



THE VAULT

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



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“A More Perfect Lens”

Laurel Ave
Orchestra Conductor, Teaching Artist

In the 2024 Middle School Outreach Ensemble Program, we have started a new project which allows for young composers within our community to submit compositions that they have made for our Band or Orchestra to perform. The winner of this contest, Hannah Miller, wrote a piece titled, *More Perfect*. From the composer notes she wrote “I named it *More Perfect* after the line in the preamble “We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union,” because it emphasizes the value of democracy in our country, and the ability to make something that is already “perfect” even better through the efforts of the people.”



I love to see this type of enthusiasm and thought behind a composition from this student. Her enthusiasm reminds me how much we strive every day to better ourselves and our learning and teaching. Often as teachers and conductors, we are so focused on the goal of our students. We want them to be their best selves and have the best chance at success every day. We see them grow overtime and allow them to have mistakes and second chances. Often we forget to look at ourselves with that same lens. We forget that we too are growing through music and we too, can allow ourselves mistakes and second chances.



Teaching Artists Gemma Petrucci and Matt Fox co-teaching and differentiating their instruction to accommodate the wide variety of experience in the cello section.

In my role as orchestra conductor, my eyes have been open to the possibilities at my fingertips with such amazing students. They have worked so hard up to this point and we are on our way to make even more progress as our concert nears. There is so much to do and I am ecstatic to make great accomplishments with my students, fellow peers, and mentors. To allow the inspiration from the music to inspire each, and everyone of us in the program; from every student to administration of the MSOE program.

At every level in the MSOE program, we are at a level of experience and knowledge. We also come with our own experiences of struggle. We all are focusing on how to make ourselves more perfect, and grow into the musicians we aspire to be. But we can't forget, we were also once the students that are now in our classrooms and ensembles. Inspired to challenge ourselves and enjoy the music we are making. Why can't we do that as teachers too? To take our musicality to the next level, while still having fun making students laugh and watching them succeed.

In the midst of challenge, we rise to the occasion and strive for a more perfect tomorrow. I see my colleagues aspire to be the best musicians, the best teachers, the best conductors, etc. I also understand the stress we all feel to make everything perfect all the time and live up to the high expectations we are held to. We have to grow through the challenging things to learn the most; and rely on each other when we need help and guidance. To be all those things you have to be the best you. Let yourself shine through mistakes made in conducting, shine through the wrong note, shine through a shaky lesson plan. For the way to make a more perfect tomorrow is to live through today.

“Connecting to the Music”

Kathryn Carlos

Teaching Artist

As a musician and human being, finding pieces of music that I can connect to is important. I love being immersed in the film soundtracks by John Powell, sitting in New Hampshire with Noah Kahan, and listening to Florence Price's pieces of triumph. I think that all music tells a story and is able to connect to our souls which is why I believe music to be a driving force that brings people together in times of hardship and joy. As an educator, I feel it is my responsibility to help kids find their connection to music as well. Obviously, every student is going to connect to different things because they all have a variety of identities, values, and personalities that frame their understanding of the world. This means my music classroom needs to be full of diverse teachings and repertoire, which is why I am a huge proponent of having diverse music selections. Students can't connect to music or convey a composer's intent if student's identities are not reflected in what they are playing.



As a person who has been a part of the music community for a long time, I personally didn't know about any women composers until my senior year of high school when my private teacher introduced me to Florence Price, the first black composer to have her piece premiered by the Chicago Symphony in 1933. My lack of knowledge about historically marginalized people in music is a result of racism, homophobia, and sexism which has caused many composer's musical contributions to go unrecognized. However, it is our job as music educators to break this cycle because students deserve to see people like them in their music. Students should not only know but see that their perspectives are needed in the music classroom setting.

Of course, this puts a big responsibility on music educators to do more research and planning to help their students be seen in the music community. I recently found the [Institute for Composer Diversity \(ICD\)](#) which has an extensive list and database containing choral, orchestral, and band music composed by historically underrepresented people. Additionally, the ICD works to impact “the audiences and students who will engage with the music, the conductors, performers, and educators, who serve to bring [diverse] music to those audience[s] and students, and the composers themselves” (Institute for Composer Diversity). This is a great resource to help music educators work on their blind spots about underrepresented composers and help the world push towards justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Exemplifying that marginalized composers' contributions are pivotal to the classical music realm will help students feel that their ideas are crucial to moving music forward towards truly building bridges across cultures and communities.

“Active Participation”

Caelan Herk
Teaching Artist

When I applied to be a teaching artist in MSOE, I had no idea the experience would be the perfect combatant of passive observation. By bringing together so many individuals of different backgrounds at various levels of experience, MSOE is a fertile ground for learning and developing. As a teaching artist within this community, I'm constantly engaged in meaningful pursuits, be it logistical, musical, or educational. This is in stark contrast with many typical opportunities one has for passive observation. It is absolutely thrilling to have the chance to be in an environment where such a variety of tasks—all appealing to your interests—are asked of you.

In the realm of teaching and mentoring at MSOE, there's no room for passive learning. Teaching isn't a spectator sport; it demands active participation. Take, for instance, my role as one of the three teaching artists of The Eubabones (euphonium, tuba, and trombone). I find myself collaborating with middle school students, Trying-on-Teaching artists, and my peers. With middle schoolers, I adopt a band-director persona, infusing my instructions with humor and engaging activities tailored to their age group. With peers, discussions delve into collegiate-level music and teaching, offering a depth of thought unparalleled elsewhere.

And then there are the ToTs—high school students trying their hand at teaching—where I get to adapt and reframe concepts in order to facilitate their growth as future music educators. All of these ways in which I engage with MSOE are totally participatory and provoke unique perspectives and thoughts that would have never existed if MSOE were not so rooted in the act of doing such things.

Adjacent to MSOE, ensemble classes in general are largely paraxial-based. Making music is an in-the-moment experience—once a note is played, it's gone forever. There's no "undo" button for missed entrances. Yet, it's precisely this immediacy that drives intentionality—the force behind meaningful action. Activities focused on passive observation .

Active participation is the key, in any endeavor. MSOE embodies this belief, offering a number of opportunities for individuals to actively refine their musical and educational skills. Beyond skill development, MSOE serves as a magnet, drawing together people from disparate backgrounds who share a common passion for music—a union that might never have occurred otherwise.”



Teaching artist Charlie Wooton and ToT Kaden Cardonne working together to assist a student with their viola set up.



Teaching artist Alex Gregory leading a trumpet sectional with the support of Arjen Wynja.



Band Conductor, Ethan Dunkerton, addressing the style of Three Czech Folk Songs in rehearsal.

2024 MSOE Seedbank

What is the Seedbank?

The MSOE seedbank is collection of teaching practices, resources, or other information that the teaching artists of MSOE create. It starts off small, but as the MSOE season goes on, it continues to grow! Check out its current status here: <http://tinyurl.com/MSOE-Seedbank>



Meet Our Master Teachers!



Dr. Ingrid Larragoity-Martin is the Executive Director of El Sistema Colorado and serves as conductor of the Conservatory Orchestra of Denver Young Artist Orchestra. She brings with her over 22 years of high school and collegiate instrumental experience as a conductor, music educator, and community leader. Her passion to diversify and create inclusive music classrooms has impacted her leadership from the podium and into the music community at the state and national level. She looks forward to expanding her impact as a nonprofit leader through community-building, creating pathways for musical excellence, and engaging nonprofit leaders and educators in conversations around access, equity, inclusion, and social justice in the music classroom and beyond.

Prior to these appointments, she served as Director of Bands at Skyline Visual and Performing Arts High School in Longmont, Colorado. Dr. Larragoity-Martin also served as Associate Director of Bands/Music Education Coordinator and then Interim Director of Bands at New Mexico State University. Before then she served as Associate Director of Bands at Henderson State University. In her time in these positions, she conducted both wind and orchestral ensembles, commissioned and premiered repertoire, created innovative programming that crossed international borders, and collaborated with colleagues and community members to build substantive musical experiences.

As an active conductor, she has led honor/all state instrumental ensembles in Florida, Georgia, Connecticut, New Mexico, Colorado, New York, California, Missouri and Texas. She has initiated programs with New World Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, and Colorado Symphony, connecting her ensembles to professional musicians and experiences. Internationally, she most recently served as guest lecturer on The World, Residence at Sea, presenting lectures and conducting clinics throughout Europe. Dr. Larragoity-Martin also cofounded and led Jinsha Summer Music Festival, a musical and cultural program for music students from the United States and from the SiChuan Conservatory of Music in Chengdu, China.



Danielle Johnson is highly 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. In 2013, she 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.

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

Week #4

Melissa Claeys - Boltz Middle School, Orchestra Director | Boltz Middle School, Musical Theater Choreographer