



# THE VAULT

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



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## *Behind the Scenes with the UPD*

Jack Robitaille, Undergraduate Program  
Director, Conductor, Teaching Artist

MSOE is an opportunity for CSU Music Education students to test their chops in teaching, grow as a community, develop relationships with students, and experience a slice of what it means to really be a teacher.

As the UPD (Undergraduate Program Director), it's my job to help make these things happen, both in my own teaching practice and for all of my colleagues. I was in charge of developing our Curriculum, helping to lead trainings, creating and executing the Recruitment Plan, developing and fulfilling the Undergraduate Administration Report (or Undergradmin Report as we call it), and I am now in charge of leading the final charge towards the 2023 MSOE Concert Showcase. Now, this might sound like a great deal of work – and it is – but I also have wonderful support systems in place to help me accomplish these goals through the Graduate Students and Senior Admin Team, as well as my fellow Undergraduate Administration Team. Together, we have helped make this year of MSOE a positive and fulfilling experience for all of our students, teachers, ToTs, and hopefully our students' audience when Concert Day comes on April 15th.

The role of the UPD as I have fulfilled it is distinct as compared to previous years of MSOE. In the last few years that I have been in school and involved in MSOE, there were multiple UPDs who collaborated to make everything a success in their respective seasons. This year, we tried something a little different. I am the only UPD, but I am supported in my duties by the Lead Conductors of each ensemble. This has allowed me to delegate and handle my various responsibilities in MSOE through the help of my wonderful colleagues. They have helped take weights off of my shoulders both during the preparation phase of MSOE and as we have entered and gone through the season itself: they assisted in printing and organizing music and folders for each and every



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Jack Robitaille conducts the Ram Band

one of our students, they have shown leadership and modeled effectively in their respective ensembles, and they are now working on writing programs for our pieces and helping me organize for the final push to the concert.

With all that being said, it hasn't exactly been a walk in the park being the UPD this semester. Everyone in MSOE has run into hardships and challenges, expected and unexpected, throughout this season. We have lost teaching artists due to physical ailments, intermittently and for the rest of the season; we have had students unable to attend at various points in the semester; we have each run into a challenge in our own teaching which requires us to reflect and change to provide for our students; and we have all struggled with maintaining school-work-life balances. But all of these challenges have helped us become stronger as a community and stronger teachers. Hardships and challenges such as these are part of the everyday life of a music teacher. Teaching has never been for the faint of heart or the weak of will. Our teaching artists, leadership teams, trying on teachers, and everyone else who has been involved in the behind the scenes of MSOE has faced challenges and overcome them this season.

For me, that is what this experience is really about. I love teaching my students, and I love that I get to see them every week; I love collaborating with my colleagues and teaching partners to make each week a success; I love seeing students smile when we do social justice activities; I love seeing trying on teachers grow in their comfort and ability to teach students throughout this season; and most of all, I love getting to see my friends and colleagues do the thing that brought us all together: teaching music for the love of music, for the love of our students, and for the love of our community.

As we prepare for the final Concert Showcase, I hope that we can all think about why we love music and MSOE. MSOE is such a unique opportunity for everyone involved, from the Senior Admin Team to the Middle School Students who make it all worth it, and it is important for each and everyone one of us to think about what we love in music and how we can make positive change in the world through it. There is so much going on today that causes fear, anger, hatred, disappointment, sadness, grief. But there is also love, happiness, positivity, community, Carnivals, Concerts, music-making, positive struggles, and, most importantly, joy.



Associate Director Kristen Falls leads the Ram Band through the "Roller Coaster" warm-up activity

## Student and Teacher: Learning to be Both

Emma Edwards, Teaching Artist

If I had to choose one takeaway from what I have learned from my involvement in MSOE, meeting the master teachers, and working with my peers is that an educator can never stop learning. I was first introduced to this idea in my Schooling in America class this past Fall when my professor explained the importance of knowing your students before teaching them. You have to learn and understand the different backgrounds that students come from, the different cultures that your students represent, and learn how to adapt what you already know to the everchanging pool of students that you will interact with. No two students that you teach will be the same, which requires a teacher to adapt the skills and knowledge they already know to teach a diverse set of students. Even in my limited experience teaching different students I have begun to see this. Those I taught in my first practicum were different from those in my second and those participating in MSOE.



## Student and Teacher (Continued)



Program Director Erik Johnson gives hands-on teaching wisdom to Trying-on-Teaching Artist Bailey Permanter during an Aggie Band saxophone sectional

I knew I wanted to reflect on my experience applying this concept from the beginning of MSOE and through professional development and wisdom shared from master teachers, I continued to learn more about what it means to be learning as an educator. Not only should we learn how to teach different backgrounds, but we should continue to learn and develop our repertoire of pedagogical strategies and this is best achieved through collaboration with peers and colleagues. Through friendly discussion in the halls, to working through lesson plans together, to watching my colleagues during rehearsals, I have already begun to add to my repertoire. In fact, one of my professional goals as I continue to progress through my education is to seek advice from my colleagues more deliberately with an intrinsic desire to do so instead of extrinsic motivators.

I know that I still have a lot to learn in any given area in teaching but I also know that I am on the right track to do so. I am so grateful for the experience I have had in MSOE so far because it has given me opportunities to learn how to teach on my own without the supervision of my professors. Every week I get the opportunity to apply what I learned to my teaching and I am learning how to combine the two ideas. In MSOE, and in any teaching scenario, it is not learning at one moment and teaching at another, but instead they go hand in hand.

I shared something to a peer this past week at MSOE in terms of something I felt proud of from that night. I had sat with my students during the sectional and watched as my Trying on Teacher taught her lesson. While I was sitting there, I was thinking to myself of things I would have said in the moment and ways to enhance the teaching and learning experience, however I didn't want to impose on my ToT's lesson. I had the realization that I have learned a great deal about being a teacher and that I wanted to be teaching at that moment, that I have learned to love what I am doing each week.



Emma Edwards leads students in making DIY instruments during the MSOE Carnival



# Meet Our Master Teachers!



**Dana Kettlewell** started her career in Winter Park where she taught middle school band, choir, and drama. After finishing her graduate degree, she taught 6-12 band in Greeley. Currently, you can find her at Lincoln Middle School (Go Lancers!!) teaching band, choir, orchestra, and drama. Her degrees are from CU and CSU; if you have it ask, it's always "Sko Buffs!" Mrs. Kettlewell has been recognized for her teaching expertise throughout her career, but her biggest accomplishments are seen in the strong communities she has built through the performing arts in her schools. When not teaching, Mrs. Kettlewell loves to ski, run, and bake. And yes, she was that music teacher you saw on House Hunters.



**Madeleine Cort** is originally from Las Cruces, NM and currently serves as the Director of Bands at Sunset Middle School in Longmont, CO. She began her music teaching career at the University of Colorado Boulder, where she earned her Bachelor of Music Education Degree. After graduating, Ms. Cort served as the Instrumental Music Teacher at Clear Creek Middle & High School (Evergreen, CO) and guided all aspects of the program. During her time at Clear Creek, Ms. Cort gained experience teaching concert band, pep band, jazz band, piano, guitar, music technology, and conducting the school musical. She later earned her Master's Degree in Music from Colorado State University. While attending CSU, Ms. Cort served as a graduate teaching assistant and assisted several undergraduate music education courses, instructed the Woodwind Techniques course, conducted the CSU Concert Band and Symphonic Band, and served as the Associate Director of the Middle School Outreach Ensemble program (MSOE) at CSU. Her current position at Sunset Middle School has given her experience working with beginner musicians and furthering her skills as a pedagogue of young musicians. Her course load at Sunset MS includes Beginning Woodwinds and Beginning Brass & Percussion classes, Intermediate Band, Advanced Band, Jazz Band, and Music Explorations. When Ms. Cort isn't teaching, she enjoys hiking, yoga, reading, spending time with her significant other, Alex, and snuggling with their two cats, Sophie & Kit.



**Danielle Johnson** is sought after as a guest clinician and adjudicator along the Front Range and Western Slope. An active performer, Johnson plays associate principal viola in the Steamboat Symphony Orchestra. For 12 years, she spent the summer months as Dean of Women and Interdisciplinary Faculty Instructor for the string chamber music program, Rocky Mountain Summer Conservatory in Steamboat Springs, CO. Since 2011, Johnson conducted five European summer orchestra tours and was one of the original architects of the Lebanese International String Orchestra Workshop held at Notre Dame University in Beirut.

Johnson taught orchestra in the Adams 12 District for 20 years. Her orchestras at Mountain Range High School won numerous awards including a first place finish at the Heritage Festival in Colorado Springs and an invitation to perform in the renowned Orchestra Hall in Chicago, IL; home to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 2013, Johnson was named Colorado's "Music Director Who Makes a Difference" by the publication School Band & Orchestra Magazine. Additionally, she was nominated as Outstanding Music Educator in the 2022 edition of Marquis' Who's Who in America. Previously, she taught for Wheaton's pre-college program, the International School of Bangkok in Thailand, Boulder Suzuki Strings, and the public schools in Omaha, Nebraska and Boulder, Colorado.

Johnson received her Bachelor of Music Education from Wheaton College Conservatory in Wheaton, Illinois, and her Masters in Violin Performance/Pedagogy from the University of Colorado at Boulder. She lives in Broomfield, Colorado with her husband, Reid and their two children, Jordan and Ryan.



Teaching Artist and Assistant Feedback Coordinator Leah Dunphey leads the final drum circle activity for the MSOE Carnival



Teaching Artist Sean Sullivan leads a rhythm counting game as part of the MSOE Carnival

## THE SEED BANK

The Seed Bank is starting to take its final shape as we move closer to the end of the season! Our teaching artists have compiled a wonderful collection of teaching tips, quotes, resources, and pedagogical techniques.

Check out what's growing by visiting [https://tinyurl.com/2p8jp37c!](https://tinyurl.com/2p8jp37c)

## Letter from the Editor

Last Saturday's MSOE Carnival was a massive success- we had sessions on Irish Music, Jazz Improvisation, Found Percussion, Composition Classes, Boomwhacker Choirs, and so much more!

I want to give a big shoutout to Mary Vogelsberg for her stellar organization and hard work in ensuring the carnival was a success. We couldn't have pulled it off without you!

