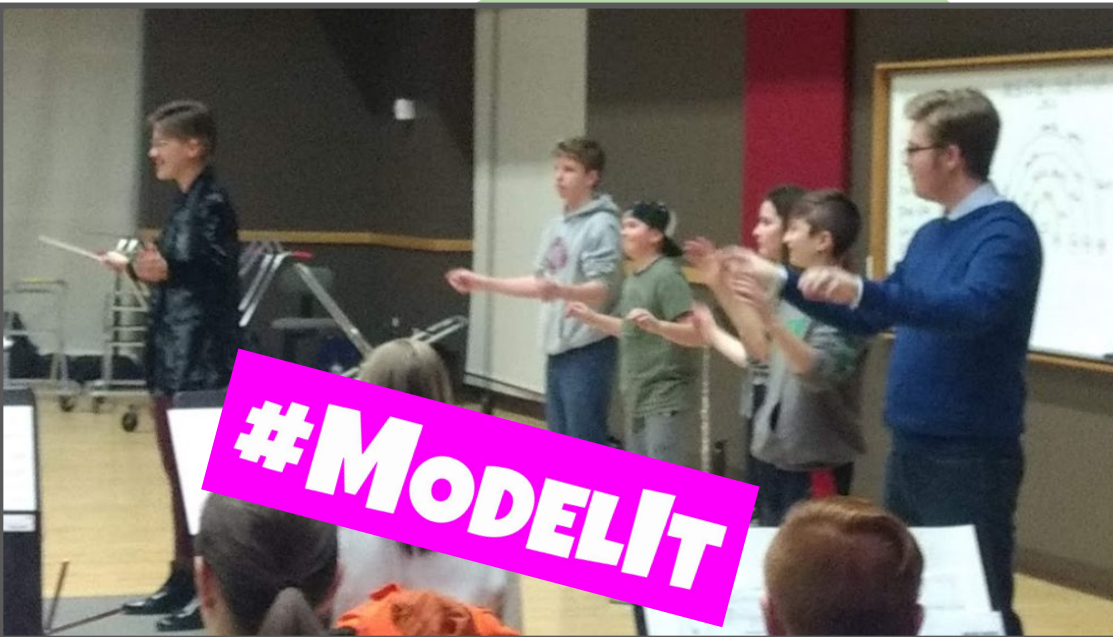
#MODELIT

ACTION SHOTS!

Right: Guest teachers Heather Ewer and Sebastian Adams in Dr. Johnson's HOT SEAT!



Below: Percussionists practice conducting the MSOE band ensemble!



On a Personal Note....

One way to easily implement our Social Justice theme is through fostering musical autonomy in your section. For example, our tuba section worked together to decide on the style we wanted in a given section of music - students discussed together what would sound the best, and we tried a few options before they chose one and wrote it in their music. Giving students agency for musical decision-making can personalize that music for them, and turns it from a prescribed exercise to one that they had a hand in creating - and therefore will take personal pride in.

-Kelci Hartz

CONTACT US

Questions? Comments? Concerns?

Submissions? Send them to:
casey.lawson@colostate.edu

Letter from the Editor

HASHTAG, MODEL IT. You may remember hearing some Sage Wisdom on the first night of MSOE about modeling (modeling EVERYTHING! Tone, musicality, respect, empathy....). Have you noticed how often teaching advice from VAULT contributors, guest teachers, or your feedback mentor have to do with modeling? Have you noticed #MODELIT throughout this issue of the VAULT? This week, think about how YOU can #modelit to improve your teaching!

-Casey Lawson, VAULT Editor

