



# THE VAULT

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



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## *“Fairness” In the Music Classroom*

Nick Hailey  
*Teaching Artist*

Fairness is not a word or an idea that can be defined easily. Some people just think of fairness as, "Equality," but in reality fairness is a much deeper and harder thing to define than just that word. There are many layers and fairness can be different on a case by case basis. There are some ideas that can help music educators reach the goal of having a fair classroom for all. These ideas can be equity, equality, and identical opportunity vs. equal opportunity.

My older brother has Mosaic Downs Syndrome, a form of Downs Syndrome where the extra copy of chromosome 21 is not present in all of the person's cells but is still present, and he really wanted to participate in music since he was little. He decided he wanted to sign up for concert band his final semester of high school and was thrilled to be a part of the band his little brothers were in. This was his first formal instrumental experience and needed some help figuring out how to play his splash cymbal parts and didn't know how to do it on his own. His new band director and new classmates played a huge part in him being able to play his part, they gave him a part written specifically for him, counted along with him and specifically queued him in during the concert, and spent more time working with him than maybe some other students more comfortable on their parts. All of this allowed him to play in an instrumental ensemble and get to experience creating with other people like he never has before all because of how equitable his director and classmates were.



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*MSOE after party activity. Each member identifies specific goals, then sends them off to other teaching artists to give specific advice on how to achieve those goals!*

Equity in the music classroom is when each student gets the support they need, which is specific to each and every student. It is so important that music educators are equitable in their classroom so they can truly support all of their students. It is the educators responsibility to be equitable and demonstrate equity in the classroom. If the band director wasn't providing my brother with the help he needed, my brother would have gotten the same treatment as everyone else in the classroom despite his disability holding him back in an unfair way compared to many other students in the class. Which, in the classroom, is an example of the difference between equity and equality, equity being the first example.

Another way educators could use equity to make their music classrooms more fair is by providing equal opportunities for their students, not identical opportunities . An example of providing equal opportunities could be providing students with the playing experience of playing in an ensemble that is their level that challenges and supports them, that would be a fair option for students. Differing from equal opportunities, identical experiences in the music classroom

would be grouping students into ensembles based on what grade they are rather than what playing level they are. This is not the most fair because it can limit students' growth if they are very comfortable on their instrument, or can push a student too hard too soon if they are brand new on their instrument.

There are many ways for educators to try and achieve a 'fair' classroom, but really all an educator can do is try to be fair and do what they can for their students. The ideas of equity, equality, and equal opportunities vs. identical experiences can just help educators guide their thinking and lead their classrooms to a more fair place.

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## “The All-Star Game”

Ben Landfair

*Recruitment UPD, Carnival Coordinator, Teaching Artist*

The MSOE All-Star program is officially off to the races. This year we launched our innovative MSOE All-Stars Program partnering with the Trying-on-Teaching program, to give middle school students a chance to also try out their teaching and leadership abilities. Our wonderful All Stars are stepping into their roles as leaders in the classroom and providing a hand in many aspects.

These exceptional students are the first to arrive and among the last to leave, consistently working harder to help their classmates, the Trying on Teachers, and the college students to make our program as fantastic as possible. The All Star students have been helping to create our student facing promotional and supplemental videos with the help of Mrs. Sydney Bouwens, one of the Assistant Directors, for our Scale Karate initiative. They excitedly jumped at the chance to help create a fun promotional video, to sell the initiative to the rest of our MSOE students.

This week they will rejoin Mrs. Bouwens to create another video to help with the practice process of our repertoire. Making promotional material is not the only way that the All Stars have been bettering the program. The All Stars are currently preparing for their turn at the helm by teaching. We have been working with the All Stars to assist them in understanding their own instruments in order to provide meaningful feedback to the groups that they will be leading.

Developing their musical ears towards error detection and giving techniques on how to fix different mistakes that they may be hearing. These exceptional students are working hard to develop as musicians, leaders, and people. We as MSOE staff are incredibly proud of them and are excited to see how far they will come by the end of our season!





# Meet Our Master Teachers!



**Melissa Claeys** has been teaching for 21 years, and has been the Orchestra Director at Boltz Middle Schools since 2014. Prior to this position, her career has spanned all three levels of instrumental music. She has directed groups at the elementary, middle school and high school level. At all levels, her groups have a history of receiving Superior ratings at festivals and achieving prestigious honors and championship awards at both the State and National level.

Mrs. Claeys received her Bachelor of Music Education and Performance degrees from Fort Lewis College in Durango, CO in 2003. She graduated Summa Cum Laude and received the Educator of the Year Award in Music. In 2008 she received a Master's Degree in Integrated Arts Education from the University of Montana. Earning this degree allowed her to become more educated in other passions of hers as a performing arts educator which includes dance, drama and music collectively.

Not only is Mrs. Claeys a music teacher, but she is a dance instructor as well, currently teaching one of the few middle school dance programs in Poudre School District. Currently, she is also the choreographer for the Boltz Middle School Musical Theater program.

Aside from teaching music, Melissa Claeys' other passions revolve around being a wife to her husband Jason, and mom to her three children, Emmalene (10), Annaliese (7) and Remington (4). As a family, they enjoy spending time outside on their boat up at Horsetooth Reservoir, scuba diving and just living life to the fullest—together.



## Prior 2024 MSOE Master Teachers

### Week #2

- Katrina Hedrick - Colorado Music Bridge, Director of Education | Spur Music Lab, Program Director |
- Joshua Greiner - Preston Middle School, Orchestra Director | Northern Colorado Youth Orchestra, Co-Director |
- Dr. Cody Gifford - Carol Morgan School, Dominican Republic, Director of Instrumental Music | Alexander Technique Specialist

### Week #3

- John Hermanson - Fort Collins High School, Orchestra Director | Chair of Colorado ASTA Large Group Orchestra Festival
- Alex Koster - Windsor Charter Academy, Band & General Music Teacher