

# ArkMEA



Arkansas Music Educators Association

A "Conducting  
6-Pack"

Fall Conference

Beyond the Surface:  
The Freedom of  
Artistry

Honoring Florence  
Price and William  
Grant Still

Educator Program  
Highlights:  
Terry Hicks and Tim  
Oliver

De-Stress for  
Success!

Lead a Legacy:  
Julia Reynolds

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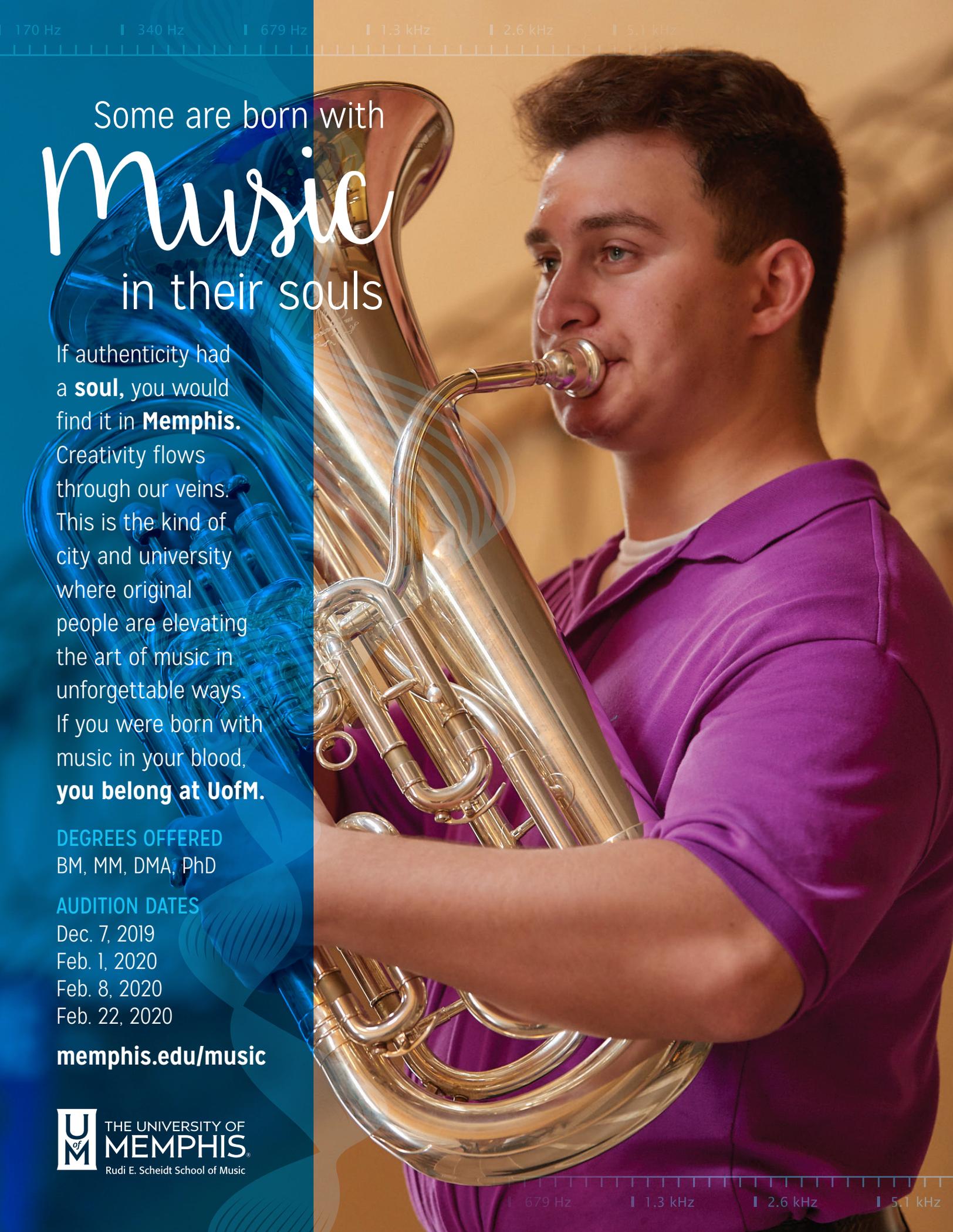
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# Table of Contents

President's Note.....	4
Beyond the Surface: The Freedom of Artistry.....	6
A Day of Play-Summer Professional Development..	8
A "Conducting 6-Pack" for Music Educators.....	10
Fall Conference.....	14
Starting Fresh for the New Year: Tips for the Non-String Player.....	16
Honoring Florence Price and William Grant Still...	19
Arkansas Music Educator Music Program Highlights.....	20
De-Stress for Success!.....	23
Lead a Legacy-Julia Reynolds.....	24
Editor's Note.....	26

## Fall Professional Development, Choral Festival, and Honors Orchestra: Friday November 1, 2019

More information can be found on page 14 and  
our website [arkmea.org](http://arkmea.org).

The registration form can be found on page 15  
and on the ArkMEA website.

Whether you plan on preregistering or paying at  
the door please fill out the following google form.  
This form will help the ArkMEA board members to  
have a more accurate number of participants on  
the day.

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# President's Note:

## Haley Greer-ArkMEA President



Hello!

As I'm writing this, the melody for "Welcome Back Kotter" is going through my mind. You may not be teaching in the school you grew up in, or even the one you taught at last year, but the sentiment is the same-welcome back!

When I return to school in August, I always say, "it's like summer never happened," because boy, does it fly by! If you're like me, you pack a combo of fun, professional development, projects, relaxation, and travel into your free summer days. No wonder it goes by in a blur! But I have proof that summer did indeed happen - pictures, certificates, newly refinished barstools, and a refreshed outlook full of ideas and plans for the upcoming year.

Some of my new ideas are coming straight from our Summer Workshop with Cristi Cary Miller. What a fun day we had with her all around the state, thanks to live streaming! Technology has enabled us to continue striving to meet our mission of bringing quality professional development to the music teachers of Arkansas. We are so grateful to Lana Hallmark (ADE) and the people of AETN who made that possible for the second year in a row.

ArkMEA's next professional development opportunity is the Fall Conference on November 1. Check out the Schedule at a Glance in this issue of the Journal to see what's in store for you. Do you have outstanding singers or orchestra players in grades 4-5-6? Then sign them up to be a part of our Festival Chorus and Orchestra. Do you teach at the college level? Then bring some students with you to introduce them to the professional world. We hope to see you in Little Rock!

If you're not already a member, here are some reasons to join NAFME/ArkMEA:

- Countless supportive resources on the website
- The right to vote on our constitution/bylaw revisions. They can be read and voted on through our website, [www.arkmea.org](http://www.arkmea.org), by mid-September. Voting will close on November 1.
- Ability to bring students to Fall Conference and participate in Music In Our Schools Month concert
- Eligibility to serve on the ArkMEA board. If you're ready to develop your leadership or contribute your ideas, contact us.

Membership is the lifeblood of any organization-join today!

I wish you a year of merry music making with your students!

Haley Greer

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# Beyond the Surface: the Freedom of Artistry

As music educators, we have fond memories of our beginnings in this honorable profession. We did not choose to teach music because of promises of great fortunes. We chose to teach music because we love it, and as we grew into young adults, we chose to continue in the field because of a deep-rooted belief that we can make a difference for future generations through music.

## Distractions in our work

As veteran teachers, we still stand by these beliefs. But there have been growing pains along the way, as with anything of value in life. Sometimes we find ourselves struggling with distractions and other necessary tasks that can take over, crowding our time and freedom for personal study and solitary thought that leads to artistry and creation. We find ourselves living by a To-Do List. This can become restricting, although it is often necessary. We find ourselves content with checking off tasks from a list as if that is the ultimate way of being productive. But most of the time, these are really nothing more than tasks, empty of any valuable meaning.

## When “the job” gets in the way of being an artist

How many of us have found ourselves in a rut that leaves little to no time for artistry? We chose this profession because the ideal of artistry is the ultimate goal, but it is easy to let things pile up and replace the time we want to spend as artists. When we find ourselves feeling this way, there are a number of options. It does not necessarily mean it is time to leave a job. Perhaps it simply means it is time to re-assess time management. It is important to know when the job itself has become stifling or when it is only because we have allowed other things to interrupt our mission of artistry.

## Setting boundaries and avoiding time wasters

There are a number of things in our daily lives that can be labeled as time wasters if they get out of hand. We all begin our day with a number of things we know we need to accomplish during work hours. How many of us have begun every day for years with email? I have found over time that this is a sure-fire way to ensure forgetting what really needs to be accomplished and to end up working up longer than necessary in a day's time. When I begin my day with what was already on my mind, I find my day to be more efficient. When I begin my day with email, I can easily spend the workday just trying to catch up with requests from emails, resulting in lack of score study

and planning that I need to be a good teacher and a successful artist. Checking email once before noon and once before the end of the day works for me. Email is just one example of such interruptions that can take over our lives unless we find a routine that works. Of course, we are all different. It is important to find what works for you.

### Seeking out inspiration

As music educators, we spend much of our lives in leadership positions. We are almost always "in charge" in some capacity. It is important to be an audience member too. We find inspiration when we experience what other artists have to offer.

I was recently an audience member at a performance that changed my life. The performance was miraculous. The performers drew me in, and I found myself feeling and understanding things I had never understood before. I understood poetry and song settings I had not studied in depth on my own, through the interpretation of these two master artists and their performance that evening. As working artists, it is easy to become somewhat immune to such a feeling, and being an audience member allows us to let our guards down and remember. Through this performance, I was reminded that music can be transcending. I was reminded what it is like to allow myself to be overcome by song.

### Artistry as the ultimate goal

As teaching artists, we have to balance organizational skills with artistry. We lead through efficiency and artistry simultaneously. So it follows that there will of course be some days that are more focused

on efficiency and "getting things done." That is life. But to uphold our artistic ideals is important, lest we forget why we chose to be teaching artists in the first place. It is a large part of who we are as human beings and of our own personal peace and happiness. It is as important to us as the air we breathe, so we must take care to remember and protect our time to be artists.



Lorissa Mason is the Director of Choral Activities and Vocal Department Chair at the University of Arkansas Little Rock. Dr. Mason studied music and conducting under Dr. Robert Bode at the University of Missouri – Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance. Prior to her doctoral studies at UMKC, Dr. Mason completed her Master of Music in Choral Conducting at Texas Tech University as a student of Dr. John Dickson. Dr. Mason enjoyed a thirteen-year career teaching high school choir in Texas. During her conducting career, she has conducted in workshops and performances throughout the United States and in Italy. Dr. Mason currently resides in Little Rock, Arkansas, with her husband Brady and her son Silas.

# A Day of Play! With Christie Cary Miller



For the second summer in a row, ArkMEA hosted a one-day workshop at the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center in Little Rock. Nationally renowned music educator Cristi Miller presented “A Day of Play” to attendees both in person and via simulcast at the state’s educational cooperatives, thanks to the Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN). Lana Hallmark, Fine Arts Specialist with the Arkansas Department of Education, was a crucial player in the making of the event, and we are so grateful for her service.

Mrs. Miller brought tried and true activities from her own classroom for K-8 grades, including general music and choir. The day began with movement to “Orinoco Flow” and a fun patting game with “Dum Ditty”. Jenny Hainen, the ArkMEA Elementary Chair was present and she recalls “seeing the smiles from all participants!” Cristi has a great sense of humor and had us laughing throughout the day. She also challenged us with activities such as thinking ahead with “Row Your Boat”, in which we had to omit words as we sang out loud, and identifying who was singing our name with only aural skills using the song, “Hello, Neighbors!” Greg Pearson, choir teacher from Lakeside Schools in Lake Village, used the latter as a way to learn his students’ names at the beginning of school. I plan to use “Boogie Down” for creative movement, as well as a way to learn names. The day was packed with so many wonderful activities that addressed the sing, say, dance, play approach to teaching music to children, I can’t possibly list them all! We closed the day with a reading session of 10 songs, which were bound book style, courtesy of Hal Leonard Publishing Company.

When asked what she remembered best about our day together, Mrs. Miller said, “I loved the positive participation from the participants. They kept everything fresh and focused and helped move the session along. Great people in Arkansas!” We certainly thank Cristi for preparing such a wonderful day of learning and taking the time to be with us.

There’s nothing more authentic than hearing the author explain the intentions behind their creations. Let us know who you’d like to see in person in Summer 2020!





# A “Conducting 6-Pack” for Music Educators: Practical and Realistic Ideas for More Efficient Musical Communication

**A**s the summer winds down and we begin to plan and prepare for another year of music making, it can be helpful to self-assess our teaching and conducting. Some music educators leading ensembles do not consider themselves conductors. Please let me suggest that a music educator who leads an ensemble, whatever the size, type, level, or configuration, is also a conductor. While there are different areas that intersect when we conduct, the focus of this article is the area that involves podium presence and gestural vocabulary. This “Conducting 6-Pack” offers practical ideas, many of which could be implemented on day one of the upcoming school year, to facilitate clearer and more efficient communication while making music.

## 1. Posture: Availability to Communicate

We remind our students frequently about the importance of posture. Any music educator can ask an ensemble to attend to this and almost everyone immediately improves their sitting or standing posture – so there is no need to over explain this. Good posture also applies to us as conductors since it helps facilitate our head, face, arms and hands to be available to communicate with all sections of the group.

Two common impediments to good posture are the height and angle of our conductor’s music stand, and the height and placement of our podium. When I am conducting, I try to keep my music stand parallel to the floor. If the stand is at too steep of an angle it becomes a barrier to effective communication – almost like standing behind a desk or short wall. I also raise my stand just high enough so that I can turn pages of the score with little bending at my waist. This helps me stay connected to the ensemble. Podiums can be problematic since they typically are not adjustable without a stackable system. Ideally, students should be able to read their music and the conductor’s gestures with a minimal amount of movement between the two. Students in the front row sometimes have greater difficulty with this. If the podium height is fixed, try moving the podium

farther away from the first row of musicians. This will decrease the angle between reading music and interpreting conducting gestures.

## 2. Preparation and Breath: Starting the Ensemble

It is my belief that the single greatest cause of ineffective communication between conductors and ensemble members is a conductor who regularly begins a musical event by “counting off.” As I share with my conducting students, “Counting off” is often “Counterproductive.” The following example illustrates this point. Ask the students in an ensemble to close their eyes and clap in-time on a single beat when prompted. With their eyes closed, “count off” to them. Odds are that they will clap together at the correct time. Why? They are listening to us rather than watching us. How many times have we asked our students to “watch me” when conducting? I suggest that part of the problem can be attributed to “counting off.” When we do this regularly, we subtly and unintentionally teach our students that they do not have to watch us. Are there times when I “count off?” Yes, but I try very hard to make that the exception and not the rule. During the first couple of attempts of not “counting off” there may be some students who miss the first entrance. Please

### 1. Posture: Availability to Communicate

### 2. Preparation and Breath: Starting the Ensemble

### 3. Eye Contact: Watch Me!

### 4. Wrist Ictus: It’s all in the Wrist!

### 5. Smaller gestures: Discouraging “SHOUTING” at the Ensemble

### 6. Left Hand Structure: Specific Tasks for the “Expressive” Hand

do not become discouraged! Students will adapt quickly and will follow silent preparatory gestures.

Breathing with the ensemble is also extremely important as it increases the possibility of an accurate beginning. As a former percussionist, I have struggled with this over the years. I remain vigilant, but there are times I relapse and don't breathe with the ensemble. When I fail to breathe with them, the results are usually undesirable. The breath is the fuel for voices and wind instruments, but string, keyboard, and percussion instrumentalists also benefit by breathing to begin a musical passage. I suggest modeling the breath correctly when conducting. Sometimes we can be exuberant when we want to "make sure" the ensemble breathes at the beginning and we can model an incorrect breath. Breathing together as an ensemble greatly increases the chances of performing the music together.

### 3. Eye Contact: Watch Me!

We have all had the experience of trying to engage in a personal conversation with someone and receiving little or no eye contact from that person. This inhibits communication and may cause one to wonder about the other person's attentiveness. The same is true for eye contact with our students. Our eyes are the most expressive part of our faces. We have all heard idioms such as "Catch Someone's Eye" or "Turn a Blind Eye." These expressions suggest attention to someone or something through our eyes. For conductors, eye contact is essential.

I believe it is plausible to say that the amount of eye contact that we provide to the ensemble is directly correlated to the quality and quantity of our score study. As an aside, score study is how conductors "practice" and prepare for a rehearsal. Some specific examples where eye contact is crucial include the beginning of a piece to confirm everyone is prepared to collaborate. Another instance is preparing a soloist or section to perform, especially after a long rest. An encouraging look and a smile from a conductor can be a big boost of confidence, especially for younger players. Finally, classroom management is improved by eye contact. Students are less likely to be off-task if we are looking at them. When the temptation arises to utter the phrase "watch me!" determine first if the students were offered appropriate eye contact from the conductor.

### 4. Wrist Ictus: It's all in the Wrist!

An ictus is a gesture which indicates a musical pulse. There are lots of different gestures we

use to show a pulse such as tapping our foot, bouncing at the knees, and head bobs. What if we generated an ictus solely from the ball and socket joint of our shoulder, or the hinge joint located in our elbow? We can, and often do create an ictus in those areas when we conduct, but with limited efficiency. The wrist is a better choice to generate a conducting ictus. The wrist is a wonderfully complex set of different types of joints that allow for a great range of motion. Moreover, since these joints and muscles are smaller than those at our elbow or shoulder, we can move our wrists with greater precision.

Unlike the breathing example I used earlier, as a former percussionist, generating a wrist ictus came very naturally to me. It was simply an extension of my percussion technique. I suggest the way we teach a percussionist to generate a stroke is similar to the way our wrist should operate while we conduct. Besides greater efficiency, there seem to be a growing number of conductors who as they age are in need of various orthopedic treatments from overuse (and over conducting) caused by too much elbow and shoulder ictus. Residual tension in the upper arm or back after a rehearsal could be a sign of not using enough wrist ictus while conducting.

Another reason to utilize a wrist ictus is due to various styles of notes, specifically the range that exists between legato and staccato notes. Our wrist can be very effective in showing these musical differences. A characteristic of a staccato note is the separation that exists around that note. The way we show that separation through gesture is by not moving for a split second between the pulses. Stated differently, we use a quick flick of the wrist to show a staccato note. Conversely for legato notes, we do not stop the wrist so that it can maintain a fluid quality that communicates connection between the notes. While our elbows and shoulders can aid in these gestures, by themselves, they are not nearly as efficient in executing them as our wrist.

### 5. Smaller gestures: Discouraging "SHOUTING" at the Ensemble

Every conductor at some point has probably executed a conducting gesture for how it felt rather than for how it functioned musically. This is particularly relevant for large gestures. The size of the gesture is often directly related to the volume desired from the ensemble. A good example of how this concept can be disjointed is the well-meaning conductor who requests a pianissimo from the ensemble, yet the large size of their gestures continue to suggest fortissimo plus dynamics.

A technique I have used to help address this issue is employing the use of "dynamic picture frames." Imagine a square picture frame and each side measured 2 inches. Now take that same frame and fit all of the baton hand activity inside of it. It may feel very restrictive, but this could be an appropriate gesture size to consider for the softest dynamic passages. A 4 inch frame represents a louder dynamic, a 6 inch frame louder still. The loudest dynamics are represented by a very large conducting frame. While there are always exceptions, appropriately moderating the size of the gestures makes the music more conversational and less like a gestural lecture.

### 6. Left Hand Structure: Specific Tasks for the "Expressive" Hand

Many conductors choose the right hand as the baton hand; therefore, the right hand automatically has some sense of structure, as demonstrated by appropriate beat patterns and an ictus, hopefully generated from the wrist. The left hand however does not have that same structure. The freedom afforded to our left hands can sometimes be paralyzing. A frequent lament is, "I don't know what to do with my left hand." Rarely is that same comment applied to the baton hand. As a result some conductors relegate the left hand to mirroring the right hand or simply disengaging it and dropping it down to their side. The term "left hand independence" is probably a familiar one. However, for conductors who still struggle with creative usage of their left hand, perhaps the term "left hand structure" is a better descriptor. Here are three specific techniques for developing left hand structure.

First, engage the left hand (and arm), but do nothing with it while conducting. I suggest keeping the arm at a comfortable elevation and angle, but open the fingers with the palm facing up or down, but not at an angle like a chop. While this may seem an awkward, independence of hands is occurring because the left hand is deployed, but purposefully "silent" while the baton hand is working.

Second, consider cuing students by inviting them to share and perform the music. Think of shaking hands with another person, but with the left hand, palm facing up. This movement functions as an invitation rather than a directive. This gesture can be especially effective for soloists or younger musicians who might benefit from this reinforcement prior to performing.

Third, consider the desired sound of a release on a particular note. Then, try to replicate and mimic that sound with a left hand gesture of release.

Some conductors are comfortable executing a circular, clockwise release that is functional, but lacking in expressivity. There is a lot of great music to be made with the releases of notes! Explore some of the seemingly infinite possibilities. Not all will work, even when executed perfectly. That's ok! Try again, or try something else. When the left hand begins to shape releases musically, showing other musical elements through gestures usually becomes a little easier and less intimidating.

## Coda

Remember, simply offering a beat pattern devoid of musical content is the gestural equivalent of a monotone lecturer. "Did someone say Bueller?" Conducting gestures alone will not remedy all issues encountered during rehearsals, but they can help lead to more effective communication and musical experiences. Hopefully this "Conducting 6-Pack" will provide inspiration to revisit and perhaps refine future conducting gestures. Have fun and enjoy experimenting with these techniques!



Dr. Tim Oliver is the Director of Bands and Coordinator of Wind and Percussion Studies at Arkansas State University. A strong proponent of both performance and education, Dr. Oliver conducts the A-State Wind Ensemble, leads the master's level wind conducting program, teaches courses in graduate and undergraduate conducting and music education, and administrates a comprehensive university band program at A-State. He is an active guest



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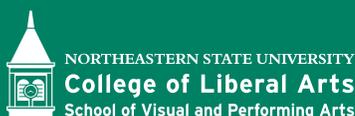
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# Fall Professional Development, Festival Chorus, and Orchestra November 1, 2019



We are beyond excited for this year's one day Fall Conference! Quaver will be this year's sponsor, as well as presenters. Jerron Liddell from UAPB is joining us as this years Festival Chorus Conductor. We are also welcoming Jann Knighten and Mirna Cabrera, who will be presenting some outstanding professional development. The Fayetteville NAFME Collegiate chapter will be performing, and the Honors Orchestra will be directed by Chelsea Subick from Cordova High School in Tennessee.

To register for the event please fill out the registration form found on the adjoining page, as well as the google form found at <https://forms.gle/c5JbWZ96Yky1EmGC8>. By filling out both, it helps our board to obtain a more accurate count of how many participants we will have on November 1st.

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## ASTA Jr. Honors Orchestra Festival

We are pleased to announce that we will once again offer the Jr. Honors Orchestra Festival, in conjunction with the ArkMEA Fall Conference. The one-day event will take place on Friday, November 1 at the Calvary Baptist Church in Little Rock. The clinic and performance offers a wonderful opportunity for some of our intermediate string players to interact and perform in a large orchestra setting with students from across the state. We have recently adapted the Orchestra to target the mid-level, younger players who may not yet be participating in All-Region. For those of you who are string teachers, private studio teachers, or youth orchestra directors, this event is primarily for, but not limited to, students in the 4th-8th grades who have had at least one year of instruction. Due to the limited rehearsal time, we focus on two to three pieces that are level 1-1.5 and we plan to make those titles available by the beginning of September so that students may begin learning them. Last year we chose Legend of Dark Mountain by Soon Hee Newbold, Intensity by Sean O'Loughlin, and Themes from Harry Potter by John Williams and were privileged to welcome Mrs. Chelsea Subick, Orchestra Director at Cordova High School in Tennessee, as our clinician. Please make plans to attend the 2019 Jr. Honors Orchestra Festival! Cost for each student is only \$15, due on the day of the clinic. If you would like more information and/or like to be included in future mailings concerning this festival, please email Delania Owen at [delania.owen@jonesboroschools.net](mailto:delania.owen@jonesboroschools.net).

Delania Owen  
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Fall Professional Development Conference

November 1, 2019

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# Starting Fresh for the New Year: Tips for the Non-String Player on Improving Tone in the Strings Classroom

I am often approached by band and choral directors who have been asked to teach string orchestra and one question I am always asked is, "How do I get their tone to improve?" This is a multifaceted issue because in addition to technique, a string player's tone can be altered by the actual instrument, instrument set-up, bow, and strings. While there is no "quick fix" to improving tone, there are several things you can do with your students to yield noticeable results. As we approach the beginning of the school year, there is no better time to assess equipment and review the basics so that your students can start the year with a strong foundation.

## Strings

My first recommendation is to make sure your students are changing their strings regularly (if budget will allow), rather than waiting for them to break before replacing. As a collegiate studio teacher, when my freshman students struggle with clarity and intonation during their scales, one of the first things I ask them is, "When is the last time you changed your strings?" More often than not, I have students tell me that they cannot remember, or they haven't changed their strings in over a year. As we play, the oils and sweat from our fingers transfer to the strings causing the winding to wear. The outside temperature and humidity can also contribute to wear and tear on the strings,

causing them to need replacing. If the strings are old, unraveling, or rusting, they will not be able to hold their pitch or produce as clear of a sound as they should. If the strings themselves cannot hold pitch or produce a clear tone, this will only become more exaggerated when the left hand is added.

I like to tell my beginning violin and viola students to change on the same days we change the clocks for daylight savings, once in the fall and once in the spring. Cello and bass students can change their strings less frequently, as they are thicker and therefore wear slower. Beginning cellists should aim to change strings at least once per year, and bass players should change strings when they (or you) notice the strings are

unable to hold a consistent pitch. More advanced students should be taught to listen for changes in their strings so that they know when it is time to replace them. To help preserve the longevity of the strings, encourage your students to also wipe the rosin off the strings with a soft cloth each time they play.

## Bow Maintenance

Making sure the students have a bow that is in good playing condition will also have a large impact on tone production. This means that the bow hair is not too dirty, can still hold rosin, and that there is still a good amount of a hair on the bow. If the bow is missing half of its hair, or the hairs are breaking with every use, then it will not

perform the way it should. Similarly, if the bow cannot be tightened or loosened to the correct tension, the bow will not perform in a way that enhances tone quality. If your students are experiencing any of these issues, it is time to get the bow rehired. Just as I recommend students change their strings regularly, I encourage students who play every day to get their bow rehired (or replaced if the cost of the rehair would exceed the cost of a new bow) at least once a year.

### Relaxing the Bow Hand

Tension in the bow hand will result in tension in the sound. When setting up beginning students, I try to do a number of exercises away from the bow to help shape the bow hand. Practicing the bow hold on a pencil allows the student to shape the hand on an object that weighs less than a bow. Practicing on a pencil will also allow the teacher to observe the back of the hand and the shape of the thumb. Another exercise that I find particularly helpful for young students is to have them make their bow hand on a dry piece of spaghetti. If the students squeeze too hard with the thumb, the pasta will snap in half.

When moving the bow hand from the pencil to the bow, have the student pick up the bow at the balance point, as this will help with weight distribution. As the student adjusts to the weight of the bow, have them

move the hand to the frog. Continue to remind students to pause and notice what their right hand feels like, so that they remember the right hand should be flexible and not rigid.

### Weight, Speed, and Placement

Weight, bow speed, and bow placement not only affect dynamics, but also impact tone quality. When your students change one variable, the other two must be adjusted to compensate for the difference. Have your students experiment with various combinations of these variables during the technique block of your class. Some combinations will result in a less than desirable tone (for example: a heavy, slow bow by the bridge will result in a scratchy sound, and a light, fast bow near the fingerboard will result in an airy sound), but this can help teach students what not to do. As a general principle, a heavy, fast, bow toward the bridge will produce a healthy forte dynamic, while a lighter, slow, bow toward the fingerboard will produce a piano dynamic.

Try to encourage your students to add weight to the bow by using gravity and the weight of the entire arm, rather than squeezing the bow hand. After students are able to manipulate the variables in Table 1, you can begin to change the bow placement with regard to the bow (frog, middle, tip). There are some wonderful examples of these exercises in Teaching Strings in Today's Classroom by Rebecca MacLeod.

Table 1

Placement	Weight	Speed
Fingerboard	Light	Slow
Middle	Medium	Medium
Bridge	Heavy	Fast

Bow Hold on Pencil-  
Cello/French Bass



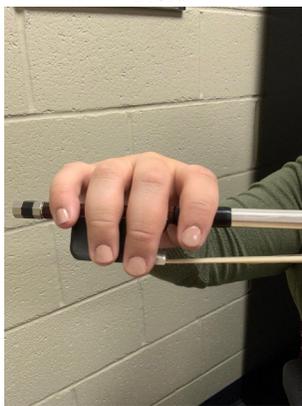
Bow Hold on Pencil-  
Violin/Viola



Violin/Viola Bow Hold on Bow



Cello/French Bass Bow Hold



## References

MacLeod, R. B. (2019). *Teaching strings in today's classroom*. New York, NY: Routledge

Annalisa C. Chang is Assistant Professor and Director of Music Education at Clayton State University in Morrow, Georgia. She received her Ph.D. in Music Education from Florida State University. She also holds degrees in Music Education (M.M. and B.M.) from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she was a North Carolina Teaching Fellow.

Prior to her appointment at Clayton State, Dr. Chang was the Director of Orchestras at Leon High School in Tallahassee, Florida. Before moving to Florida, Dr. Chang served as an orchestra, chorus, and general music teacher in the North Carolina public schools. At CSU, Dr. Chang teaches music education courses, string methods, applied violin, supervises student teachers, and serves as the associate conductor of the Clayton County Youth Orchestra.

Her research interests include string teacher education, the inclusion of students with exceptionalities in string classrooms, music education for students in underserved populations, and traditional (folk) music instruction in the schools. Her research has been presented at state, national, and international music education conferences. Additionally, she has been a clinician at state in-service conferences (Georgia, Florida and North Carolina), the American String Teachers Association National Conference, and the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic.



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# Honoring Florence Price and William Grant Still

This November, Arkansans will have the opportunity to hear symphonic masterworks by two Arkansas legends in Robinson Center for the first time. William Grant Still and Florence Price, pioneering African-American composers, will be featured on the Nov. 9 & 10 ASO masterworks concerts. For more information, visit: [shorturl.at/cdJO2](https://shorturl.at/cdJO2)

To expose your students to the life and works of William Grant Still and Florence Price, we have included two lesson plans for your classroom. Each lesson plan contains links to provide audio and video examples for your students. To be able to hear the musical examples on Spotify, you must have a current account with Spotify. Sign up at <https://www.spotify.com/us/> for either the free ad-supported version or the premium version (no ads + offline access). Log on to Spotify. Then use the link for the playlist in the lesson plan.



"Portrait of Florence Price taken by G. Nelidoff"

## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Lesson Plan: Arkansas composers Florence Price, and William Grant Still

<b>Desired Results (Enduring Understandings)</b> Students will be able to identify Florence Price and William Grant Still as important composers, and recognize Arkansas cultural heritage. Students will recognize two pieces, one by each composer, and discover expressive musical elements in each piece.	
<b>Understandings:</b> By the end of this unit, students will understand that 2 important classical composers grew up in Little Rock, and went on to make important contributions in music. They will also know that the ASO is going to perform their music on Nov. 9 & 10 at Robinson Center	<b>Essential Questions:</b> If these powerfully expressive artists came from Arkansas, and I'm from Arkansas too, what creative gifts do I have? How can I use body percussion for exciting music-making? How does a composer express joyful dance rhythms? How does a composer express thoughts about the spirit of a playful dog?
Students will know... that body percussion is something anyone can do; that African-American syncopated dance rhythms are exciting and beautiful; that a composer tells a story with music, and there is music in the movements of a playful animal;	<b>Students will be able to...</b> perform body percussion and identify syncopated juba rhythm in Price's piece, 3 <sup>rd</sup> movement from Symphony #1. For Still's piece Quit Dat Foolishness, identify the instruments that are playing and their relationship; come up with a short story about a pet they have or know.
<b>Evidence (Assessment)</b> Students will recognize juba as they listen to the recording of Juba Dance, the 3 <sup>rd</sup> movement from Price's symphony; will identify the playful roles of the instruments, and write a short story in response to Quit Dat Foolishness.	
<b>Learning Activities</b> What sequence of teaching and learning will equip students to engage with, develop, and demonstrate the desired understandings? A 16-minute video has been provided by Dr. Holzer, introducing both composers, and then focusing on a piece by Florence Price. Go to YouTube <a href="https://youtu.be/VZ1BB6A5cc8">https://youtu.be/VZ1BB6A5cc8</a> . It includes an excerpt from a podcast, StickyNotes. At 7 min. 01 sec, conductor Joshua Weilerstein talks about Price's orchestral music. At 8 min., the singing group Sweet Honey in the Rock talks, sings, and pats juba. Then Weilerstein shares some clips from Price's piece Juba Dance. At 14 min. 46 sec, pause the video. Your class can imitate some juba rhythms with body percussion. Then the teacher may choose to go to the Spotify playlist, <a href="https://shorturl.at/nsvY3">shorturl.at/nsvY3</a> and play the entire 3 <sup>rd</sup> movement of the symphony for the class.	
1) Juba Dance, from Symphony #1 in E Minor, 3 <sup>rd</sup> movement by Florence Price  Duration of musical example: 3 min. 40 sec Ft. Smith Symphony, conducted by John Jeter  What is juba? A lively, rhythmic dance. Originated in West Africa (in what is now Angola), and became a plantation dance in the days of slavery, in Caribbean and African-American	

cultures. Performed with onlookers forming a circle around two dancers, who do body percussion (hand clapping, foot stomping and hand patting of the thighs).

**Activity:** Use body percussion to tap a syncopated juba rhythm; divide the class into 2 groups: group 1 does a stomp on beat 1 and 3; group 2 slaps their thighs on the off-beat 16<sup>th</sup> notes.

**Now, listen to the symphonic music by Florence Price 2 times.** The first hearing: Listen especially for the percussion (tympani, drums) Raise your hand when you hear a juba pattern in the orchestra. The second hearing: group 1 stomp on beats 1 and 3 (or play low drums) group 2 slap your thighs on the off-beats.

### 2) Quit Dat Foolishness by William Grant Still

WGS was inspired to compose this piece after watching his dog, Shep.

**Performers:** Zina Schiff, violin; Cameron Grant, piano. Duration of musical example: 1 min. 15 sec  
 The piece bears the dedication: "Shep, my mischievous dog." Composed 1935.

Briefly resume the video at 14 min. 56 sec. Then go to the Spotify playlist, [shorturl.at/nsvY3](https://shorturl.at/nsvY3) and play the entire piece "Quit Dat Foolishness."

**Activity:** Listen to the music by William Grant Still 3 times. The first hearing: identify the instruments that are playing. How many characters do you see in this story? How is the music telling a story, which instrument is Shep? Second hearing: There are 3 places in the piece where the music pauses. Using your imagination for this story, what is happening during each pause? 3<sup>rd</sup> hearing: Write a short story about a pet you have or know. Describe what music would sound like if you composed a piece for them.

**Hook – Students:** Listen to a short video on the composers, and Juba. Clap, Slap, Stomp. Body Percussion. Syncopation. The topic is syncopated body percussion, and the way Florence Price used it in the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of her symphony, Juba Dance. Then work with the Still piece that was inspired by his mischievous dog.

**Lesson Activity – See above. Resource List:** My video, on YouTube, <https://youtu.be/VZ1BB6A5cc8> which includes photos from the composers' childhoods, and an excerpt from a podcast about juba by Joshua Weilerstein; Spotify playlist [shorturl.at/nsvY3](https://shorturl.at/nsvY3).

**Supplemental materials:** You may want to introduce Sweet Honey in the Rock in a prior class period, with this video, which shows them singing and performing with percussion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2T216XgiOo>  
 Also, there is a demo of body percussion here <https://www.bodypercussionclassroom.com/juba.html>

**Closure – Which piece sounded more dancelike: Juba Dance? Or Quit Dat Foolishness? What do you remember most about Juba Dance? About Quit Dat Foolishness?**

# Program Highlights:

This selection of the ArkMEA Journal is to highlight music programs around the state. We are beyond proud of our music educators and their accomplishments that we want to share them with the state. If you would like to nominate a program please contact Samantha Bentley at [sbentley@mhbombers.com](mailto:sbentley@mhbombers.com).

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## Choral Program Highlight: Terry Hicks-Bentonville High School

### ***How long have you taught?***

I am entering my twenty-ninth year.

### ***If you were to give a new teacher a piece of advice, what would it be?***

Be genuine, students can smell a fake a mile away. Get to know each of them and learn what motivates them. Keep in mind that the students are human beings with all the needs and desires of the species. They want to belong, to be appreciated, and to be noticed. Be sure you provide an environment where these things can be done. Also, realize that they have lives outside of your classroom. They have other interests and responsibilities and while you expect them to do their best for your class you will likewise encourage them in their other activities.



### ***What has been the biggest obstacle of your career? How did you overcome it?***

My biggest obstacle was being from New York and not knowing anyone. Trying to fit in with colleagues that went to college together was particularly difficult. I overcame it by putting myself "out there" and allowing the time it took to belong. I also worked very hard taking constructive criticism and let my teaching speak for me.

### ***What lesson or activity have your students or group loved the most?***

The incorporation of Dalcroze eurhythmics. This method allows the students to experience the music making process in a very different all encompassing way.

### ***Describe an experience that made you say, "This is why I became a music educator."***

I have been very lucky to have an experience multiple times that has made me say these words. It is the feeling during and after a rehearsal or performance that went exceptionally well. The look on the student's faces, the feel of the audience's response, the involvement of everyone working to learn and achieve more than they were expecting. These are the moments that make it more than worthwhile.

### ***What is the craziest thing a student or participant has said in your room or rehearsal?***

"We are being attacked by sand flees!" After the construction of our new high school we had a very heavy rainfall during class on some sod that had been installed just outside the choir room doors. The rain encouraged thousands of sand flees to enter the choir room doors and start jumping all over the soprano section!

### ***Lastly, in three words or three small phrases-describe your classroom or teaching setting.***

Welcoming, genuine, inspirational

## Collegiate-Band Program Highlight: Dr. Tim Oliver- Arkansas State University



### ***How long have you taught?***

This academic year is my 20th year teaching at the collegiate level and my 27th year overall in music education.

### ***If you were to give a new teacher a piece of advice, what would it be?***

You will make mistakes throughout your teaching career. In an effort to minimize errors, try to surround yourself with people who will not give you “approval error” – this occurs when someone tells you something is good when it is not. The individuals who offer counsel to you can be varied and not all of them will be in the music profession. Never underestimate the value and importance of your school’s support staff, especially the administrative assistants and custodians.

### ***What has been the biggest obstacle of your career? How did you overcome it?***

The biggest obstacle in my career, unfortunately, has been me. One of my mentors, the late James Croft from Florida State University said this better than I. Upon his retirement Dr. Croft wrote that music gave him a sense of self, stretched his innate abilities, suffered his inadequacies, and provided him with a learning-laboratory. I couldn’t agree more. The field of music, whatever ones particular endeavor, embodies the need for life-long learning. I have no doubt that I am a better music educator than I was 10 or 20 years ago, but experience has also shown me, that I still have a lot to learn. So, have I overcome my biggest obstacle? No, but I am making progress!

### ***What lesson or activity have your students or group loved the most?***

There is something truly special about the capability of musicians, whatever their level of proficiency, to offer a wonderful and artistic performance; carefully and thoughtfully balanced with objective precision and attention to technical details while offering the audience, and the performers, the opportunity to be musically and emotionally vulnerable and therefore completely present in each moment. When these moments of optimal aesthetic distance occur, they are nourishing, motivating, and quite powerful. These experiences are the ones that my students, and I, seem to love the most.

### ***Describe an experience that made you say, “This is why I became a music educator.”***

I attended Truman State University in Kirksville, MO for my undergraduate education. I began my freshman year as a computer science major, but I was still involved with bands since I performed in the marching band as a member of the drumline. About 7 weeks into my first semester, I was working on my computer science homework in one of the campus computer labs – lots of green screen computers with large dot matrix printers with paper that had perforated edges that always needed to be torn off gently. I had spent hours working on a programming problem that I could not solve. A classmate casually walked by, saw my frustration, and glibly remarked that if I replaced a semicolon with the comma on a line of code the problem would be solved. Surely it couldn’t be that easy. It was. I knew in that moment I could not spend the rest of my life engaged in computer programming. The next morning, without consulting anyone, including my parents, I changed my major to music education. It took that moment of clarity in the computer lab for me to realize that music education had to become my chosen career.

### ***What is the craziest thing a student or participant has said in your room or rehearsal?***

Effective classroom management is essential for any teacher. During my first semester of teaching, I learned very quickly why this was necessary. One day a student in my eighth grade band decided to explore the full range of his baritone in a way I could not imagine. The rehearsal began smoothly. A few moments later we needed to stop because the clarinets were having some issues with a passage. My “with-it-ness” was still

developing because even though my intentions were genuine, I probably spent too much rehearsal time with the clarinets. Subsequently, this led to some off task behaviors from the rest of the class. After I finished working with the clarinets, I prepared to restart the rehearsal when this tall, lanky, bell front baritone player stood up, inverted his horn, placed it on the floor, bell first, and excitedly exclaimed to the entire class of about 20 students, "Look Mr. Oliver, I'm sweepin' the floor with my baritone." I was at a loss for words. Looking back on it now, it is a funny anecdote, but back then it reminded me that my classroom management skills needed to improve! Incidentally, once I figured that the young man just needed some positive, appropriate attention he became a leader in our band, and he never swept the floor, or anything else with his baritone.

***Lastly, in three words or three small phrases-describe your classroom or teaching setting.***

"Music is a timed art of sounds and silences." – Mr. Bradley Moore, my first band director often said this and I have used it in my teaching from the beginning.

"There is no relationship between tempo and dynamics." – you could substitute whatever two items you like, but I seem to be often reference these two musical elements.

"There is an infinite distance between zero and one." - There is always room for improvement.

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# De-Stress for Success! Eight Tips for Feeling Better

8. "Motion is lotion." Physical therapists say that movement helps the joints of the body function better.<sup>1</sup> Couch potatoes may deny it, but exercise improves how we feel and think.<sup>2</sup>
7. Sleep is cheap. Those who insist that laughter is the best medicine need to crash for a few hours and see what a long nap or good night's sleep can do for mind and body.<sup>3</sup>
6. Complaining is draining. Telling others about how things "ought" to be doesn't get you nearer your goals. A positive outlook affects both you and those around you for the better.<sup>4</sup>
5. Food sets the mood. A healthful diet can lift your spirits as well as lengthen your life. Five fruits or veggies a day really does make a difference.<sup>5</sup>
4. Drink water? You oughta. By the time you're thirsty, you may already be dehydrated. Keep your brain cells firing better by keeping your body hydrated and happy.<sup>6</sup>
3. Stretch, don't kvetch! Getting up from your chair can help increase your alertness.
2. Focus is locus. The Star Wars character Qui-Gon Jinn insisted that what you focus on determines your reality.<sup>7</sup> Concentrate on things that uplift you, not the dark side!
1. Have an "attitude of gratitude." You are everything your ancestors wished for. Count your blessings, and realize that many of your problems are minor. Try life in a major key!

By Ella Wilcox, NAFME State Editors Meeting, Washington, D.C., June 18, 2019. Information Sources:

1. Rene Pelletier, <https://www.renepelletieroste.com/motion-is-lotion#>.

2. "Exercisers Achieve Greater Acute Exercise-Induced Mood Enhancement than Nonexercisers," Science Direct, January 28, 2008, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0003999307016978>.

3. "Sleep cures 99 percent of humankind's ills."—Dr. Archer C. Wilcox, 1977.

4. If you're constantly fussing about your situation, you're protected by the First Amendment, but you may find that changing your tone changes your perspective.

5. The "5 a Day" campaign is based on advice from the World Health Organization, which recommends eating a minimum of 400 grams of fruit and vegetables a day to lower the risk of health problems such as heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer (<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/why-5-a-day/>).

6. Joe Leech, "7 Science-Based Health Benefits of Drinking Enough Water, Healthline, June 4, 2017, <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/7-health-benefits-of-water>.

7. "Always remember: Your focus determines your reality."—Qui-Gon Jinn, *The Phantom Menace* [Film]. See a discussion of this perspective at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72w\\_fUJyVw4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72w_fUJyVw4).



# Lead a Legacy

## Ms. Julia Reynolds

**Interviewer:** Thank you so much for taking the time out of your busy schedule to share your teaching experiences in Arkansas. For the few readers who don't know your background, could you briefly share the many roles you have held in the state?

**Ms. Reynolds:** I have been involved in music education for 42 years. I started my career in Sheridan in 1976 where I taught middle school band and was the assistant director at the high school. Following my time at Sheridan, I moved to Russellville Middle School and later taught the Sophomore Band and assisted the High School Director. In 1999, I became the Executive Secretary for ASBOA and the Executive Advisor

for Arkansas Bandmasters Association. I was selected to be a member of the Phi Beta Mu International Board and the Advisory Committee to the President of the International Midwest Clinic in 2017. Both opportunities are beneficial for our state in addition to be professionally invigorating for me.

**Interviewer:** Wow! With 42 years of education experience within the state, can you share a favorite memory that you had as an educator and speak of some of your successes?

**Ms. Reynolds:** I always remember those moments when students would perform beyond their abilities. . . I remember one of those moments when I was with the Sheridan High School Band at the Four States Bandmasters Association Convention in 1984.. It was a great performance. I love when music brings something extra out of the students. I am also overjoyed when I see former students who are not music professionals but continue to love music. I am thrilled when my former students play in community bands or at church.

Another memorable moment was when the Russellville Band performed in Washington D.C. in 1996 in the Presidential Inauguration Parade. So many of the students talked about the feeling they had at that performance. I loved hearing sophomore boys talking about the "chills" they got throughout the performance or watch student's tear up at a performance in Hawaii on the USS Missouri. Moments like those will always bring joy to me. I enjoyed anytime students spoke about great music and I witnessed them taking ownership of the process. I really have had some great students. I always tried to put the students first; it was great to be able to do music with young people.

**Interviewer:** I think it is obvious that you have had a great impact on your students, who were those people that impacted you and influenced your career?

**Ms. Reynolds:** Oh my, there are so many! We could be here all day. Many educators in Arkansas have impacted me. I think of Hal Cooper Sr. He started me in school. He taught me in 7th and 8th grade choir. He sought me out and encouraged me to do band. He gave me my first private lesson on an old alto horn but then quickly moved me to the Horn to make accuracy more challenging. He has continued to be a mentor and a friend to me during my professional career. There are so many others. Wendell Evanson, who was the band director at Henderson and also Wes Branstine and Don Kramer who were the brass teachers at Henderson. All of them had profound impacts on my teaching. I also can't forget Ann Rye, who taught piano at Henderson. She challenged and encouraged me to be musical and to strive for excellence. She was an extremely talented pianist and I was always amazed at her musicianship. I can't forget the colleagues that I worked with throughout my public school career. Fine educators like Bart Ghent, whom I worked with at Sheridan and Travis Beard and H L Shepherd at Russellville High School. I have been extremely fortunate to work with fantastic colleagues. Huge impacts on my current role were Ray and Ruth Brandon who mentored me as I became an officer in ASBOA. It is an understatement to say that no one could fill Ray's shoes. He was so kind to me when I took over. I said, "Ray, I can't replace you." His response was, "Julia, you're not supposed to, you are supposed to bring your own dynamic". I remember that conversation so vividly and I was so grateful for his guidance and support.

**Interviewer:** With 42 years in education, what has contributed to your longevity in the career?

**Ms. Reynolds:** Passion for the kids and music. I feel this is where God has placed me. Now I get to teach directors. I love what I do. It is great that I get to work with this great community of directors and I get to support them.

**Interviewer:** What advice do you have for developing music educators?

**Ms. Reynolds:** Develop life skills. Learn how to communicate with those in your profession. Find out how to get involved in the community without over extending yourself. Find time for yourself outside of school. Work on yourself personally, spiritually, and mentally. Understand that there will be hard times and that quitting is not an option, not the 1st time, 2nd time, 3rd time... Learn the environment of the community and the school. Strive to know all of the staff (custodians, secretaries, lunch workers, etc.) Find help from well-seasoned music educators and speak to them often. Seek advice frequently. People are always willing to help.

**Interviewer:** Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. Are there any parting words of wisdom that you would like to provide our readers?

**Ms. Reynolds:** Wherever you are planted give it your best effort. There are people who need you. Don't wait for the next opportunity to work hard.



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“Wherever you  
are planted  
give it your best  
effort. There  
are people  
who need you.”

# Editor's Note: Ken Goff



I love NASA and most things space related. As a kid, I dreamed of being an astronaut. I am still waiting for the call when NASA needs a middle-aged bald musician to explore the depths of space. Until I get that call, I will continue to watch movies like "The Right Stuff" and "Apollo 13" anytime they come on T.V. Those of you who know me would not be surprised that upon a recent trip to Washington D.C., I spent an entire day in the Air and Space Museum. I was able to see capsules from the Gemini and Apollo projects, touch a moon rock, walkthrough a space station, and see the Wright Brothers plane. Yeah, I was geeking out big time.

When I was on my return flight from Washington, I found myself scrolling through the pictures on my cell phone that I had taken during my time at the Smithsonian. I began to think, how could I share my passion and love for space with my students, friends, and colleagues in Arkansas. As I thought it hit me. I can do a space themed concert! I got so excited. Music and space! Holy cow, two disciplines that I love in one concert; I am living the dream (albeit a nerdy dream). I started thinking of all of the literature that could relate to space/NASA/flight - limitless opportunities. I am guessing, like me, many of you have taken the summer to relax, recalibrate, recuperate and dream about what this year may look like for you and your students. Summer can be a great time to do that. We plan and dream so we can walk into our rooms with excitement and anticipation for the school year.



Many of our students come to us without having the opportunity to dream or to be excited about their school year. Someone much wiser than me said, "it is difficult for someone to dream when they are in survival mode." While we may have had a great summer preparing for our school year, it is most likely that some of our students have been in survival mode. It could be possible that many of our students, because of life's circumstances, have not been allowed to dream. Yet, it is often our class that gives the student their first chance to dream. As we begin this school year, let's strive to create a classroom environment that aids our students to dream. We can build a safe environment where student ideas are celebrated, creativity is encouraged, and students have choice. It's great to dream, it's great to be excited, but it is awesome when a music educator allows a student to be in a place to hope, to yearn, to dream. I wish you the best this school year as you strive to achieve your dreams and reach for the stars. Godspeed!

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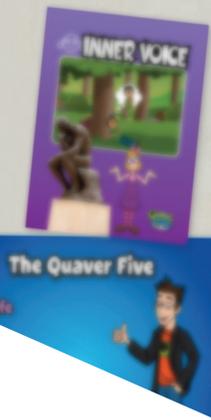
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