



# THE VAULT

The official newsletter of CSU's Middle School Outreach Ensembles (MSOE) 2023



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## *Moving Up A Level: How MSOE Creates Spaces for Everyone to Excel*

Arjen Wynja, Asst. Social Justice Coordinator and Teaching Artist

My experience in MSOE began in the Spring of 2021, when it was held online over Zoom every Wednesday night instead of in the University Center for the Arts. That year, I was a high school junior participating in the Trying on Teaching program- an incredible and unique opportunity to “move up a level” and experience the nature of the CSU program through building connections with future colleagues, professors, and friends while working on my teaching. 2 years later as an undergraduate Music Education major, I see how Trying on Teaching through MSOE was not only a gateway to this field and degree, but a space to have new experiences and work to improve myself. Furthermore, I see how MSOE has created similar spaces for excelling for everyone involved.



In a way, MSOE itself has moved up a level since the online year in 2021. In terms of the Social Justice program, we have moved from the 2021 theme of “Keeping Music Alive” to “Music Lives” in 2022 to “Nurturing Community through Music” in 2023. The growth of the community among the students through this year’s Social Justice activities has been immense, and their success has far surpassed what SJ Coordinator Paul Beyer and I anticipated when we began designing the curriculum in December. This indicator alone shows the growth of the program coming out of the pandemic, and the opportunity we have to make this program be a space for so many more students to pursue excellence, and move up a level in music.

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## Moving Up A Level (continued)



Teaching Artist Conlin Buttermann explores musical expression during an Aggie Band flute sectional

MSOE is, first and foremost, an opportunity for our middle school students to learn and play music in a new environment. Our students grow together in new ensembles, with different teachers, and in different learning environments in sectionals and full ensemble. Through both Social Justice activities and more experience in playing together, the new community among the students is strengthening each night. The change from seeing my sectional room students' shyness turn into excitement to see one another and play their music, not to mention their tangible gains on the repertoire, has been clear and exciting. They've learned how to better create an ensemble with a new group of peers, and because of that, I know that they've moved up a level in MSOE.

Next, the Trying-on-Teachers. It has been a unique experience to see the ToT program from the other side, with the experience of being a ToT not so long ago. And with the stronger in-person environment this year, I know that the program has already been even a better space for them than it has for me, and have seen it firsthand. Learning is always reciprocal, and though the ToTs learn from the teaching artists, I know that my co-teacher Leah Dunphey I have learned so much from watching ToTs Jill Ivory and Mya Lynn teach in our sectional room. Hearing from the Trying on Teaching coordinators about the students' own learning through their challenges and successes gives me so much excitement for how they have been stepping up through MSOE.

And of course - the part that I see the most of - myself and my CSU Music Education colleagues have such tremendous opportunities in this program. Not only do we get to practice our teaching, lesson plan writing, and try out new techniques, but we get to watch our colleagues teach, get feedback from our colleagues, professors, and guest teachers, and participate in professional development sessions each night. We each play a part in running MSOE, and learning how to do so as we do it. I've learned how to improve my own teaching, new techniques, and writing curriculum through my involvement as a teaching artist and assistant Social Justice Coordinator. Watching my colleagues learn and grow in their own duties and positions is equally exciting. We're working together to step up into our careers. MSOE is a space for us to step into in our field, surrounded by passionate peers, mentors, faculty, and students.

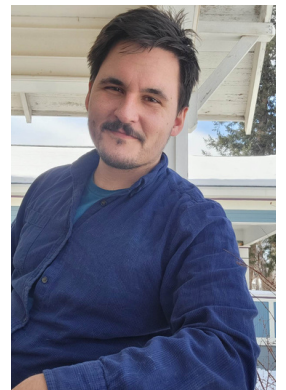
There's even more people involved in the program, more levels - CSU Music Education graduate students, guest teachers, professors, etc., and while I can't speak to their experiences in our program, I know that they are learning and stepping up as well. MSOE is so unique to have such a beautiful layer cake of levels of learning. As MSOE 2023 has taken shape, and as we move into the last trimester, I'm excited to see how everyone involved will move up a level through Music Education. It's one of the only places where it's possible to see all of this learning in one place - with all of us stepping up to shape and improve ourselves, each other, and our world.

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## The Seed Bank: Connecting Our Islands

Brian Tremper, Assistant Director and Teaching Artist

As I've moved through my first year of graduate school here at CSU, one piece of advice has echoed again and again: "Don't be an island!". I've heard the saying from the Master Teachers during MSOE, from the Music Education faculty at CSU, from mentors, friends, and colleagues. It can be easy to fall into yourself and your own world in this field- if we're at schools, we're often the only one teaching in our particular area of music, and it can be easy to forget that the outside world exists. But being an island robs us (and, by proxy, our students) of the wealth of resources and experience that our peers and colleagues have to offer. Collaboration with other educators (and not just music educators!) is a crucial part of our growth as teachers and as people.



The Seed Bank started with a conversation about The Vault (yes, this one!) I had with Dr. Erik Johnson last Fall. The initial conception of The Vault was very similar to what the Seed Bank is now- each week, the teaching artists would add a teaching technique or a pedagogical method to The Vault. Thus, the name "The Vault"- it became a wealth of information and resources that any music educator could use. Over time, The Vault evolved into the weekly newsletter that comes careening into your inbox each week, and the initial idea was phased out.

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## The Seed Bank (continued)

That original conception of The Vault intrigued me, though for admittedly selfish reasons- I am still fairly new to the world of music education, and I wanted to have a place where I could find techniques, resources, and tips to further improve my own skills. In fleshing out the idea, though, I realized that it had the potential to encourage something that is useful to all educators, regardless of age, content area, or grade level: collaboration.

The Seed Bank is geared toward fostering that collaboration among the music education students at CSU. Seven weeks in, we have everything from concrete pedagogical techniques (Lucy McCrossan's 'Monk Rehearsal', where the lesson is taught using as few words as possible) to quotes ("The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery." - Mark Van Doren, submitted by Jack Robitaille) to podcast recommendations (Music Teacher Coffee Talk, a podcast by two veteran Elementary School Teachers, submitted by Leah Dunphey) to resources for teaching ukuleles to beginners (Shaun Keddy's "Book of Beginnings", submitted by Kristen Falls) and much, much more. The Seed Bank is a growing, living collection of knowledge, and I know that I for one will look back on this year's Seed Bank time and time again as I move into my career.

I fervently believe that I can learn something from everyone I meet, and I have been proven right over and over again during my last semester and a half at CSU. The people I have the privilege to see and work with every day are incredible resources for my own development as an educator and as a person. My hope is that the Seed Bank continues to grow, and the sharing of ideas, concepts, quotes, and resources becomes the norm at CSU. We are not islands, or even an archipelago- we are one continent of educators, all with the same goal: to instill a love of music in our students.

Check out the Seed Bank at:  
<https://tinyurl.com/2p8jp37c>



Teaching Artist Sean Sullivan works with the MSOE Orchestra Bass Section during a full ensemble rehearsal



Undergraduate Program Director Jack Robitaille and Senior Associate Director Kristen Falls clap and count to direct the Ram Band students back to their seats after a social justice activity



# Meet Our Master Teachers!



**Sebastian Adams** graduated in 2018 with a Master in Music Education including a Wind Conducting emphasis from Colorado State University where he also served as Associate Program Director of the Middle School Outreach Ensembles program. His published master's thesis supports the relevance of teacher-student rapport in the secondary music classroom with seminal works in educational psychology. Mr. Adams served as Interim Professor of Music Education at CSU in 2018, and he is currently in his 9th year of teaching as instrumental music director at Timberline Pk-8, a Title I school in St. Vrain Valley School District with a thriving Mariachi program. There, he serves on the Leadership Committee where he co-designs staff trainings on the trauma-informed classroom, equitable grading practice, and school climate/culture. Mr. Adams is the Artistic Director of the Northern Colorado Concert Band where he collaborates with Chase the Music Foundation, a non-profit that connects musicians and composers to perform works for children battling critical conditions. Over a dozen original works have been premiered for children and their families through this collaboration with three more on the way in May 2023. He also serves as Program Coordinator for CSU Spur Music Lab, an organization that brings free music education to students in the inner-city Denver area. Mr. Adams loves all of his students, and he believes music education is a fundamental right for all children.



**Xareny Polanco** (she/her) is currently in her second year at Timberline PK-8 in Longmont, Colorado teaching Orchestra, Choir, and assisting in the Mariachi Program. In addition to being a public school music teacher, she also maintains a private Violin and Viola studio, is an active professional and freelance musician, and has worked with various organizations including Camp Con Brio, String Camp of the Rockies in Divide, Colorado as the Middle School Viola Coach and the Westview Summer Music Academy in Longmont, Colorado as the Violin and Viola teaching artist. Ms. Polanco received her Bachelors in Music: Music Education from Colorado State University (2021) with an emphasis in Instrumental Music. Growing up as a first generation Chicana in Northern Colorado, Ms. Polanco values the importance of representation and equity in music and strives to up-lift students who come from similar backgrounds.



**Andrea Frost** is in her 24th year of teaching life through band. She is one of the band directors at the new Timnath Middle High School. Andrea earned a Master's degree in Music Education from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and her undergraduate degree in Music Education at the University of Alabama. Andrea continually works on optimizing joy by spending time with her daughter, surrounding herself with people who call forth her best, meditating, and taking risks. Outside of music, Andrea enjoys writing poetry, hiking, watching sports, puzzles, Stoicism, solitude, and yoga. Andrea resides in Fort Collins, Colorado. Andrea serves on the CBA as the Northern representative for Northern Colorado Director. She has served as the director for Poudre School District Solo and Ensemble, coaches track, and has coached football. Under Ms. Frost's direction, her bands have earned Superior ratings at band festivals, including Nordic Festival and Colorado Bandmasters Association Festivals. Preston Symphonic Band performed at Colorado Music Educator's State Conference in 2020, 2017, and 2013 and was a clinician in 2012 and 2019. She proudly plays clarinet in the Fort Collins Wind Symphony. Ms. Frost was a clinician in 2019 and 2008 at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Conference. She was featured in the 2019 edition of SBO magazine. Andrea's article on "Composition in the Classroom" was published in The Instrumentalist 2009 October edition. She earned a trip to Calgary, Canada, for a week of SMART professional development in 2014. She was the Rotary Club Teacher of the Month in 2013. Her professional affiliations include CBA and NAFME. She has conducted several different honor bands throughout Colorado. Andrea previously taught at the elementary, middle, and high schools in the Chicago area and Alabama.



Junior Associate Director Sam Gray leads the MSOE Staff through a professional development activity



Teaching Artist Olivia Calzaretta directs the Aggie Band saxophone sectional through runthroughs

## MSOE Carnival!

We will be holding the MSOE Carnival at the University Center for the Arts this Saturday, April 1st, from 10:00am to 12:00pm!

The MSOE Carnival is an opportunity for students to explore new musical experiences in a more free-form, "lab" style setting. This year's theme is Camp MSOE- we'd love to see as many campers come out as we can!

## Letter from the Editor

Our concert on April 15th is just around the corner! We've already achieved so much in MSOE over these past seven weeks, and I'm excited to see us finish strong and put on an amazing concert.

Putting a concert together is an important experience for everyone involved in MSOE, from the students to the staff to the administration. We are so lucky that we get this real-life experience in such a safe and supportive setting!

