



# THE VAULT

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



## In this edition:

Feedback at All Levels  
p. 1-2

Movement in the Classroom  
p. 2

Come Together  
p. 3

Meet Our Master Teachers!  
p. 4

## “A More Perfect Ensemble: Growing Together”

Leah Dunphey

*Conductor, Personnel & Logistics Coordinator, ToT Mentor*

*“We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union...”*

These are the famous words that begin the preamble to the United States Constitution. This line inspired high school student Sarah Miller, winner of the 2024 MSOE Composition Contest, to write *More Perfect*. The piece was originally written for orchestra, and with the help of our fabulous composition professor, Dr. Jim David, was arranged for band just in time for the 2024 MSOE season to begin.

In her notes about the piece, Sarah expresses that she wanted to portray the general unease that the public can feel about a social issue, but that it may not yet be pressing enough to call for improvement. It often takes a catalytic event to spur people into action. Particularly during a time of division and hostility, there is immense power in connection, collaboration, and community. To represent this, *More Perfect* begins with unrest, tears into chaos in the middle, and comes back together in a triumphant conclusion that shows that good can come from the efforts of the people when they work together.

Ensemble music settings provide an excellent space for us to explore and embody principles of democracy. The French word ensemble means “together”, a group of independent pieces that work as a whole. In a band or orchestra, we each contribute our individual “voice” to the collective music that is ultimately heard, and it is impossible for one person to create the same kind of experience on their own. We must listen to one another and strive for an excellent ensemble sound while also considering our musical roles at every given moment. The students often consider questions like these: Who has the melody? Am I part of that, or part of the accompaniment? Can I hear the melody if I’m not playing it? Am I matching the people around me so that I blend into the ensemble sound? These questions and more are an essential part of stretching our abilities as individual musicians to become part of a cohesive whole.



**Continued on page 2**



*Associate Director, Brian Tremper, modeling proper triangle technique in band rehearsal.*

As we draw near to the close of my third and final MSOE season, I am reflecting on the incredible experiences I have had and all that I have learned from my teachers, peers, and students over the years. I have played many roles within MSOE, and as an Undergraduate Program Director and Conductor, I see a lot of the work that goes on behind the scenes to create and nourish an environment where students at many different levels pursue excellence in teaching and music-making. I watch my students grow and change a lot from week to week, and I can share with them what I hear that is better than last week or the beginning of the season.

I have the pleasure of mentoring many of the Music Education undergrads within and outside of MSOE, and I am so encouraged by the passion they bring to their work and how dedicated they are to becoming excellent teachers. Last week, I was struck with how far the Band has come in their musicianship. One of the other conductors instructed them to play a movement of his piece without a conductor and without the college students playing, which they had not yet done. They sounded incredible! I was brought to tears as I sat in the midst of the ensemble, listening to these young musicians work together to make something beautiful, exciting, and rewarding.

In our weekly MSOE rehearsals, many layers of learning, engaging, and inquiry occur. We explore our perspectives and contributions as musicians, students, teachers, and ensemble members, making constant adjustments to how we play in order to be more accurate, more in tune, producing a more beautiful sound. As the conductor for More Perfect, I am so proud of the progress that our MSOE Band has made in putting the piece together. It is filled with challenging rhythms, melodies, harmonies, and structure that many of the students had not encountered before. On top of these, the parts are very independent, representing the many roles that people and communities play in enacting social change. The students have worked hard and made tremendous improvements as individuals and as an ensemble, and we are so thrilled to share this exciting new piece with you at our concert!

## “Chamber Music in the Classroom”

Matthew Fox  
*Teaching Artist*



As performers and teachers through music, it is so important that we are consistently finding ways to expand our craft through means that strengthen our minds and musicality, and overall make us (and our students) better humans. I have been a music student for as long as I can remember, and when it comes to finding outlets to create music, I have been through it all. Solo performances, symphony ensembles, pit orchestras, even songwriting have all done wonders for my musicianship throughout the years, although none of these outlets have done more to make me the musician I am today than chamber music has.

Participating in a chamber group leads students to enhance their musicianship in ways that promote stronger ensemble performances, higher levels of confidence and expression, and overall create stronger connections between peers. When placed into a small group, students have no choice but to learn the parts of their peers, including audio and visual experiences. A smaller ensemble allows students to quickly pick up on the cues of their group members, and something as simple as glancing across the group to catch a first violinist’s breath to start a piece provides the foundation students need to learn how to rhythmically follow along with their sections and conductor in a large ensemble. However with no conductor, students in chamber groups need to use their eyes and ears to stay with their peers, helping them learn how to listen, allowing them to rely upon their growing musicianship. This then opens the door for confidence and ownership of their music; as students rehearse in chamber groups, they develop a sense of responsibility for their parts. Unlike a symphony, each musician is showcased in unique, harmonizing ways that can be frightening, yet immensely confidence boosting. Learning that practice is necessary for success, the young musician begins to take ownership of their part, providing a result that can be truly expressive and moving. All of these positive traits that stem from chamber music can be easily transferred to orchestra rehearsals and personal performance, creating opportunities that lead students to success in music.

The best part about chamber music is not only the musicianship that comes with its rehearsals, it is the connections that are made and community that forms through its implementation. This I know best from personal experience: At CSU I currently play with 4 other Music Education majors in a bass quintet, and this experience has allowed me to not only become a better musician, it has allowed me to join a community with others that share my love for music. Every single week I look forward to meeting with the quintet and I always leave with a smile on my face. All of these fantastic musicians I have the opportunity to play with are caring, passionate, and inspire me to be a better human wherever I can. We all share the same goal: to create music, and inspire others to do the same. There is nothing better in this world than making music with people that you care about, and we have all grown closer through our chamber group. We have built trust in one another, and help each other develop the confidence needed to grow and be successful in our future teaching careers.

Students that participate in chamber music become better musicians, teammates, and overall develop stronger connections to music and the peers they create it with. Creating chamber music programs in K-12 music classes introduces to students a new way to express themselves, and a new way to grow as a well-rounded musician. Most importantly, it makes music fun!

## “Mindfulness in Music”

Audrey Farrar  
*Teaching Artist*

Even as a music major, I have pretty severe performance anxiety. There have been multiple performances where the only way I can remember anything from a performance is to watch a recording back. I think that most musicians can recall a time when they were adequately prepared for a performance, but nerves got the best of them. Something that has become helpful for me in overcoming this anxiety has been incorporating mindfulness in my practice routines and during a performance. I have found when I am prepared, I can trust my body and rely on feeling rather than the sounds I am producing.

This way of thinking about being grounded in your body while performing is recognized a lot in vocal music, as in a sense your whole body is your instrument. However, this can be applied in instrumental music, and also in general music classrooms. Just having bodily awareness can help with any kind of music making, and can even help us connect personally to the music we are performing. By being more bodily aware, we have heightened awareness of breaths we are taking, air that is flowing through our instruments, or our fingers pressing down on tone holes or strings. We are not only more calm in performance situations, but are also becoming better musicians through the simple practice of just noticing how things feel in our bodies. We are better attuned to mistakes we may be making and are able to fix them more effectively. Not only do we often perform better this way and come back from mistakes easier, we are more focused on how we ourselves feel, rather than our audiences. A common root cause of performance anxiety is the fear of others watching and judging us. Performing is extremely vulnerable. I have found that while performing if I choose one thing to focus on such as the feeling of my feet on the floor, I often perform better and am less worried about what others think. I also tend to have less overall tension or can recognize that tension and correct it.

This practice of mindful music making can be applied in the classroom especially with a performance coming up. Younger students and even high school age students may feel less confident in front of a crowd. If we encourage them to rely on their bodies and the others around them to produce music this may ease their performance anxiety. Breathing exercises used in warm-ups are inately mindful in the way that we are feeling each breath we take. Lastly, eurythmics can also be thought of as a mindful music practice. Getting our students up and moving is extremely important in the music classroom and moving mindfully to music can be not only calming but help students understand different musical lines and dynamics.

Music making can be an amazing experience if we let it. Being fully present in the practice of making music is one small step to not only being better musicians but enjoying music itself. Me and other musicians alike are often able to recall an experience where music making felt truly magical. Why can't music making always feel this way?



## 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

### Week #5

Dr. Ingrid Larragoity-Martin - El Sistema, Executive Director | Conservatory Orchestra of Denver Young Artist Orchestra, Conductor  
Danielle Johnson - Front Range Youth Symphony, Conductor | Steamboat Symphony Orchestra, Associate Principal

### Week #6

Aaron Herman - Fossil Ridge High School, Band Director  
Dr. Seth Pendergast - Colorado State University, Assistant Professor of Music Education

### Week #7

Phuong Nguyen - Boltz Middle School, Band Director  
Kathy Van Wert - Bill Reed Middle School, Band Director | Mountain View High School, Assistant Band Director  
Liz Richardson - Greeley Central High School | Loveland High School, Woodwind Instructor



# Meet Our Master Teachers!



**Mrs. 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, orchestra, and drama. Her degrees are from CU and CSU; if you have to ask, it's always "Sko Buffs!" Mrs. Kettlewell has been recognized for her teaching expertise throughout her career by her administration and colleagues, but her biggest accomplishments are seen in the strong communities she has built through the performing arts at her schools and the joy and trust in her classrooms. When not teaching, Mrs. Kettlewell loves to ski, run, and bake. And yes, she was that music teacher you saw on House Hunters.



**Rose Dunphey** is a retired Music teacher from Lewis-Palmer School District 38. She taught in Monument, CO for 20 years, as well as eight years in Oregon and Washington before that. She earned her way through the University of Oregon as the bassist for the elite Green Garter Band. A double-major in physical education and music, her plans were to teach PE and coach basketball. (One of her life mottos is, "We make plans, God chuckles.") With only a very streamlined "B.A. in Music," her first music credential was added to her PE certificate via the National Teacher's Exam, in time to land her first band job. But she knew what she didn't know about teaching music, and began on her Master of Music Education in the summers at the University of Oregon. One thing Rose committed to was a year of private lessons on each woodwind instrument, and on drumset. (having progressed from trumpet to euphonium to trombone, the brasses already came pretty naturally to her).

Rose held many different music positions in D38; Beginning Band at three schools; Associate Director of High School Band; several years of High School Choir, an beginning through advanced Guitar. Rose's passion for great music is matched by her passion for her students as individuals. A highly relational teacher, she taught with humor, high expectations, and the creativity to write many custom arrangements and exercises.



**Leanne Griffey** is the Orchestra Director at Kinard Core Knowledge Middle School. This is her 14th year as a Mustang. Leanne's professional experience includes 27 years of teaching Orchestra and Choir in public schools in Greeley & Fort Collins, CO and Williamsburg, Virginia, as well as teaching private violin, viola, and voice lessons. Leanne received her Bachelor's of Music Education from the University of Colorado at Boulder. She served as Concertmaster of the Greeley Chamber Orchestra for 15 years and has performed with many professional Orchestras including the Fort Collins Symphony, Cheyenne Symphony, Greeley Philharmonic, Longmont Symphony, and Richmond (VA) Symphony.

Outside of school, Leanne enjoys spending time with her family, including her husband, Kevin, and their daughter who is a student at CU Boulder. Their two cats, Quincy & Penelope, bring lots more laughs and love to their home. Leanne loves to ski, dance, hike, travel, and eat good food. Leanne considers herself very lucky to have been a PSD student and as such, to have learned from some of the finest music educators in the nation. Along with her mother and grandmother, these teachers shaped Leanne's passion for music and cultivated her desire to share it with the next generations of musicians!