

THE VAULT: Vol I

The official newsletter of CSU Middle School Outreach Ensembles (MSOE) 2025

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Welcome to MSOE!

Dr. Erik Johnson, Program Director

It is with enthusiasm that I write to you as we usher in the 2025 season of the *CSU Middle School Outreach Ensembles* program and the *CSU Trying-on-Teaching* project. Behind the scenes, the work that goes into putting this program together takes nothing short of a small army and whole bunch of chutzpah. I would like to thank the many people who have contributed to making the 2025 permutation of MSOE come to life including the MSOE Teaching Artists (current and past), the MSOE Senior Admin Team, the CSU School of Music, Theatre, and Dance administrative staff, the CSU College of Liberal Arts, the CSU Provost Office, and the individuals who contribute to – and manage – the endowment that primarily funds MSOE – the Youth Programming in Arts Education (YPAE). There are many more to thank... Also, if you missed it, the 2024 MSOE Teaching Artists were given a university-wide recognition last May to acknowledge their excellence in community engagement

[\(https://tilt.colostate.edu/oura/community-engaged-learning/awards/2024-service-learning-awards/\)](https://tilt.colostate.edu/oura/community-engaged-learning/awards/2024-service-learning-awards/)

Now in our twelfth year, the CSU MSOE program has brought enriched music education to well over 2000 participants. At the outset of our program in 2014, we made a goal to expand as we were able which included adding orchestra to the mix in 2016. In 2025, we are proud to welcome our choral community to the world of MSOE! Led by Dr. Seth Pendergast, the choral component of MSOE is off and running, staffed with an enthusiastic choral Teaching Artist team. We have been working diligently to onboard a record forty-six members of the MSOE Teaching Artist Staff as we prepare to welcome the middle school students this week on Wednesday, March 5th. All in all, thousands of hours of preparation have already been spent preparing ourselves to meet our mission this year – *to uplift the lives of young people through expanding access to enriched music education.*



The CSU Atmospheric Sciences Department, namely Emily Fisher and Mindy Hill have jumped head-first into a collaboration with MSOE to raise awareness around enhancing air monitoring and air quality education in Northern Colorado. We have commissioned world-class composer and CSU Professor of Music, Dr. James David to write a work which will be premiered by the MSOE students at our final concert in April. Dr. David's work titled *Pale Blue Dot* is inspired by Carl Sagan's quote about the photograph of the Earth captured by the Voyager 1 spacecraft on February 14th, 1990 when it was 3.7 billion miles from the Sun. If would like to indulge in a treat, here is more to read and see (for curious minds):

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/337712-from-this-distant-vantage-point-the-earth-might-not-seem>

<https://science.nasa.gov/resource/voyager-pale-blue-dot-download/>

In addition to having the honor of premiering Dr. David's work, several of the works of music that will be studied and performed by the 2025 MSOE ensembles are inspired by the concept of holding nature in a sense of wonder and awe. From works that have to do with molecules and atoms to works that prompt a thoughtful reflection to our relationship with the natural world, our hope is that MSOE 2025 expands minds and deepens our collective awareness of the complexities and fragilities of the world we call home.

We encourage you to drop by for a visit to MSOE – either to a rehearsal, or, at our final concert – to say hello and see the wonderful musical collaborations that are taking place.

GO RAMS, and GO MSOE!

Dr. Erik Johnson

MSOE Program Director

Music: The Vault of Expression

Matthew Fox, Teaching Artist

There is something so valuable about the teaching of music; More than just teaching notes and rhythms on a page, to teach music is to teach a form of expression unlike no other. As a music student growing up, this is something I've always loved about the arts. I have had many windows of opportunity to express myself, whether it be clubs or other extra curricular activities, yet none have allowed me to truly grasp my own



emotions like music does. I did not realize it at the time, but through my performance I often found myself experiencing emotions that otherwise remained unexplored. Having learned how to tap into this vault of expression, I began to realize the potential music has to change my perception of the world around me. My time as an undergrad education major here at CSU has prepared me to state the following: To allow students to find themselves through music is to do justice to the entirety of music education. To teach music is to open doors for students that better themselves, and the world around them.

One of the most beautiful things about music is the culture that surrounds it, rather, the cultures it surrounds. No matter where you go in the world, music will be found! Music breathes throughout history, sharing stories from every part of the globe. As students tap into this vault of expression, they will find that music holds the records of civilization. Compositions share stories of love, hope, joy and happiness while lamenting sorrow, hardships and more. This

universal melting pot of vulnerability has no bounds, and as students begin to understand these stories, they will learn to tell their own too. The true comprehension of music begins when its importance is understood, and once they can apply it to their own life and connect emotionally to the repertoire, the music student begins to learn.

As a vessel for safe vulnerability and expression, music allows those who indulge to have an outlet. With this thought in mind, students will begin to enjoy music to the fullest. Those who create and perform through means of emotion and passion not only feel more successful and fulfilled, but allow the community around them to tap into the vault as well. Music is so much more than notes and rhythms on a page, and by teaching with this thought in mind, we as educators can allow our students to find themselves in a comfortable world of expression.

What's Your Why?

Alexis Highland, Teaching Artist

Music is one of the most effective forms of fostering connections within school communities. The MSOE program at CSU is one of the ways that we can more effectively connect with the surrounding middle schools and allow for the undergraduate students to network throughout the community. But there is so much more to music education than networking and finding jobs. Though music seems like one subject area, every person within the music community has their own passions and interest areas, whether that's Unified music, music education for

the hard of hearing, modern band, etc., everyone has their why. I think that finding the reason that you choose to pursue your passions is the reason that everybody is successful in their own ways. While music seems like a relatively monochromatic path, there are hundreds (if not thousands) of different options within the large-scale umbrella. Part of the experience of MSOE for the undergraduate teaching artists is to remind ourselves of the why behind our choice to pursue Music Education in the first place.



What's Your Why? (continued)

Every day that we step into the role of leader and educator with middle school students is another day that we get to show ourselves that we are worthy, and we are meant to be a part of this major. So much of our lives are an outlook-oriented viewpoint, and I believe that having an experience like the Middle School Outreach Ensemble allows us to focus on the now. The connections and bonds that we form with the students we encounter within the MSOE program is incomparable and fulfilling in so many ways. All of us have our reasoning behind wanting to become a music educator, but helping students to find their reason for participating in the performing arts is an experience that not many undergraduate students can say that they have had. With our incredible leadership (shoutout Paul Haarla), combined efforts from every undergraduate Teaching Artist and Trying on Teaching high school student, and the middle schoolers that enroll in MSOE, participation in this program is something that people will never forget. I cannot speak for every undergraduate student that has chosen to participate in the MSOE program as a teaching artist, but I can say for myself that this program has been an incredible opportunity for personal growth and development. Whether I experience small successes or large obstacles, I know that with perseverance and effort I will make it through this program to be able to help kids to see the value that they have and the positivity they bring to the world. So, moving forward into the less-busy/less-chaotic times of the year, I hope that we can all take a moment to ask ourselves "why?" Why do I choose to get up in the morning? Why do I choose to go and teach in front of a room full of children making sounds on inanimate objects? Why do I love being an educator? It all comes down to our love for teaching kids, and our love for the connections that we create with the time that we spend with our students. Do what you love for the people that you love, and take what you can out of every experience- big or small. Don't forget what makes you, you.



A Note About the Editor

Jessica Warner began her study of the oboe with Andrea Mather-Stow at the age of 10 in South Bend, Indiana. She made her solo debut at the age of 17 with the South Bend Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Warner holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and received her master's from the University of Texas at Austin. In addition, she has also studied the Aspen Summer Music Festival for three summers with John Mack, Joe Robinson, Jeannette Bittar, and Pedro Diaz. She has held the position as English hornist in the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra and Peoria Symphony, and oboist of Western Piedmont Symphony, Auckland Philharmonia, and

Pontiac Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Warner has performed oboe and English horn with many orchestras throughout the United States and abroad, including Boulder Philharmonic, Greeley Philharmonic, Fort Collins Symphony, Cheyenne Symphony, Charlotte Symphony, Winston-Salem Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, South Bend Symphony, Illinois Symphony and Monterrey (Mexico) Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Warner has been working as administrative assistant to the Music Education Department at CSU for the past 6 years, where she has had the opportunity to work with the MSOE program and multiple other endeavors. She also works at Laurel Elementary School as the strings director, where she teaches orchestra and modern band to some amazingly talented young musicians. She spends her free time making modern band arrangements, gardening, cooking, and spending time with her lovely family. If you would like to contact Ms. Warner, please feel free to reach out at

Jessica.Warner@colostate.edu



Meet our teaching artists!

Ethan Barker	Kailey Jeffs
Cameron Becker	Cameron Kregas
Olivia Calzaretta	Michael Millan
Kathryn Carlos	Mateo Novoa
Zuzu Davis	Juno Okins
Aundrea Dugas	Gemma Petrucci
Anna Dunn	Elise Renner
Audrey Farrar	Andrew Ressetar
Madelynn Flanagan	Alexander Strobel
Matthew Fox	Triston Told
Zeke Graf	Freya Underwood
Nick Hailey	Arjen Wynja
Caelan Herk	Olivia Zenzinger
Alexis Highland	

Meet our Senior Admin!!

Dr. Erik Johnson
 Dr. Seth Pendergast
 Dr. Christina Herman
 Paul Haarla
 Jessica Warner

Meet our ToTs!

Raymundo Barrera
 Jacob Brown
 Collin Carlson
 Melinda Fullenkamp
 Kacy Larson
 Maya Leisz
 Brendan McKellar
 Savannah Morris
 Hayden Mosley
 Alexis Nyambe
 Ian Rose
 Rayya Saleeby
 Sienna Vogel

MSOE 2025 Rehearsal and Concert Schedule!

2025 MSOE Rehearsals:

Rehearsals take place on Wednesday evenings from 6-8 p.m.

- Wednesday, March 5: MSOE NIGHT 1
- Wednesday, March 12: MSOE NIGHT 2
- Wednesday, March 26: MSOE NIGHT 3
- Wednesday, April 2: MSOE NIGHT 4
- ***Saturday, April 5 (9 a.m. – 4 p.m.): MSOE Super Saturday Rehearsal***
- Wednesday, April 9: MSOE NIGHT 5
- Wednesday, April 16: MSOE NIGHT 6

MSOE Dress Rehearsal and Concert:

- Saturday, April 19, 2-8 p.m.