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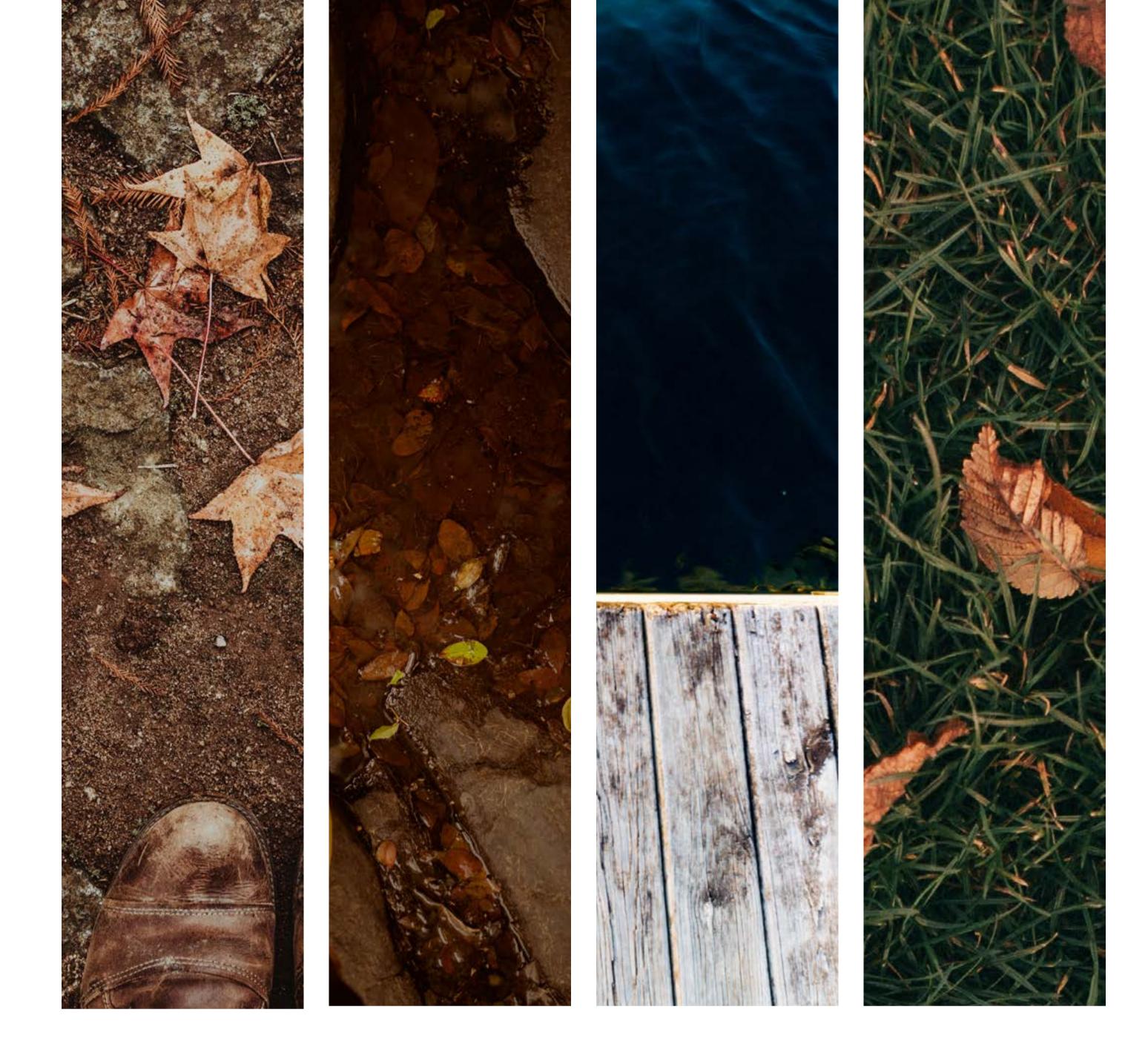


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  KATHY ROBISON



## Welcome to the "New Normal!"

The past few months have surely brought a new perspective to the field of music education. You may now be educating in-person, virtual, or a combination of both. Whatever your situation, I hope that this article will provide you with some suggestions on how to thrive in your environment.

**Breathe.** You are valuable. You probably know by heart all of the statistics about the value of music education. More importantly, you know the positive impact you provide for your school and district as evidenced through the smiles on your students' faces. You know that many students in your school only show up each day because they cannot wait to walk into your classroom. Music educators are a creative bunch. If you relax and analyze your unique situation, you will discover new methods and new opportunities to light up your students' eyes.

Know Your Policies. All of the policies surrounding the "new normal" can be maddening!
Depending upon your contracted music responsibilities and the policies adopted by your local school district, your curriculum and pedagogy may look vastly different from before.
You must be knowledgeable about your restrictions as referenced by the Department of Health guidelines and your local education authority.

In addition, facilities, resources, and materials will play a major role in what and how you are able to teach your classes this year. Always consult with your administrative team before embarking on any musical journeys.

Find the Opportunities. Once you are clear on your restrictions, find every opportunity to make your music class the most fun and engaging experience on your school campus. Music can be so much more than competitions! Although that could still be a vital aspect to your program's success, many of the best musical moments are created through the spirit of creativity, camaraderie, and social engagement. This "new normal" could allow you more time to create a positive culture within your program, reevaluate your curriculum, or strengthen an area of weakness of your pedagogy.

**Be Flexible.** Being a music educator is difficult. It is OK for that incredible lesson or unit you planned to not

work exactly the way you had hoped. Especially this year, you must be able to pivot at a moment's notice. You may never know when or if you will be expected to transition from inperson instruction (in your original classroom or another location) to hybrid instruction to fully virtual instruction.

Even in the "old normal," educators were expected to adapt their schedule due to testing conflicts, inclement weather, last-minute assemblies, and the like. A great way to pivot is to plan as many units as possible while adding adaptations with respect to all possible instructional environments. As one of my former professors, Dr. Deborah Barber (Arkansas Tech University, retired), would say, "Intelligent people have options."

Maintain Structure. Although you have to be flexible, you must maintain structure in your plans. Benjamin Franklin once said, "If you fail to plan, then you are planning to fail."

You must still differentiate for all students in all situations. A well-planned lesson provides time for a poignant introduction, engaging content, and a memorable closure.

the First Day. It is paramount that you establish clear expectations and procedures from day one - especially if you are teaching in another teacher's classroom. Hold fast to your procedures even if they are completely different from the other teacher's. Do something to distinguish you as the lead teacher and that you have officially started your music class. You could even enter the classroom to your own theme song!

**Create a Positive Relationship** with All Staff Members. If you are a veteran teacher, then this should already be a given. Concentrate on developing new relationships with new staff members. If you are a new teacher, this should be your first order of business. Your fellow teacher colleagues will be much more receptive to you invading their space if you have done a great job in this department. Don't forget about your office staff, maintenance staff, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers as well! They are the operational backbone of your successful instruction, and their value is worth much more than gold.

Be a Scavenger. Budgets have been strapped tight this year in the "new normal." If you are having a hard time finding resources, look for grant opportunities within your school district. Lean on your parents and booster organizations to help in your time of need. Local businesses may be an avenue of help as well. You could ask your booster organizations and business leaders to lend a hand in making copies, building props, assisting in instrument and uniform checkouts, staffing your concession stand, or to simply make a small donation to your music organization. You will be most successful if you can clearly state your purposes for raising funds or asking for help.

In addition, check your district's

warehouse for any supplies that you could use before your school district sells them for next-to-nothing in their annual auction. In my district's warehouse, I have found pianos, PA systems, sound equipment, and supplies that I have used to build my mobile music cart and ukulele cart. After scavenging my district's warehouse, I saved a lot of money for utilizing what was once discarded by others within my school district.

Be Overly Positive. Be happy that we are getting paid to do what we love for a living. Many people around the country are hurting due to the "new normal." We know that "where words fail, music speaks" (Hans Christian Andersen). Be that teacher, that community member, that spouse, that parent, that person that uplifts rather than deflates. Be ready to fight the negative that is surrounding education. The kids need us now more than ever before to be a positive voice in their lives.

It's OK to Make Mistakes! Where have you heard this before? In many aspects, novice and experienced educators are on equal footing this year. How do you successfully connect with and educate a student when both you and them are behind a mask? How will technology help or hinder your instructional techniques? What kind of new procedures will you have to implement due to your local health department and district guidelines? It is OK to make mistakes as long as you learn from them!

Know Your Resources. Who can help you be successful? What resources do you need in order to accomplish your instructional goals? What kind of training do you need in order to expand your pedagogy? Do you know all of your school district policies and procedures? Asking yourself these questions is a good starting point toward finding all of your available resources.

Transcend Expectations. This is a time where you can distinguish yourself as a valuable member of your educational team. Think of ways

that you can promote yourself and your program positively within your building and community. There will be many times this year where you could offer your talents to contribute to the mission of your school. If time is available for you, immerse yourself in your school culture, and you will be intrinsically rewarded.

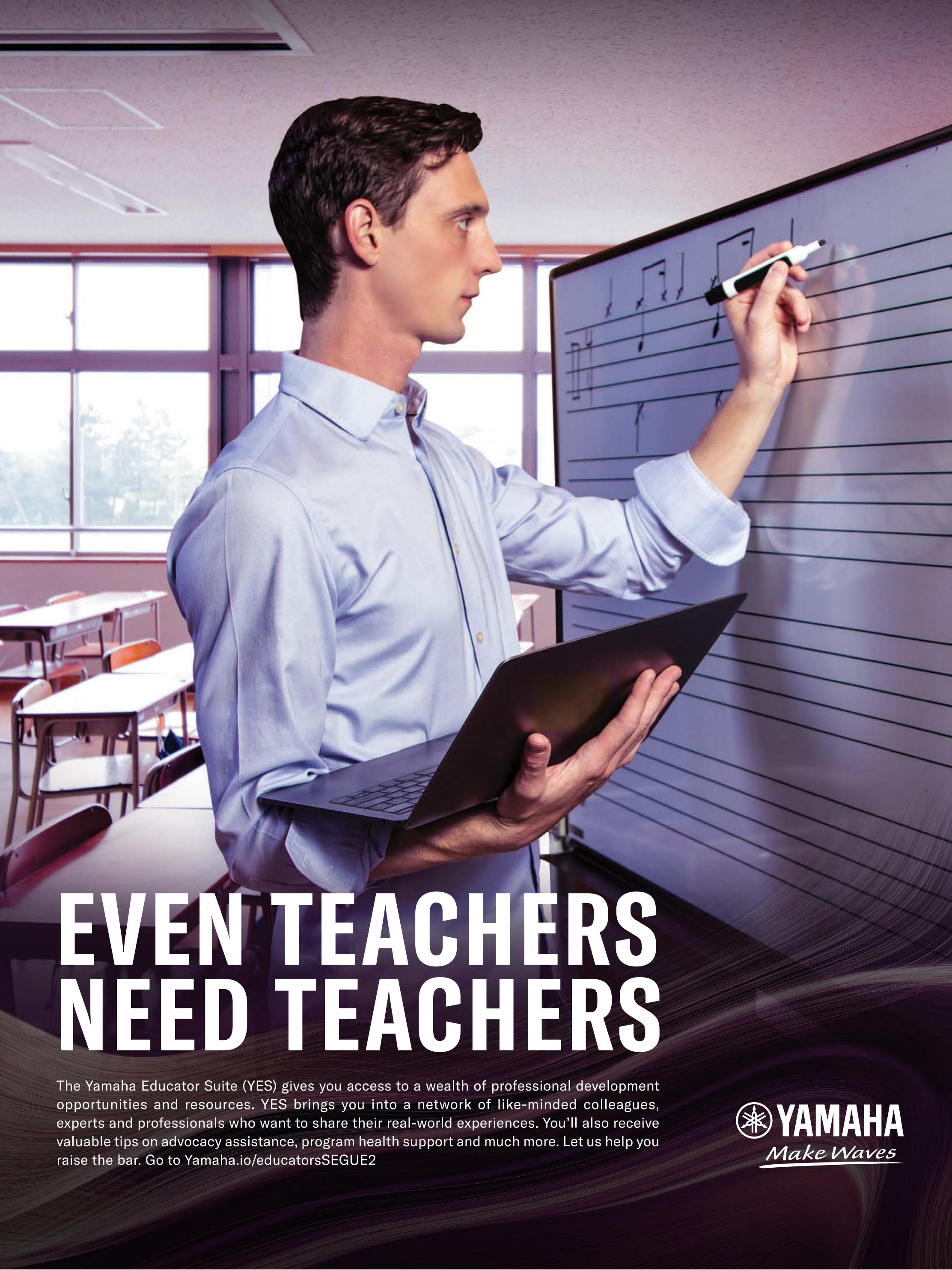
Take Time for You! Self care is crucial to maintaining your physical, mental, and spiritual health. How can you use your daily schedule to your advantage? Try to find hidden time within your day that you can accomplish tasks in order to keep your work at work. You can then have more time to focus on personal matters, recharge, and reflect at the end of your day. This is how you stay at the top of your game each day.

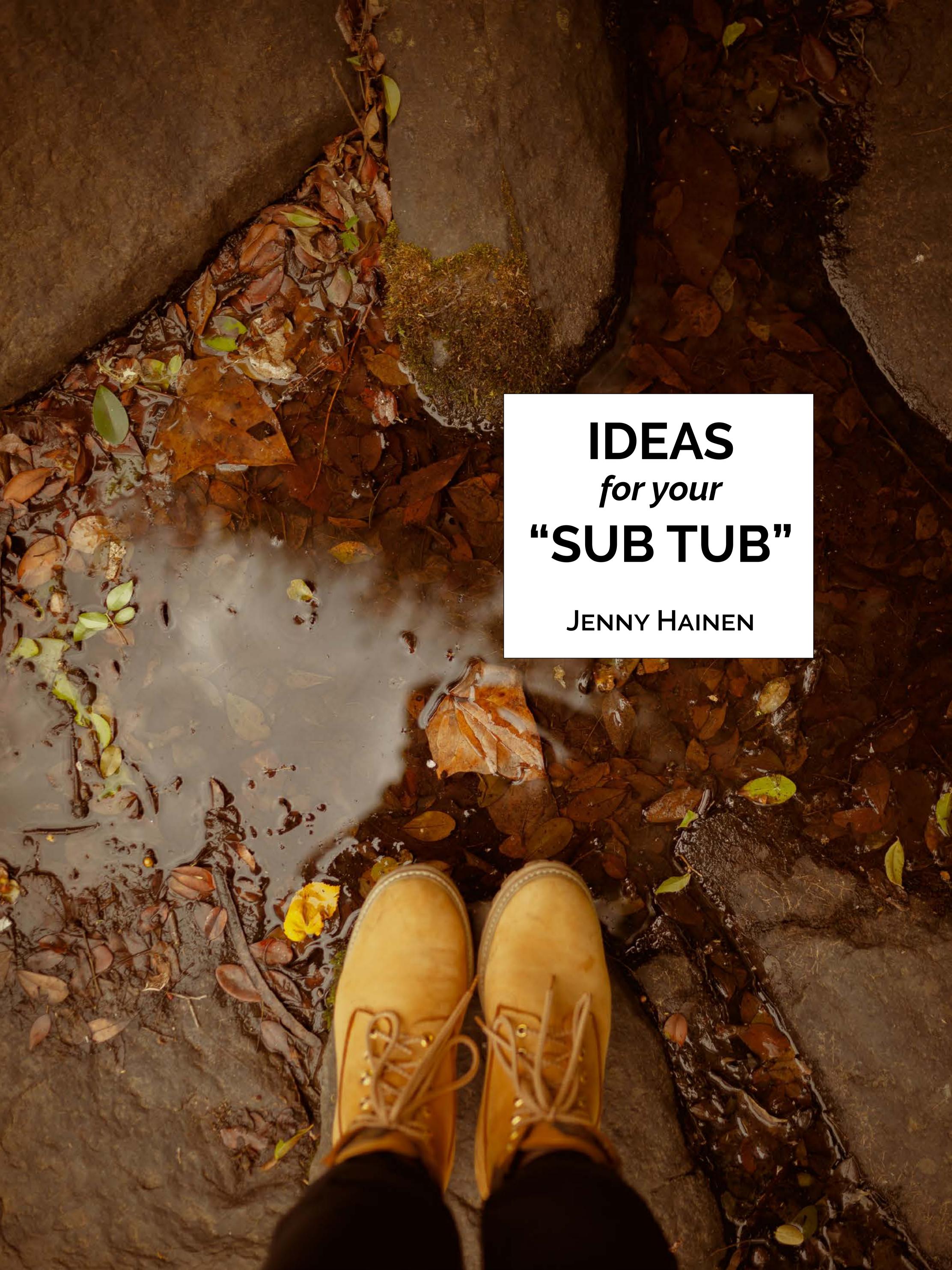
Closing. Unquestionably, we are in "the new normal." Those who learn to creatively adapt will thrive in this new environment. I wish you all the best in navigating these uncharted waters. Lean on your creativity, take chances, give yourself grace, and never be afraid to ask for help. I leave you with this profound quote by Claude Debussy, "Works of art make rules; rules do not make works of art."



James Maestri is the General Music Teacher at East Hills Middle School in Greenwood, Arkansas. He has more than 10 years of teaching experience in instrumental music and general music education.

He has a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Arkansas Tech University and a Master of Science degree in Educational Leadership from Arkansas State University. You may contact Mr. Maestri at james.maestri@greenwoodk12.com for more information.







# Ideas for Your *Sub Tub*by Jenny Hainen

#### Get yourself a Sub Tub!

Let your next door classroom neighbor know where it is, perhaps even your principal and school secretary. Let them know this is where all of your sub plans are in case of emergency. Hopefully you would have time to get everything ready for everyday, but a Sub Tub is great for an emergency! Pack it full and it's ready to go!

- I found a beautiful teal plastic bin and I labeled it with a big SUB TUB lettering on the front! Make it very easy to find without you present.
- For the time we are in, I would definitely have 14 days worth ready to go!
- Only use activities where a sub could EASILY socially distance. Both them and the children.
- Don't forget that children have their own art packs in the classroom. If it's an activity that requires art stuff, tell the teacher ahead of time to please send students with their personal art packs!

### I have loved using the new <u>Essential Elements</u> <u>Music Class</u> interactive site.

One feature I use is the Playlist creator. Once you have your playlist made, simply load your music and activities into the playlist. You have the option to "share" the playlist by code, which means you could do this creation from home or anywhere and it be

shared on any format and you never have to give out your password to anyone, they will only have a link to that specific 'Playlist."

- Works great with flipgrid, classroom, seesaw. . . . Any of them!
- You can create by grade level, topic, or all in one! It is totally up to you to build what works best for your school.
- Pre-print direction and the codes to stick in folders of individual lessons in your Sub Tub!

### Allow yourself to mess up and know it's gonna be ok.

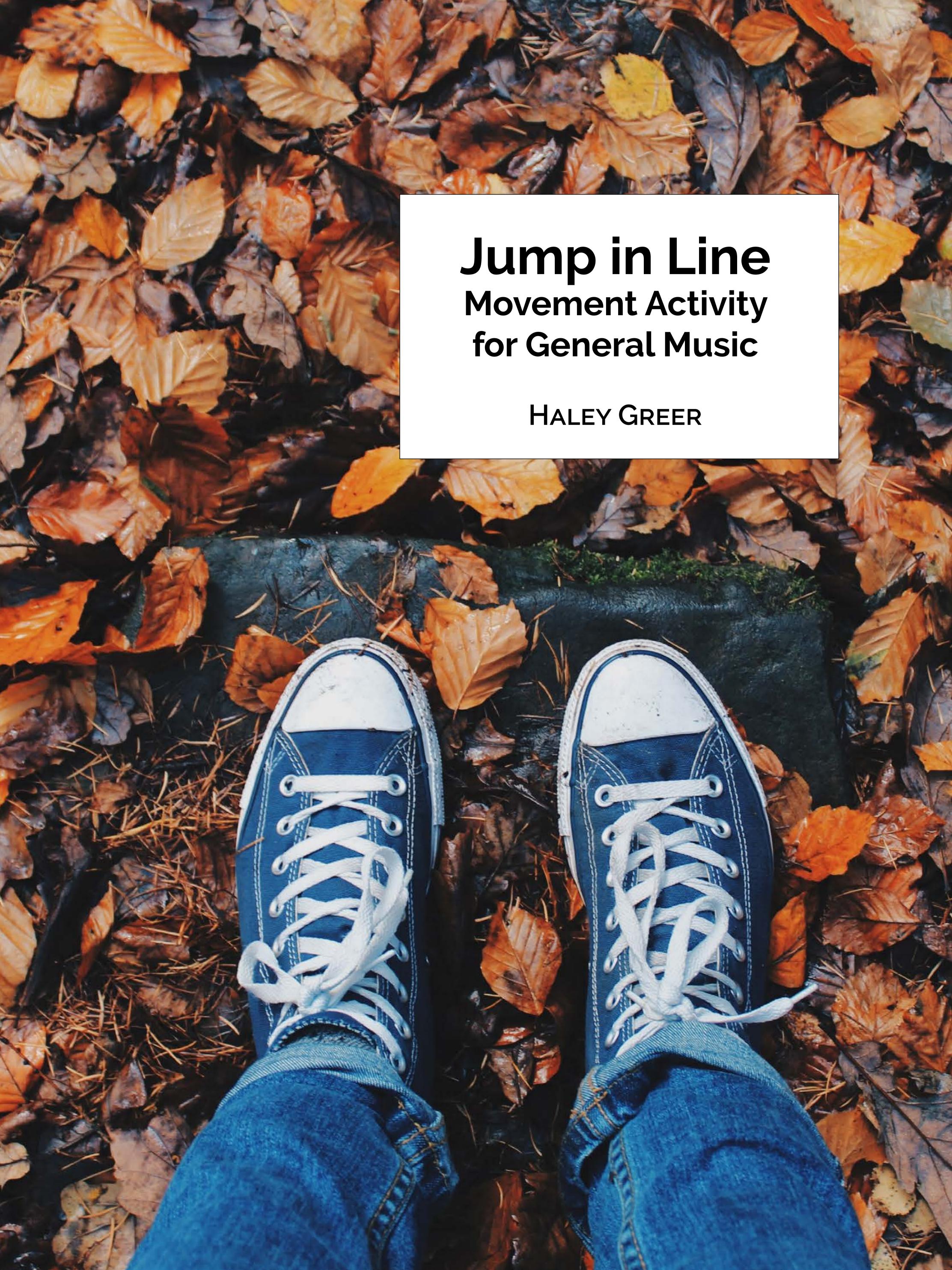
Prepare the absolute best you can and then prepare a little more and then see what happens. You'll know how to do it better the next time!

- Breathe. Offer grace to yourself and others.
- Breathe. Know that never are things perfect the first time you try them.
- Breathe. A wise philosophic-philosopher once said, "Life's a garden, dig it? You gotta keep on keepin' on. You gotta make it work for you."
- Breathe.



Jenny Hainen is an elementary music specialist, a drum circle and rhythm event facilitator, and a certified aromatherapist. Her drumming workshops, PD workshops and other events have been enjoyed around the country. Jenny focuses on the art of deep listening in order to bring groups of all ages to new levels of musicianship by utilizing and building on simple skills for purposeful in-the-moment music

making. Jenny has earned her Masters in GTC and is Orff, WMD, VMC, and R2R certified.



# How to Play "Jump in Line" by Haley Greer

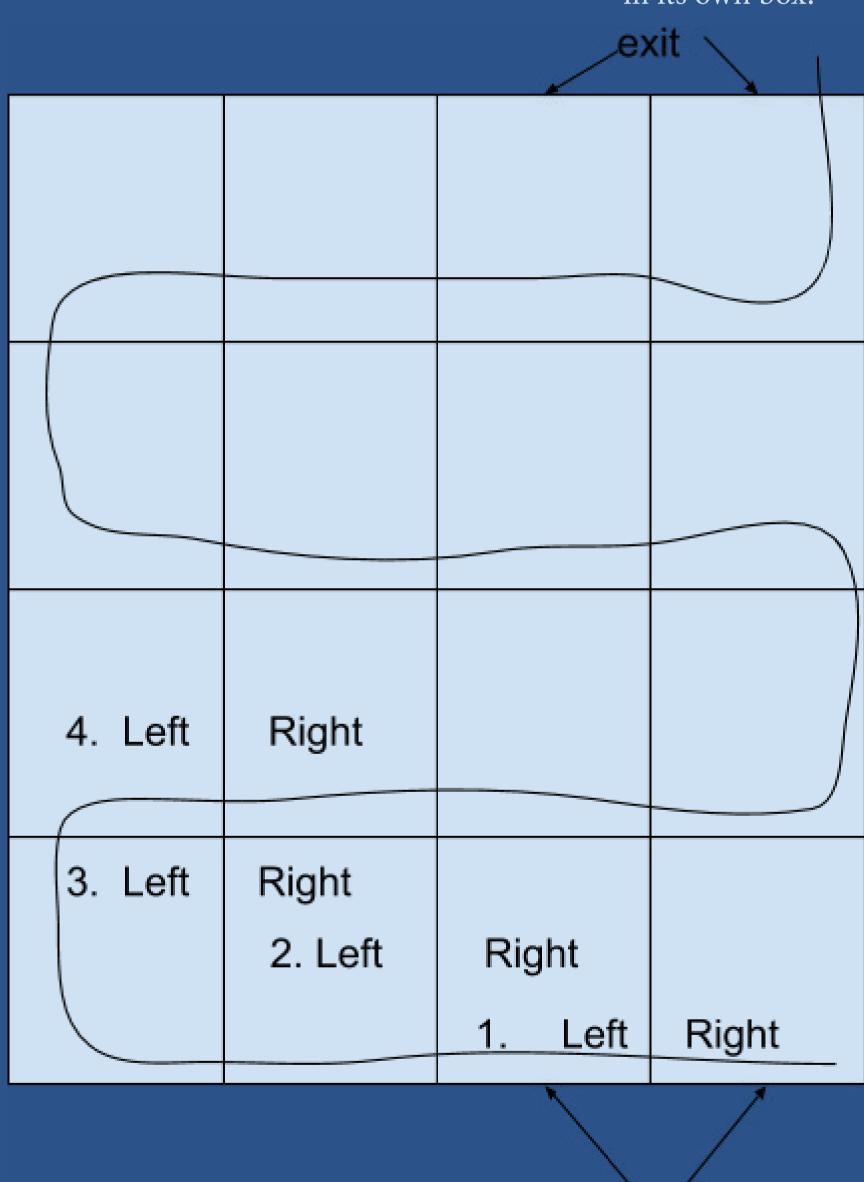
### Start by downloading the song *Jump in Line* by Harry Belafonte.

Next, lay out a 4x4 grid. The boxes need to be big enough for one foot to fit inside. I used painter's tape on my carpet because it comes up easily without leaving sticky residue.

Play about 30 seconds of the song. Have students jump the slow steady beat (half notes) non-locomotor. This is the tempo they'll move to.

Designate the entry box and have students line up outside of it.

1. Student Q jumps into the first two boxes on the bottom row - each foot in its own box.



Entry point

For a helpful video demonstration, check this out!

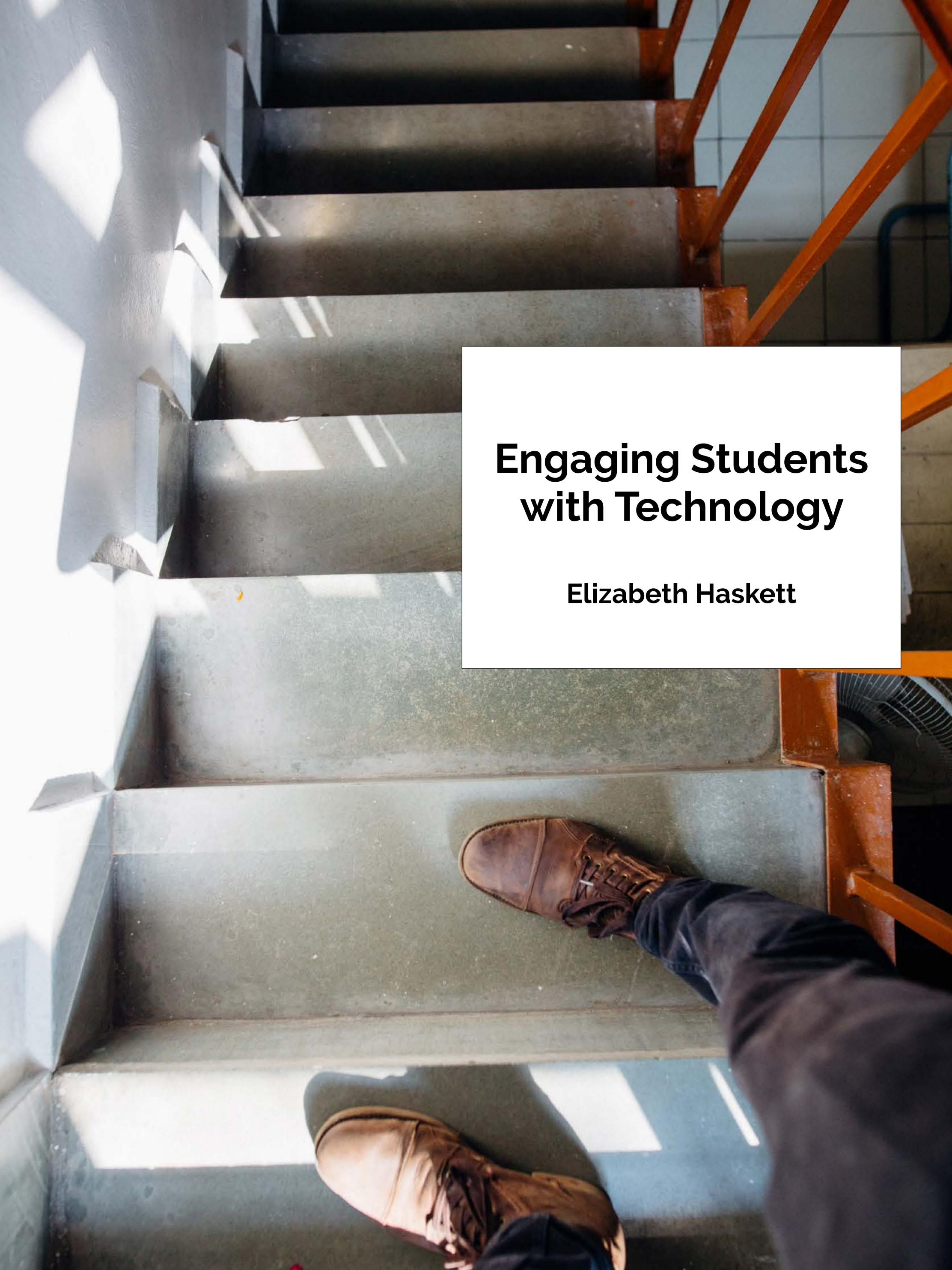
- 2. On the next beat, Q jumps over <u>one box</u> to the left. This means that Q's left foot moves over to a new box and Q's right foot moves to the box previously occupied by the left foot.
- 3. Q repeats this process again. Now Q has reached the far left edge of the grid. When Q starts this jump, student R jumps in at the entry point. Both Q and R will be on the same row together-four feet in four boxes.
- 4. Q's fourth jump will be both feet forward to two new boxes on the row above. When R takes step 4, student S enters the grid, etc.
- 5. Repeat steps 2-4, except moving to the right. Repeat again, moving to the left. Repeat a final time, moving to the right. Jump out of the grid with both feet and get back in line to do it all again!

The hardest part for my students is remembering to only move over one box. They always want to jump to two completely new boxes!

Pre-COVID, this was such a fun activity because up to eight students would be in the grid at a time, which meant getting to go through it several times before the song was over. We swung our elbows back and clapped on the stomps. We also clapped over our heads on the four big drum beats towards the end of the song. Now, distancing means that as the first student is exiting the grid, the second student will be starting so that only one student is in the grid at a time. Masks on, because they'll be laughing and breathing hard! Better yet, go outside if the weather permits.



Haley Greer is ArkMEA president. She is an Intermediate Music Teacher and GT Coordinator at Monticello Schools.



While technology can make us all crazy sometimes, we can use it to our advantage when we teach. Especially when we teach music! Let me introduce you to a few of my favorite resources that I use when trying to get students composing and making music as fast as possible!

This website is a crowd favorite and great instructional resource. Once you access the website, click "try web version" and then select which musical style you want to use. Only the top four styles are available on the desktop version; however, if students want to purchase an app for a smart device, all the styles are unlocked. After selecting a style, click the play button, and a screen pops up with several shirtless cartoon characters. There are four categories of icons below them, with the top left being the bass or beat sounds, the top right being the "strange" sounds,

as my students call them, the bottom left being harmony, and the bottom right being melody. All you have to do is drag and drop one of the pictures onto the cartoon person, and the sound associated with the picture starts playing.

I have students come up to the board one by one and select a sound. Once all the characters have a costume on, we have a quick ten second dance party. Then, I either clear all of the characters' costumes, or select a new style back at the home page.

My students are engaged and excited from kindergarten to fifth grade. In fact, I have former students emailing me and telling me about how they are still using Incredibox. The older students have figured out that if a certain combination of costumes is on the characters, it unlocks a secret music video. All of the videos are safe for school, and the students love them. You will want to make sure that your school's VPN allows the site.

One more way you can use Incredibox is by

downloading it onto an iPad or have it on a laptop and using it as a center if you are doing rotations for a lesson. It can also be a great cool down for a squirrly student, or a distraction for one who needs to just be creative for a minute. The beats are always solid, the melodies are great,

and the students always leave smiling and begging to play Incredibox again!

The second resource that I have been using lately was shared with me by my colleague Mrs. Sorrells. This website is called "Bongo Cat", and yes, it is based off of the meme. I allow for cookies by clicking "got it" when the box pops up on the bottom left corner of the screen. All students have to do is use the letters and numbers on their keyboard to control the cat and its instruments. There is a bongo, cymbal, tambourine, cow bell, marimba, keyboard, and the students favorite:

a "meow" button. After reviewing meter and time signatures with fifth grade, I had students compose a four measure song in 2/4, 3/4, or 4/4 time. The students loved it, and even came up with the idea of having a "catorchestra" where different students played different instruments and one

student conducted. The site can also be used when discussing different instruments. I had pictures of the instruments, and students put them into various patterns and I played those patterns for them so they could hear what it sounded like.

Some honorable mentions include Patatap, Record Tripper, and Isle of Tune. Patatap is a keyboard controlled website, where each key plays a different sound and makes a different shape on the screen. Hitting the spacebar makes the background a different color. The two downsides to this one is that again it does not work well with the ipads, and also that there are some strobing effects, which could harm students with certain medical issues. Other than that, it is addicting and visually satisfying even to adults!

Record Tripper is a website I would use for





"All students have to do is use the letters and numbers on their keyboard to control the cat and its instruments. There is a bongo, cymbal, tambourine, cowbell, marimba, keyboard, and the students favorite:

a "meow" button."

3rd-5th grade due to its difficulty. Students learn how to "scratch" a record during a tutorial, and then play games where they have to speed up, slow down, and scratch a record to get a ball through a maze. The other interesting thing about this website is that the record is "Alice in Wonderland," so it is a read story with music in the background. I love using this website to emphasize beat versus rhythm.

Finally, Isle of Tune is not only a website but also a very popular app! While it does cost \$2.99 in the app store, I used some yearly funds to purchase the app for my school ipad that I use for centers or one on one time. The website is free to use, and students love it. They spend time creating a little town for cars to drive through. Every tree, lamp, house, and road they build makes new sounds, so as the cars drive through the map, it creates a one of a kind composition. Eventually students figure out the sounds each object makes and they work to create a beat or a melody that they find interesting. This is great for sub plans, getting to know students, and something to show students for use at home. The best part is you can use it on an ipad in the web

browser! Any time I can get students making music and learning when they think it is a game I feel accomplished.

I hope some of the resources help, or at least give you one more thing to play with in your spare time! We will make it through this year, and come out better music educators because of it.

Elizabeth Haskett is a pre-k through 5th grade music teacher



for the Little Rock School District. She graduated from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock with a bachelor's of music education and is currently finishing a master's of music education at the University of Central Arkansas. She has had a passion for music her whole life and loves sharing the gift of

the arts with students of all ages. She especially enjoys finding new ways to teach music using new methods and technology.

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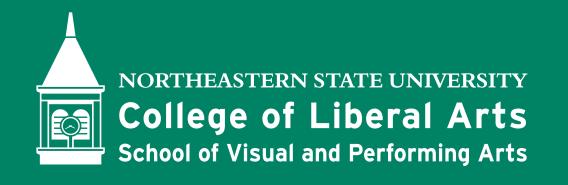
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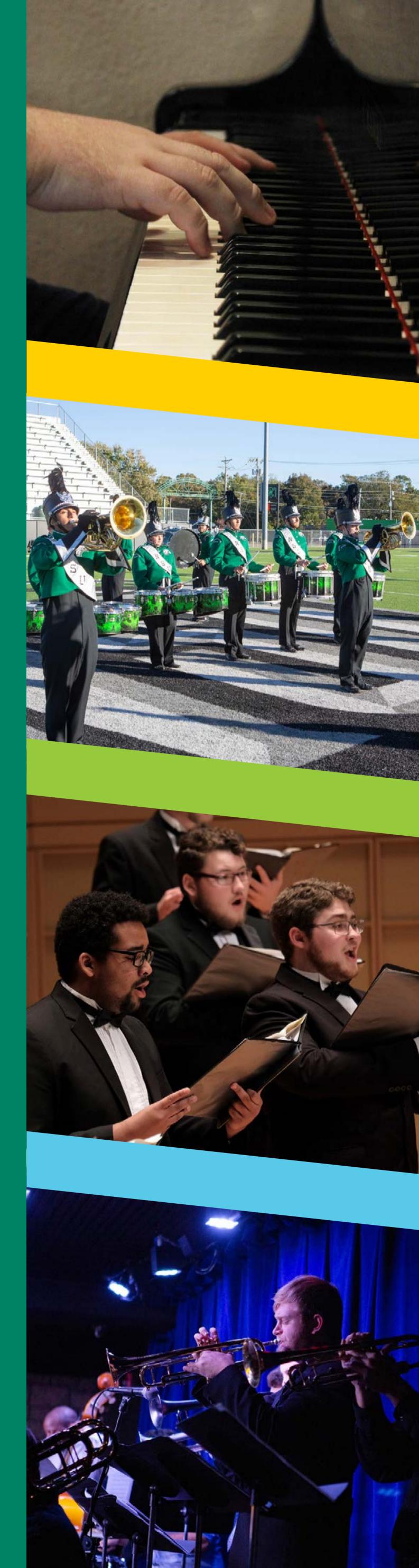
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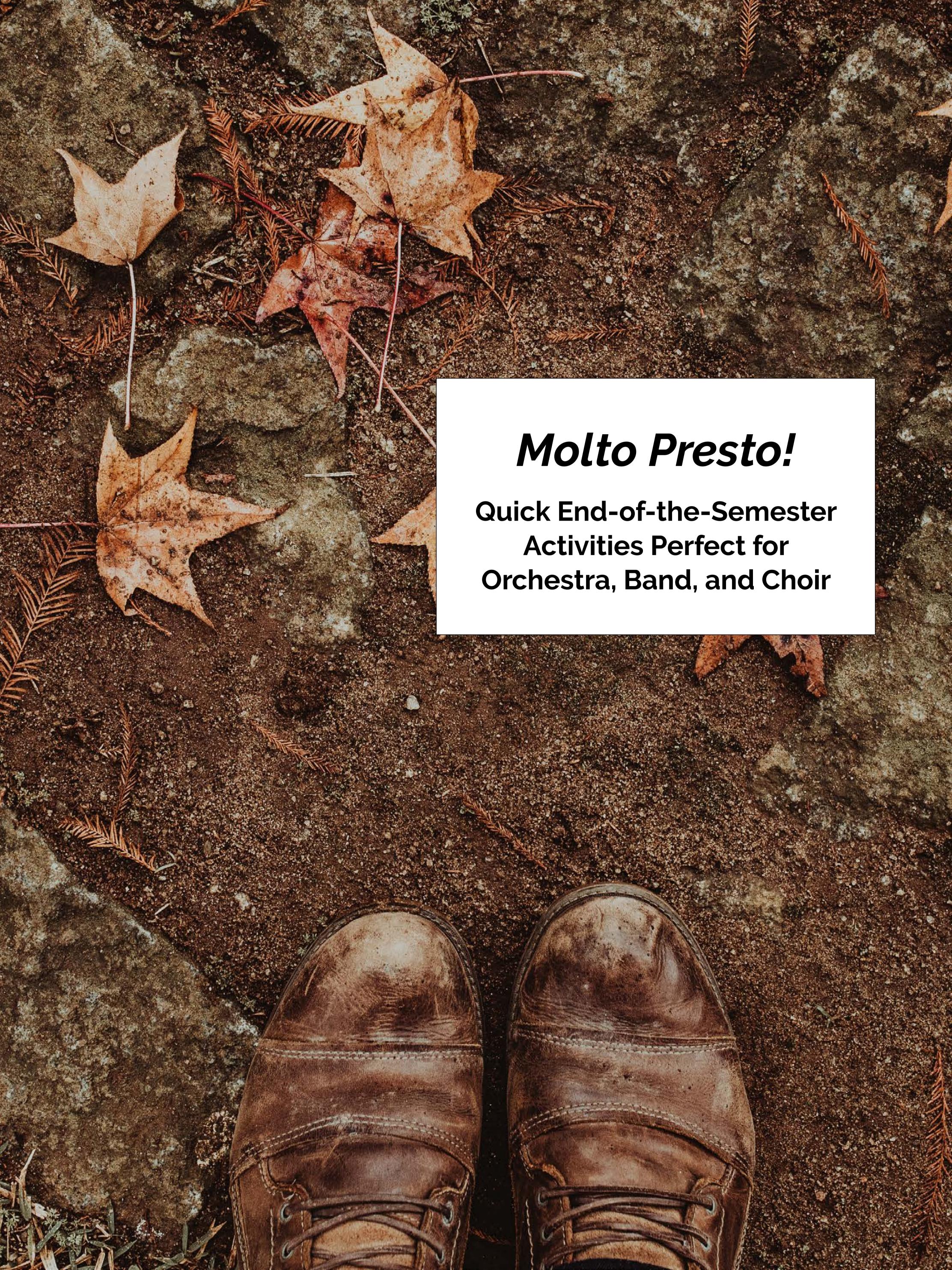
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We all know as musicians and music teachers that rests are essential in music. Rest is also necessary for our daily life. My husband is a preacher and he loves to use acrostics and alliteration, so I am going to give you an acrostic for "rest."

R-Rural Rides. In March 2017, I completed my final round of chemotherapy for ovarian cancer. When my husband picked me up he was driving a red 2003 Mustang convertible. This had always been my dream car. I thought he had rented it for the afternoon. Wrong!! He had bought it for me to celebrate the end of my treatments. Since that time I have driven the car very little. But I love to be chauffeured in it. It has become our vehicle for rest and relaxation. On sunny days when it is around seventy degrees, we hit the roads of rural Arkansas. We have driven all over our state and it has helped both of us to take a step back from the worries and stresses of every day.



E-Educate Your Heart. This can be anything that you learn just for you. It might be teaching yourself a new instrument. During the pandemic shut down I decided to learn the ukulele. A few minutes every day helped me find joy in learning the basic chords. This can also be reading for fun or education. Find something that speaks to your soul! I alternate between historical fiction, self-help books, and books about music and teaching. I will read one fiction book and one non-fiction. I try not to read two fiction books consecutively, so that I can stay grounded in the real world.

S-Start with Some Art. I am not a visual artist by any means. I decided to paint some quotes for my classroom. I painted quotes about music. I painted pictures of keyboards. I painted treble clefs and eighth notes. My artwork will never be in a museum. Currently it is not even hanging in my classroom, because I am traveling from room to room. But painting helped my soul and mind to rest. I decided it did not have to be perfect. It didn't even have to be good, but it was good for me!! Adult coloring books are also a great stress reliever. You get to make the choices of the colors you want, whether you use crayons, markers or colored pencils. It gives you a small sense of control of what is happening in your world.



T-Take a Walk. We all know that exercise is important to our health. Often, when I take a short walk I start off tired and lethargic. But as I walk, I take in the fresh air and I end up walking longer than I intended. We take walks with our dog, who also keeps us entertained. If you are walking with someone else it gives you an opportunity to talk about events of the day or plans for the future. If you are walking alone, you can think and work through problems to find solutions. Breathe in deeply, notice your surroundings, enjoy moving your body and energizing your mind.

As teachers, we lead busy, stressful lives. REST can make all the difference in a piece of music and in ourselves. If you leave out the rests, the music is not quite right. Without rest, neither are we.



Kathy Robison serves as secretary of ArkMEA. She has taught elementary music for 38 years in the Newport School District. Kathy also serves as the President of the Central Arkansas Orff Chapter and the Iron Mountain Regional Arts Council. Kathy is married to David Robison, the Audio Events Specialist at Harding University. They have three adult children and one precious granddaughter!!



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