



THE VAULT

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



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Cultivating Our Gardens

Dr. Erik Johnson, Program Director

With MSOE and Trying-on-Teaching 2023 drawing to a close, I am humbled by what our community has collectively accomplished. Thank you to everyone for what you have invested this year — it has been truly remarkable! Together with the help of the amazing teaching artists, undergraduate and senior administrative teams, our goal of *Nurturing Community* has been furthered through the thousands of hours spent by a team of over forty individuals to make something truly special happen. Stepping back to reflect upon the energy, risk, nerves, and commitment that everyone brought to the performance this past Saturday, I am filled with pride to be part of such a wonderful organization that aims to elevate the lives of young people through music education.

So, what now? What do we do with all of the energies garnered, the connections built? As I shared with the MSOE and Trying-on-Teaching staff on Saturday, Voltaire's *Candide* might provide us all with some guidance. Frustrated by the current state of the world in the mid 18th century, Voltaire's satire weaves his protagonists through a seemingly endless series of tragic events. The air of optimism with which each event is met is sometimes naive yet never ending. It is in the end of the tale that we get the iconic message of "make your garden grow." In a deep way, this message is telling us that everything is local. All that matters in the world is what you do with the connections you make, with your own plot of land, with the garden that you grow. In an ever expansive global world where connections are stretched to their physical limits, we might think of the myriad ways we can nurture our own garden and cultivate community locally in brilliant and meaningful ways.



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Cultivating our garden means looking for opportunities to continue growing our connections with the new friends we have made, to continue to reach out to one another even though we may not have our Wednesday evening space. Still, Voltaire's message still can provide some guidance. Just as Leonard Bernstein picked up on in his *operetta*, when the world seems overwhelming, focus on what you can do with the garden that you have. Focus on tilling your own soil, to developing yourself to the best of your capacities in the local context. Focus on creating your community in a local sense: it may just be what makes your global connections even more enriching. Reflect upon what you have gained and given in the MSOE program, honor that work, and continue to nurture your own garden so that you continue to have gifts to bring and share.



Dr. Erik Johnson reflects on the words of Voltaire's *Candide* during the final after-party of the 2023 MSOE Season

In the past three years of MSOE, our social justice themes have reflected our world: *Keeping Music Alive* (2021), *Music Lives* (2022), and *Nurturing Community* (2023). Taken together, just as Voltaire communicated in his satire, they convey a sense of optimism through hardship. However, MSOE and Trying-on-Teaching are also *our* garden: a place where we can do the work to make our world a better place through music, a place where the connections can help our garden grow. It is an understatement to say that the ebb and flow of the world that we live in has its challenges. Music, however, has always been a place for reconciliation, repair, and growth. A place where all of our humanity can be celebrated where all voices are equally important. Just as Bernstein harkened back to Voltaire's *Candide* during a time of great change and civil unrest, I too challenge us to find ways to keep your garden growing as we collectively do the work to make the immediate world we live in a more just and equitable place.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for a wonderful MSOE 2023!

Dr. Erik Johnson



The Uniting Power of Music

Alexis Highland, Trying on Teaching Artist

Music education truly is an art form. Not only are music educators responsible for the musicianship of their students, but they are responsible for the interpersonal relations involved in every part of the classroom. In MSOE, our undergraduate students started from the ground and built a community that is irreplaceable. They have formed new relationships with not only the students within their sectionals or bands, but with every single one of the kids involved. There has not been a time through this process where the middle schoolers have been short a mentor, someone to confide in, or a friend. Our social justice goal of this year being "nurturing community" has been so successful this MSOE season. We have built a true community of motivated, young musicians, who want nothing more than to come to rehearsal every week to see what adventure is awaiting them in their time at MSOE. Our goal went from simply getting some sort of an interaction out of the kids in the first week to building the lifelong friendships

that they have made during their short time together. As Music Education author Sanchita Pandey says, "music, with all of its subtlety, has immense power to unite people, spread love, and bring peace to the world." Before MSOE, I'd never experienced a program that reflected that idea, but after this experience I can confidently say that CSU has embodied the nature of that quote down to its core. Every single student, whether an undergrad, a high schooler, a middle schooler, or a grad student, has experienced the feeling of being united through music during their time in their ensembles at MSOE. Personally, I have gained the privilege of experiencing the incredible mentorship of Ben Landfair, and a personal connection to every one of the students in Aggie Band. Watching my students grow into not only better musicians, but better people and community members is something that I will never forget. To me, while MSOE is centered around music, it is far more beautiful than that. It involves watching a mere "hello" turn into a "how was your week" turn into a "I'm so happy that we are friends." MSOE is truly unforgettable and incredible to be a part of, and it wouldn't be possible without the outstanding effort of every person involved in the process. Music is community, art, and family.

A Letter From the Editor

Brian Tremper, Assistant Director and Teaching Artist

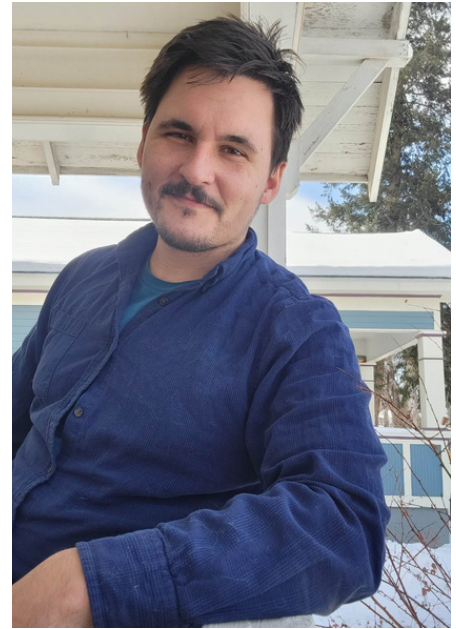
MSOE 2023 has been quite a ride. The senior administration team first met in October of last year in order to get a sense of what the year would look like, discuss curriculum, and clarify each of our roles. I came into MSOE not really knowing what I was getting myself into- I'd never edited or put together a newsletter before, didn't know the teachers around Colorado that I'd ask to be Master Teachers, and wasn't sure what the percussion section would look like. The next six months were a whirlwind of learning by doing, and learning fast.

I wore two main hats this year: Assistant Director and Teaching Artist. As Assistant Director, I was responsible for coordinating, scheduling, and interviewing the Master Teachers, as well as putting the Vault together and creating The Seed Bank and supervising Wind/Percussion activities. As a Teaching Artist, I led the percussion section of the Ram band, teaching sectionals each week with the help of another teaching artist and a Trying-on-Teaching artist, coordinating percussion equipment needs for rehearsals and the concert, and playing along with all three groups on the final concert.

I'm not going to lie, it was a lot of work. But with all that work came a huge amount of growth: I now feel pretty proficient at using the website Canva to put newsletters together; I've made connections with educators across Colorado; I've learned how to pace an interview; I better understand the inner workings of a program like MSOE and how to put together and organize a large scale operation like MSOE in the future; I've learned so many pedagogical techniques and found amazing educational resources from the colleagues through The Seed Bank; I've learned how to structure sectionals and pace my teaching while coordinating with another teacher; and I've grown in my organizational skills as an administrator. MSOE is a wonderful learning opportunity for everyone involved, and I feel so lucky to have been a part of this season.

Of course, there are people that this season just wouldn't have been successful without- I'd love to thank the Master Teachers first and foremost for donating their time and energy to helping us all grow as educators- their insight and feedback was instrumental (pun slightly intended) to our success this season. I'd love to thank our sponsors, who made it possible to put this program together. I'd also like to thank Dr. Erik Johnson, our fearless program director, for countless hours of work and endless headaches endured to make things run smoothly- we couldn't have done any of it without his efforts. I'd like to also thank my fellow members of the Senior Administration team- Kristen Falls (without whom I would have had no idea how to do my job), Sam Gray (whose relentless positivity and energy fuels everyone around him), Joshua Greiner (who brings the extremely valuable perspective of a current middle school teacher to our team), and Professor Jessica Warner (who is the hidden engine behind the entire program). Finally, a massive thank you to all the Teaching Artists and Trying-on-Teaching Artists who dedicated each Wednesday night (and then some!) to teaching our students and making MSOE work. You are all the heartbeat of the program, and I feel so lucky to work with you. All our hard work culminated in a fantastic concert last Saturday, and we should all feel proud of that!

Our social justice theme this year was Nurturing Community, and I feel like we certainly achieved that goal- we've created a tight-knit community of educators and students that is unlike anything I've ever been a part of. Here's to MSOE, and here's to the future!



Dr. Erik Johnson gives words of encouragement to the Ram Band prior to their performance on Saturday

Our MSOE 2023 Teaching Artists





Conductor Madison Kubala runs the Orchestra through their pre-concert dress rehearsal



Our 2023 MSOE Conductors- Kristen Falls, Paul Beyer, Jack Robitaille, Ben Landfair, Madison Kubala, and Mary Vogelsberg



Our 2023 MSOE Staff- Senior Admin, Teaching Artists, and Trying-on-Teaching Artists

**Thank you all for your
support of MSOE 2023!**
