

# Ark MEA

The logo for the Arkansas Music Educators Association (MEA) is located to the right of the title. It consists of a blue square divided into four smaller squares. The top-left square contains the letter 'n' in yellow, the top-right contains 'a' in yellow, the bottom-left contains 'm' in yellow, and the bottom-right contains 'e' in yellow. A white musical note is positioned between the 'a' and 'm' squares.

Do You Hear What I Hear?  
.....

Recording the Large  
Ensemble  
.....

Ramping Up the Voice



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# President's Note

## Amber Moss-ArkMEA President

If you have been following ArkMEA closely for the past several years, you've noticed some immense changes. These changes have been carefully chosen by your leadership board, and have been necessary for the future of our organization. As President, I have been honored to walk through the process of change with each of you. I am hoping that ArkMEA has unleashed creativity in our profession, making room for change.

The biggest change you may have noticed is the reorganization of our annual Fall Conference. This year, we successfully began a new model, splitting the conference into two separate events.

The summer professional development day was a historic event. The day was a collaborative partnership between ArkMEA, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), and AETN. There were over 25 participants at the live event in Little Rock, and over 100 others who participated throughout the state of Arkansas at local co-ops. Brian Hiller did a sensational job incorporating music education strategies for all teachers. The day-long event marks the first professional development of its kind! We are already planning for next summer, with the hope that even more educators will find the value in this experience.

We will still have a fall day of professional development which will be aligned with our honors chorus and honor strings. We will be meeting at Calvary Baptist Church in the Heights, Little Rock. Please see our flyer in this journal for more information.

The Fall always offers teachers a fresh start. The summer is full of professional development, beach time, lake days, long summer nights, mosquitoes, and definitely a break from it all. Time seems to stand still. We become the de-stressed version of ourselves. We can finally be still. When August hits, we hit the ground running, but the promise of the 3-day Labor Day weekend helps us push through those hectic first few weeks of school.



*"What good is an idea if it remains an idea. Try. Experiment. Iterate. Try again. Change the World."*

As you begin this school year, are you ready to empower your students with musical knowledge and instill the passion of creating music for a lifetime? In the time we live in, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to do our jobs well. Challenges include: time, discipline issues, time, class size, and did I mention time? I hope you can find the power to rise above all the challenges, and let nothing stand in the way of empowering your students.

Simon Sinek said, "What good is an idea if it remains an idea. Try. Experiment. Iterate. Try again. Change the World." This quote has really inspired my students. Allow your students to try! Work with them while they experiment! Watch them change the world, and always celebrate with them!

I became empowered this summer through several books, but one stood out among the many. The book is: *Future Driven: Will your Students Thrive in an Unpredictable World?* by David Geurin. If you haven't had the chance to read this book, I highly recommend it! David Geurin is an administrator in Bolivar, Missouri. His thoughts throughout his book are brilliant, and there are so many "nuggets of truth" which I will utilize throughout my school year. One of my favorite chapters is titled, "Curiosity, Creativity, Risk Taking". He says, "Curiosity helps drive authentic learning." I find this to be true, even of ourselves. I find that this should drive my lifetime learning style. When do we stop being curious about our craft? The answer is- never. Continue to ask questions, continue to attend high quality professional development, but most importantly, support those who are curious around you. Allow others to question the "why" of your teaching, and ask the same of yourself. Robert F. Kennedy said, "Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly."

Have a great fall!

Amber Moss, ArkMEA President



# ADE, AETN, and Brian Hiller

July 24, 2018- at the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center in Little Rock, AR

The AETN camera crew couldn't resist stepping back from their equipment and moving to the traditional "Tue Tue," a song in the Fanti language proclaiming gratitude for food at harvest time. The event was held at the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center in Little Rock, with satellite events at educational service cooperative all over the state. The participants joined in by singing dancing, moving, and clapping to the rhythm. It was a full day of inspiring professional development, delivered by national music education expert Brian Hiller. We were excited to debut a new model of music teacher in-service training.

The professional development event was held July 24, 2018, after several months of planning and collaboration among a variety of partner organizations. Leadership of the Arkansas Music Educators Association (ArkMEA) reached out to me as the Fine Arts Program Advisor at the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) in the early spring, looking for a way to leverage the resources they had to devote to training for their members to have a greater statewide impact. Our initial meeting involved brainstorming ideas from our different perspectives. Not finding a real connection at first, we left the meeting scratching our heads. This is not unusual for brainstorming meetings, but after some reflection, Amber Moss (President) and Haley Greer (President-Elect) reached out again. The decision was made for ArkMEA to provide a presenter of their choice for the day. Through ADE coordination, the Arkansas Department of Heritage provided the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center's stunning ballroom as a venue for the event, AETN provided a camera crew to livestream the presentation, and fourteen educational service co-operatives hosted off-site participation. Local music educators who volunteered to facilitate at each co-op were instrumental to the success of the event. Approximately 112 educators attended the event across the state.

The presenter, Brian Hiller, is Associate Professor of Music at Hofstra University, Music Specialist in Westchester County, New York, and Orff Level I and II Pedagogy Instructor. During Mr. Hiller's six-hour, hands-on workshop participants sang, moved, and played a variety of pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments. The workshop included several fully-processed lessons which included warm-ups, lessons, performances, extension activities, and dynamic choral pieces for use with upper-grade choirs.

The potential of this model of in-service training is exciting. While it provides an opportunity for those who wish to attend in person and experience the inspiration of working with the presenter live, it is also a valuable experience for every music educator in the state who participates at their local co-op. Several co-op teacher center coordinators excitedly reported that music could be heard throughout the building and everyone had a great day. Access to relevant professional development is an issue for fine arts educators, but this format addresses that issue directly.

Going forward, we at ADE anticipate the production of more of these live-streamed events in association with ArkMEA. With the appropriate planning, future events may be developed into courses to access through AETN Ideas. Hopefully, the success of this event will transfer to other arts disciplines and we will see live-streamed events specifically for visual art, theatre, and dance educators as well as music educators with a more narrow focus such as orchestra, band, or choir directors. Continue to keep up with ArkMEA's facebook page and the local educational service co-operative's escWorks for information regarding 2019 professional development.



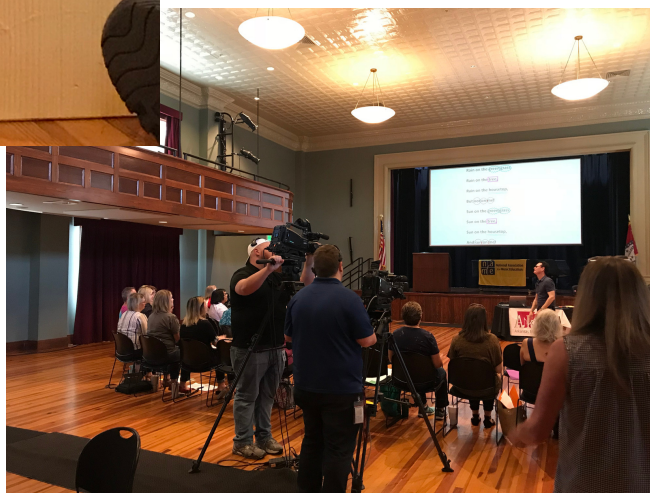
ARKANSAS  
DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION





Music Educators from around Arkansas came together for a live simulcast event. Thank you ADE and AETN for supporting this collaborative effort. Also, thank you J&B Music for taking care of all of our music needs!

## The Power of 3 Viva La Musica



Attendees gained knowledge...



Utilized their creativity...



...and even the cameramen enjoyed the day!!



Jeaneau Julian-

"My favorite activity of the workshop was working through the program. That is something that has never been done before, and I thoroughly enjoyed it."

**ArkMEA**

**ADE**

**AETN**

Samantha Bentley-

"I am very excited about this new platform of PD, that ArkMEA is working on. I can't wait to see what else we have in store!"

# Lead a Legacy

Fall Conference-A New Model in a New Setting

November 2nd 9:00am-4:30pm

The one-day fall conference is shaping up with a fantastic line-up of offerings! From watching a master choral director rehearse the ArkMEA honors chorus, to discussing current initiatives with Lana Hallmark from the Department of Education, we will have something to help everyone Lead A Legacy. Be sure to check our Facebook page and the ArkMEA website for a full schedule of events and details as the conference approaches.

The conference will be held at Calvary Baptist Church in the Heights (1901 N. Pierce St., Little Rock) on Friday November 2nd, beginning at 9:00am. The children's festival chorus will perform at 4:30pm that evening.

Don't miss out on a great day of learning for both you and your students! Registration is now open. Visit [www.arkmea.org](http://www.arkmea.org) for choral student and teacher registration. Orchestra student registration is through Delania Owen, the Orchestra Chair. Contact her at: [delania.owen@jonesboroschools.net](mailto:delania.owen@jonesboroschools.net). Choral music can be purchased by through J&B Music

Sales: <https://www.jandbmusic.com/webforms/index/index/id/15/>

Feel free to use the pre-registration form found on page 7. We can't wait to see you on November 2nd!

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Fall Professional Development Conference

November 2, 2018

Calvary Baptist Church  
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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred Name on Badge \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (W) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

NAfME # \_\_\_\_\_ ~Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ ~ASTA# \_\_\_\_\_

(Required for Chorus Participation)

(Required for Orchestra Participation)

Membership in NAfME or ASTA must be valid through November 2018

| PRE-REGISTRATION FEES: |   |          |     |
|------------------------|---|----------|-----|
| "X"<br>Category        | Pre-registration must be postmarked on or before October 27, 2017                   |          |     |
|                        | Active Member Pre-Registration  | \$65.00  | \$  |
|                        | Non-Member Pre-Registration   | \$85.00  | \$  |
|                        | NAfME Collegiate/ASTA Student   | \$10.00  | \$  |
|                        | Non-Member Student  | \$15.00  | \$  |
|                        | Retired NAfME/Senior ASTA Member  | FREE     | \$0 |
| MEMBERSHIP FEES:       |   |          |     |
|                        | Active Membership in NAfME/ArkMEA (Retired \$63.00)                                 | \$125.00 | \$  |
|                        | Active Professional Membership in ASTA (Senior, 62 or over: \$85.00; Dual \$162.00) | \$116.00 | \$  |
| TOTAL                  |   |          | \$  |

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MM    YYYY

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MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Arkansas Music Educators Association (ArkMEA)

SEND PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION INFO TO:

Jaree Hall, Treasurer 249 Sullivan Road; Nashville, AR 71852

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# Do You Hear What I Hear?

## Tips on Better Error Detection for Ensemble Conductors

Imagine you're in a regular rehearsal with your ensemble (if there is such thing as a regular rehearsal). They have just performed the eight measures that you asked them to perform. They relax their posture after you lower the baton, and all eyes turn to you to await your feedback (since we're imagining). At that moment, you realize that you don't have any kind of specific feedback to offer them on the performance. It wasn't perfect; you remember thinking that some things sounded odd during the third measure but you couldn't pinpoint what it was. You are an experienced educator, so you pull out everyone's favorite phrase: "Alright, let's try that one more time," and vow to yourself to 'listen harder' so you don't come up empty-handed again.



While far from a nightmare scenario in the classroom, it's the kind of awkward situation that most of us would prefer to avoid. We spend years in school trying to learn a myriad of skills and abilities that are required as ensemble conductors. Administrative tasks, grade assignments, seating charts, classroom management...the list is long. Somewhere on that list, though, is the process of making our ensemble sound better, and one aspect of that is our ability to detect performance errors. When most people hear the phrase 'error detection,' however, they immediately think of a 'gotcha!'-style approach, as if the conductor is trying to rack up as many points as possible by detecting as many errors as possible. However, I encourage us to first move beyond the 'whack-a-mole' conception of error detection. If we conceive of it in the broadest sense, then error detection includes not only notes and rhythms, but intonation, phrasing, dynamics, and every other aspect of musical performance. It is my hope that this article will provide you new ways or refreshers on how to better approach error detection in an ensemble setting, regardless of whether it's band, choir, orchestra, or kazoo class.

*"Alright, let's try  
that one more time,"  
and vow to yourself to  
'listen harder' so you  
don't come up empty-  
handed again.*



## Know the Score, and To Thine Own Self Be True

When talking about score study, a mentor of mine during grad school used to sum it up by saying, “You can’t hear what you don’t know.” This truly encapsulates the need for score study at all levels of instruction. Granted, it may be easier to identify wrong notes in a major chord in a middle school choir piece than it is to detect slightly misplaced pitch tendencies in an advanced string composition, but that’s only because we generally know what a major chord should sound like and are able to compare the student’s performance with our aural image of what it should be. Going into a rehearsal without this aural image only leads to less productive rehearsals. Although most of the research literature on error detection involves undergraduates, there is some evidence to suggest that having a better aural image of the score leads to more accurate error detection (Crowe, 1996; Hayslett, 1992).

As ensemble conductors approach a performance, it’s not uncommon to invite a trusted friend, colleague, or mentor in to listen to a rehearsal and offer feedback. While sometimes it may be true that the invited person has a better ‘ear’ (although what one means by that probably varies widely), usually they are able to offer comments because they are approaching the music with a fresh palette and are able to hear things objectively. Directors often spend so much time with their groups that they become conditioned to hearing the ensemble perform a particular way and it may be difficult to envision things performed differently. This is why it is crucial for directors to stay anchored in what they envision to be the most accurate performance of the piece they are working on (a musical ‘North Star’, if you will). Many directors enjoy conference performances for exactly this reason – it helps them to recalibrate their mental image of ensemble sound and return to their own ensemble with renewed attention. Listening to recordings of stellar ensembles (at all levels!) and staying in touch with your vision of the piece are important to ensemble development.

## Pay Attention

The psychology literature on attentional processing is ever-growing, mostly as a result of the continued development of technology that allows us to better track whether participants are actually paying attention to what they claim to be paying attention to and better methods of controlling someone’s attention. While the human brain is capable of amazing feats in processing information from peripheral stimuli, there are clear differences in both recognition and retention of information when we are focused on a particular stimulus.

In an ensemble rehearsal, there are multiple such demands on our attention. Even in the simplest of musical textures, there are usually multiple timbral colors to evaluate, intonation of various voices, rhythmic precision, ensemble cohesion, and...and...and. This also doesn’t even take into consideration the visual monitoring of posture, technique, classroom behavior, and the multitude of other eventualities we are supposed to be watching for. It’s easy to see how things slip through the cracks and escape our attention. But what can we do about it?

Contrary to popular belief, humans are incapable of multitasking. Instead, our brains are very adept at helping us to switch our focus between two or more things rapidly. So while we might think we are listening to the soprano line and the alto line simultaneously, we are actually switching between the two very quickly. I like to talk about this as ‘surfing’ (although I’m sure I’m probably not the first to come up with that metaphor). As a conductor, it’s important to ‘surf’ between lines when processing what the ensemble is playing, unless there is something specific that you are listening for. In that case, by all means, focus your attention on the clarinets in the fifth measure because you just worked on that section or you are expecting them to have an issue with that part. But if you find yourself in the scenario described at the beginning of the article, surfing can help you to better evaluate what your students are doing.

## Know Your Blind Spots

The discussion of blind spots in this context is closely related to the previous point about where you are directing your attention. Developing an awareness of where you tend to focus your attention when listening will also help you to fight those tendencies. Some conductors have suggested that we tend to listen to our own instrument or voice parts. For example, tuba players tend to focus on the bass line, sopranos tend to focus on the melody, etc.

If you find yourself constantly addressing the section that you used to call home, that may be a cue for you to begin paying attention elsewhere. Additionally, Stambaugh (2016) found that preservice band teachers were more likely to focus on rhythm errors, while preservice choral teachers were more likely to focus on pitch errors. Sheldon (2004) found that overall, undergraduates were least likely to correctly identify errors in the lowest voice. I only bring these up to demonstrate that, on the whole, conductors have tendencies to focus on specific instrument groups or specific types of errors. Try recording a rehearsal and seeing what types of errors you tend to focus on, then spend a rehearsal isolating errors other than the ones you typically address.

Blind spots might also include other tasks you are doing while the ensemble is performing. Some teachers may periodically ask their students to perform a passage and will listen without conducting, maybe even with their eyes closed.

There is some evidence to suggest that the physical act of conducting may interfere with our ability to detect errors, at least with younger teachers (Forsythe & Woods, 1983; Waggoner, 2011). Additionally, singing along with the ensemble has also been demonstrated to have a negative effect on error detection skills in textures with greater than one part (Byo & Sheldon, 2000). These points reiterate the fact that we cannot multitask, merely flip between multiple activities quickly. If you find yourself at a consistent loss of suggestions for improvement for your ensemble, do a quick mental check to see if you are expending attentional resources in other tasks. Be fully present in the moment when your students are performing.

## Crowdsource It!

The emergence of student-centered learning techniques in the ensemble rehearsal has created discussion about long-standing rehearsal assumptions. One method of promoting student engagement in rehearsals is to involve them in the error detection, or rehearsal, process. At the most basic level, sometimes students are able to hear things from their particular vantage point that you may not be able to. One way to address this is to not be afraid to leave the podium during rehearsal. Listening to the ensemble from various points around the room provides you with fresh listening perspectives. Another way is to simply ask your students what they heard. If they are not accustomed to you asking such questions, it will take some time to develop this rehearsal culture. You must be patient and be willing to wait for your students to respond, otherwise they know that if they wait long enough, you will provide an answer and move on. But, the involvement of your students in the rehearsal process essentially creates satellite receptors – instead of you being the only one responsible for improving the ensemble, you have encouraged your students to also take part in the process.

Taking an ensemble from sight-reading to final performance is a long and complicated endeavor. Daily, you are forced to make countless decisions that impact the final musical product and your students' musical experiences in the process. Regardless of the level or type of ensemble, your ability to detect errors and suggest improvements for your students is a key component of the process. Fortunately, just like any other skill or behavior, there are ways to improve the proficiency and efficiency of the way we approach error detection. With practice and fresh ideas, your students will appreciate a sense of renewed attention and engagement in the rehearsal process.



## Notes

Byo, J. L., & Sheldon, D. A. (2000). The effect of singing while listening on undergraduate music majors' ability to detect pitch and rhythm errors. *Journal of Band Research*, 36(1), 26-46.

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Hayslett, D. J. (1992). The effect of directed focus on the peripheral hearing of undergraduate instrumental music majors (Doctoral dissertation, Kent State University, 1991).

Sheldon, D. A. (2004). Effects of multiple listenings on error-detection acuity in multivoice, multitimbral musical examples. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 52, 102-115. doi:10.2307/3345433

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doi:10.1177/1057083714558421

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doi:10.2307/23019437



Dr. Matthew L. Williams is an assistant professor of music education at the University of Arizona. He teaches courses in undergraduate and graduate music education and advises graduate theses and dissertations, in addition to directing the UA Outreach Honor Band and Tucson New Horizons Band. Matt regularly presents at state and national conferences and his work has been published in national research journals.

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# Recording the Large Ensemble

Over the years recording techniques have evolved and ideas have changed regarding the best way to record large ensembles. Many music educators choose to record their ensembles for various educational reasons. Because of their busy schedule and teaching demands, it is often difficult for music teachers to stay abreast of current recording trends and tips. I hope that this article can provide you with some helpful tips as you attempt to make recordings for your large ensemble.

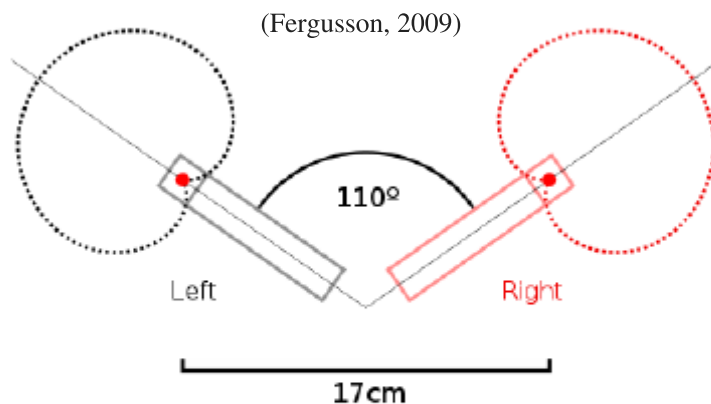
## Study up on recording techniques and microphone polar patterns.

This may seem obvious, but it's always a good idea to research which recording method works for you and the group you are recording. For most performances, I tend to use 2 small diaphragm cardioid microphones mounted as high as I can in what is known as the ORTF recording technique (see diagram). I get a good recreation of what the conductor is hearing and I am also able to capture the entire scope of the ensemble. If it's a really large ensemble, I may add a couple of microphones on the left and right of the stage either in a cardioid or omni-directional pattern and balance them in the mixing process.

Cardioid microphones are good in a live recording because the heart-shaped sensitivity pattern will reject some of the non-performance sound. The omni-directional pattern is a circle shape that picks up everything. It's great in a good sounding hall with no people, but if an audience member makes any noise, the microphone will pick-up the distraction.

The ORTF recording technique consists of having two cardioid microphones, preferably a frequency matched pair, with their diaphragms spaced 17 cm apart at a 110-degree angle from one another. The idea is to recreate the way the human ears hear.

The main complaints about ORTF recording techniques are that the center of the image may suffer a bit, and at larger distances you may experience some low frequency loss. I haven't run into either of these problems, which is one of the reasons I've stuck with this way of recording.



The ORTF Recording Technique with a matched pair of cardioid mics showing the heart-shaped polar pattern.

## Put together a good mobile recording unit.

It would be great to be able to always record in a studio or concert hall so microphone set-up can take place in advance. Often groups perform away from campus so it is a good idea to have a set-up that is easily transported.

There are a multitude of self-contained stereo recording units that record to a SD card and are affordable.

I prefer to carry a bit more with me in hopes of getting a better sounding recording. I have Pro-Tools installed on my laptop, 4 cardioid microphones (most of the time 2 for recording and 2 for backup purposes), a microphone stand with a stereo recording bar on it, plenty of XLR cables of differing lengths, recording interface, and gaffers tape. You can never have too much gaffers tape. Make sure to keep all of your cables tidy. Tape down anything that may be a tripping hazard.

## Get as much information as you can on the performance ahead of time.

Being as prepared as you can prior to a performance will really help when something goes wrong (and it will).

If the performance has video or a PowerPoint presentation try to get it in advance and have multiple ways to play it. Test it all before the performance, if possible. Set up and test everything as early as you can. Preparation is key.

At least half of recording any group is trouble shooting. To reduce stress, always have a good idea of how you are going to approach a recording. Meet with the ensemble director or conductor at their leisure before dress rehearsal. Talk to the director about their expectations for sound and lighting. It may also be beneficial to scope out the venue in advance, especially if the performance is at an off-campus location.

It is also useful to go and watch the dress rehearsal. A lot of ensembles will have some type of dress rehearsal; take advantage of these moments. It is prudent to record dress rehearsals as well so that you and the director can review the audio and make adjustments. Additionally, recording the dress rehearsals affords you the chance to have a back-up recording should something go wrong during the performance.

## Keep it professional.

When recording an ensemble, stay out of the way. People aren't going to these concerts for the recording engineer so make sure everything is set and ready prior to the arrival of the first audience member. Also try to wear muted colors and dress for the event but keep in mind that at some point you may have to crawl under or around something. Comfortable shoes are a priority, as you may need to stand for extended periods of time.

Don't rush to wrap everything up at the end of the performance. Odds are friends and family will want to congratulate the performers. Allowing for the audience to clear the hall will aid in proper clearing of sound equipment and will lower the potential of equipment getting damaged. After performances you will want to leave quickly, so use the "congratulations time" to ensure everything is recorded and saved.

Speaking of saving, SAVE, SAVE, SAVE. It should become a compulsion for you to hit command + S every 10 to 15 minutes. Saving often is probably unnecessary, especially considering a lot of Digital Audio Workstations have auto save features these days, but there is nothing worse than losing something you have been working on for hours and having to start over again.

Recording can be a daunting task. Collecting and maintaining the best equipment possible, placing the microphones correctly, talking to the ensemble director, planning ahead, and frequently saving the recordings will help you in creating the best possible recording for your organization. While there are many ways to record a large ensemble successfully, these tips have worked well for many engineers throughout the industry.

Wai-Kay Carenbauer graduated from the University of Arkansas with a BA in Broadcast Journalism before pursuing an Audio Technology diploma at SAE Institute in New York. He has worked in Pennsylvania, New York, and Arkansas on commercial TV and live studio productions. He is currently the audio technician and concert hall manager at University of Arkansas at Little Rock.



# Ramping up the Voice:

## Vocal Health for All Music Educators

For instrumental and vocal music educators, “Welcome back to school!” means getting back in the driver’s seat again and going into “overdrive.” We will work long hours, ramping up our voices again for prolonged use without a reasonable break. So, what must we do to maintain our vocal health? Do any of these statements sound familiar to you? “My voice sounds tired today,” “I have a dry throat,” “I came down with laryngitis,” or “I just strained my voice after a full week of teaching.” In the midst of working with our students in close environments with rattling chest colds, nasty upper respiratory infections, or the uninvited flu symptoms, we have no choice but to capitalize on our well-being, including adequate sleep, proper hydration, and balanced nutrition (vegetables, fruits, lean proteins), to meet the daily demands in the classroom.

### Maintaining Efficient Vocal Function

Whether you are a singer or not, if you use your speaking voice professionally in anyway, it is essential to know about vocal health. During my years of teaching middle school, I sang a few professional gigs outside of school and I valued any information that would allow me to perform after a full day of teaching. As music educators, our most valuable teaching tool is the ability to communicate through the human voice. If you are not feeling well, it is fine to give yourself a break. Let us begin with a few items to remember before we get fully involved in another school year.

1. Use body stretches and vocal warm-ups before teaching.
  - <https://youtu.be/EB8sY2PNweY>
  - <http://www.capitalregionspecialsurgery.com/ent/voice-health/laryngeal-and-vocal-fold-warm-up-and-exercises/> (Also recommended: check out the two videos by voice specialists.)
2. Skip food or beverages that may create phlegm or dry your throat, such as yogurt, cheese, milk, coffee, or caffeinated teas.
3. Avoid menthol throat lozenges or decongestants (they will dry you out).
4. Rest your voice and do not talk through a severe cold or laryngitis.
5. Contact an Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) doctor, when needed.

### Water Hydration

Our bodies are made up of about 60-70% water. If you feel dehydrated, you may not be able to drink enough water to restore your body immediately. So, the take away is to:

- Drink plenty of water before feeling thirsty (recommended: 64 ounces or a little less than two liters per day).
- Consume foods with high water content, such as pineapples, oranges, bell pepper, cantaloupes, and grapes.

### Checklist of Healthy Vocal Habits

I was invited on two occasions to provide a vocal health workshop for the Arkansas Music Educator’s Association Convention and the Arkansas Choral Directors Association (Region 2) Conference. After meeting a number of veteran and early career teachers who have experienced some sort of vocal trauma (misuse or overuse), I wanted to share a checklist of best practices for healthy vocal habits. Hint: Be mindful of what your voice is telling you.



- Maintain good posture to support your breathing and promote a healthy speaking/singing voice.
- Use a silent cough (make it breathy) to clear your throat.
- Avoid talking when stressed as your voice will tighten and easily become fatigued.
- Take a moment or two to be quiet – “vocal naps,” instead of talking excessively throughout the day.
- Use nonverbal cues in the classroom to reduce speaking or ask one of your responsible students to read announcements, take attendance, or run meetings.

## Environmental Exposures

Your environment should support your vocal well-being. For dry or sore throat symptoms, drink water, herbal tea with honey; gargle with warm salt water, or use glycerin-based lozenges (Pine Bros, Burt's Bees, and Grether's Pastilles) and/or herbal throat sprays with no numbing anesthetics (Vocal Eze, Singer's Saving Grace, and Entertainer's Secret), which will keep your voice hydrated.

Other items to consider may be:

- Avoid talking or raising your voice in loud environments such as sporting events or noisy classrooms, and yes, those favorite restaurants/bars.
- Turn the TV or audio system down instead of talking over them.
- Move away from areas where smoking is taking place.
- Purchase a small, personal humidifier to create moisture in dry classrooms.
- Use a microphone and speaker to preserve your voice in large environments.

## Online Resources

- For more detailed information, I have provided a few online resources on vocal health, including some with portable document format (aka “pdf”), to hang up as reminders in your classroom or rehearsal area throughout the year. Stay well and informed!
- [https://www.entnet.org/sites/default/files/uploads/AboutUs/\\_files/wvd2015\\_marchbulletindosdnts.pdf](https://www.entnet.org/sites/default/files/uploads/AboutUs/_files/wvd2015_marchbulletindosdnts.pdf)
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- <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/UserFiles/works/pdfs/2017-126.pdf>



Dr. Emery Stephens is a Professor of Voice at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He is also an active performer, clinician, and workshop facilitator, and has presented at a number of regional, national, and international conferences. He holds degrees from Gordon College (B.A.), Boston University (M.M.), and a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Performance from the University of Michigan.

# Lead a Legacy

It is our hope that each ArkMEA Journal provides you with articles, tips, and methods that meet your needs as a music educator. One exciting addition to our journal is an interview with a significant music educator from our state called: Lead A Legacy. Our first highlighted music educator is Cathy Williams.

**Interviewer:** Tell us where you taught and how long you were a music educator.

**Cathy Williams:** I am one of the few people who have taught their whole career in the same place. I was the band director at West Jr. High in West Memphis for 18 years. For the last 19 years I have served as the high school band director and instrumental music administrator at West Memphis High School.

**Interviewer:** As an educator, what is a favorite memory that you have had?

**Cathy Williams:** I have had several students who made trips with the band out of the state for the first time in their lives. Seeing their faces when they stayed in a hotel, flew on a plane or performed in an honor band for the first time made my job worthwhile.

**Interviewer:** You've had a long and successful career. What would you say your greatest success has been as a music educator?

**Cathy Williams:** I would feel that it has been helping students understand that music is a gift that can change your life. I have several students who do not have any family members who have ever been to college and some who do not have any one in their families who even graduated High school. It is great to see band change these kids' lives!

**Interviewer:** It's great to hear how invested you were in your students' lives. Who have been your biggest influences?

**Cathy Williams:** My high school band director, Phil Burns and my college band director, Don Minx. Both of these men believed in me and gave me confidence. There were not many women band directors at the time and they both helped me in many ways. I knew I wanted to be a band director in the 8th grade and I was blessed with parents who helped me follow my dream!

*"I would feel that it has been helping students understand that music is a gift that can change your life."*

**Interviewer:** Music education can be a tough gig. Research even suggests that half of those who go into education do not make it past year 5. What do you attribute to your longevity as a music educator?

**Cathy Williams:** I love kids! I feel that being a band director is where God placed me to impact the lives of students. I have always felt music is a gift. It has been a blessing to share that gift with some of the best students anywhere.

**Interviewer:** Each year we have many first year educators enter the profession. What advice do you have for young and developing music educators?

**Cathy Williams:** Surround yourself with good people and work hard. Students will know if you truly care about them or if you are just using them to achieve a great performance. Care as much about the musician as you do about the music.

**Interviewer:** It has been an honor to speak with you and for you to answer some basic questions about your successful career. To close this interview, please give us some final thoughts about your career and words of wisdom that may be helpful to music educators across this state.

**Cathy Williams:** I have been blessed to serve the students and directors in the state of Arkansas. I have traveled to many places and 8 foreign countries because of music. The highlights include two trips to Japan for musical and cultural exchange with directors and students who in turn have traveled to Arkansas. I am one of the founders of the Spirit of Aloha Honor Band and Choir, which takes students and family members to Hawaii every two years for patriotic performances at Pearl Harbor. I have served the Arkansas Bandmasters Association, Arkansas School Band and Orchestra Association, and Phi Beta Mu International Fraternity on the International Board. My words of wisdom to young educators are: "be a life-long learner". If you ever feel that you that you know everything about your subject matter then you should get another job. There are always things to learn. Surround yourself with smart people and people whose strengths are your weaknesses. I have been blessed to work with great people my whole career, I have learned from all of them.

**"Care as much about the musician  
as you do about the music."**

**-Cathy Williams**



# Please join us in welcoming our newest ArkMEA board members!

## Matthew Taylor Innovations Chair



Dr. Matthew Taylor is the Assistant Professor of Music – Saxophone at the University of Central Arkansas. He returns to his alma mater following five years on the faculty at Morehead State University, where he also serves as the Music Program Coordinator. His multifaceted performance career has taken him all over the world to work with Grammy, Tony, Emmy and Oscar award winning artists. As a soloist, he is an advocate for living composers, and is responsible for many commissions and over 50 world premieres within the past 10 years alone. When he is not on stage, Matt is most fulfilled spending time with students—teaching, giving masterclasses, coaching student ensembles, and participating in residencies in public high schools and at universities.

He is a strong believer in the transformative power of music education. Prior to accepting his first professorship, he developed and implemented a music curriculum for at-risk kids in downtown Miami, Florida, where he taught students about Boulez, Steve Reich, and Mozart, and they taught him about Celia Cruz, Drake, and V.I.C. Matthew is an artist/clinician for the Conn Selmer Corporation, and performs exclusively on Selmer Paris saxophones. For more information, please visit his website at [www.matthew-taylor.co](http://www.matthew-taylor.co).



## Matthew Farr

### Choral Chair

Matthew N. Farr is in his 6th year of teaching and is the current Choral Director at Sylvan Hills Middle School. He formerly taught at Mabelvale Middle School 2013-2018. While at Mabelvale, his groups consistently received Superior Ratings and had numerous students in the All region Choirs over the years. His groups have traveled the globe including a Carnegie Hall appearance, singing of the National Anthem at an NBA game, an Orlando tour, and a European Tour. Mr. Farr has adjudicated and cliniced several groups in Arkansas. He also had a group as the features performing group for the 2017 ARKMEA Conference. Mr. Farr enjoys his time at home with his wife and 2 daughters.

## Sarah Labovitz

### Collegiate Chair

Sarah Labovitz is currently the Associate Director of Bands & Coordinator of Instrumental Music Education at Arkansas State University-Jonesboro. She directs the Symphonic Winds, teaches undergraduate and graduate instrumental music education and conducting, and supervises student interns. Prior to her appointment at A-State, Dr. Labovitz served as the Assistant Director of Bands at Washburn University. She earned a BME from Bowling Green State University, a MME from Indiana University, and a DMA in Wind Conducting from the University of Kansas where she studied with Dr. Paul Popiel.



Dr. Labovitz is an active guest conductor and clinician, as well as a contributing author to the Teaching Music Through Performance in Band series. She has recently given presentations at the National Association for Music Education's National In-Service Conference, the Midwest Clinic International Band and Orchestra Conference, and the College Band Director National Association's (CBDNA) National Conference and has served as a production assistant on the NAXOS recordings "Landscapes" and "In the Shadow of No Towers." Her public school experience includes serving as Director of Bands at Athens High School in Athens, OH and Director of Instrumental Music at Admiral King High School in Lorain, OH. She currently resides in Jonesboro with her husband, Dr. Charles Page, the junior high and assistant high school band director for Valley View School District and her two rescue labs, Rosie and Sadie.

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# Editor's Note

Kenneth Goff

It was the first day of school during my third year of teaching. I had just moved into the head director position of a large program in Miami. I worked all summer to guarantee that my year would be amazing. I had my entire year of concerts planned for all five of my ensembles. Daily sight-reading folders were stuffed and ready, well-crafted and sequenced rhythm drills were written, chorales and scales had been selected; I was ready to guide my groups toward our performance goals. I was even wearing a tie! Yep... I was set.

Minutes before the bell rang for my first class, I bent down to pick-up my extremely thorough student handbooks (printed on the finest white semi-gloss, 92 bright, 20 lb. paper) and it happened. You guessed it! I ripped my pants. We are not talking about a little tear that mom can fix, we are talking a tear so large that three men and a young child could walk through it. It was as if time stood still for a brief moment. As my young educational career flashed before my eyes, I believe I went through the stages of grief... denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. What do I do?

As I crab-stepped around my office in an attempt to remain modest and salvage any dignity I had left, I found an old filthy hoodie. I knotted it around my waist and stepped into my classroom and greeted the first student that walked through the door. It was a tough - albeit very drafty first day of school. My best-laid plans had gone awry.

As music educators, we are constantly inundated with advice on how we should prepare for our classes. Each year we start with our best-laid plans but rarely do our plans work the way we envisioned. That's ok. You've probably heard Albert Einstein's famous quote, "The measure of intelligence is the ability to change." As music educators, that is what we do. We adapt, we move from plan a to b to c... We don't give up but most importantly we learn from our trials. Learn from your bad days, learn what doesn't work, talk to colleagues, steal and borrow their ideas.

Regardless if this is year one or year 35, don't do this alone. Often music education is tough because we feel no one gets us or understands us. Strive to connect with other music educators. Learn from them. Plan to make this year the best, and maybe bring an extra pair of pants to school.



Our new editor Kenneth Goff, is the Director of Bands at University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He has been a music educator for 20 years and is an active clinician, guest conductor, and adjudicator. As a secondary school band director, Dr. Goff's bands traveled throughout the Southeast United States, the Caribbean, and Japan. He holds a Ph.D. in Music Education with emphasis in instrumental conducting from Florida State University. Dr. Goff has been published in music education journals and has spoken at conferences throughout the United States.



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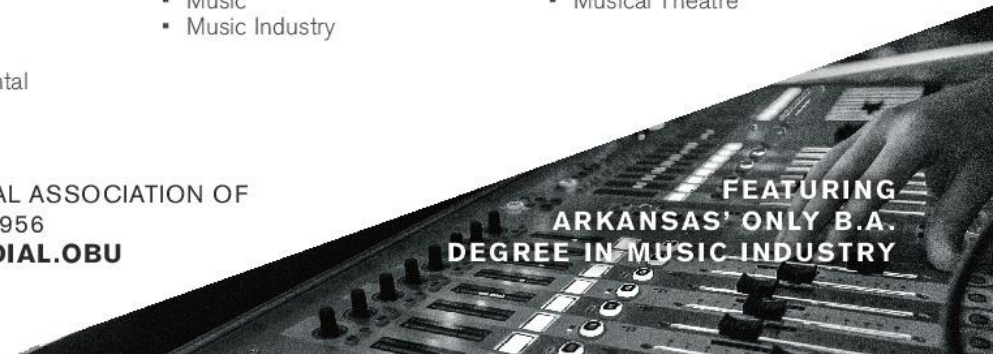
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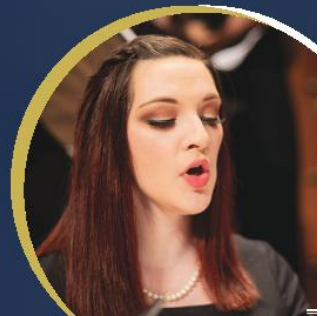
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