

# Making Connections

As I participate in the Model Educator Evaluation System process and as I read about the latest concerns with MSIP5 I am reminded of an age old issue of how society views music education. Music Education is frequently criticized for being irrelevant to the way we interact with music in our daily lives. Most citizens see a real disconnect with the music we teach and the music that surrounds them every day. As a result they do not fully understand the role or function of music education in their lives. As educators we need to bridge the gap between academic music, social music and how music is a reflection of society. I am not recommending that we abandon our core repertoires for frivolous pop music. I am suggesting that we look for ways to connect the two genres as often as possible and connect the music we use to teach to every day and historical events in our lives. By making these connections we help students, parents and administrators understand our role in developing discriminating consumers of good music and the influence music has in our lives. Research shows that students who are exposed to a diverse offering of music begin to expand their musical preferences.

So how about some ideas! Recently some of our Music Education students attended a St. Louis Symphony Kinder Konzert entitled “Hip Hop Symphony.” These students came back completely impressed and excited about the lesson and presentation. This program was put together by Dacy Gillespie, Education Programs Manager for the St. Louis Symphony. I encourage you to visit the St. Louis Symphony web site for a lesson plan download. The objective was musical form with a focus on canon. Pachelbel’s Canon was the basis for the study in form. The lesson used Coolio’s “I’ll C U When You Get There,” and the Tran-Siberian Orchestra’s “Christmas Canon Rock,” both compositions based on Pachelbel’s Canon, as present day connections to help students relate to the canon form. This summer at the MBA annual conference Professor Skip Vandelight and I presented a session based on core repertoire for band. As part of that presentation I suggested theme concerts using core repertoire relating to social or historical events or with an education focus. Some suggestions included a concert entitled “Dancing with the Stars.” In this program I programmed music associated with dance, i.e.; Washington Post (Two Step), Courtly Airs and Dances (dance forms that lead to symphonic movements), etc. How about a Choral Concert honoring the Civil Rights Movement. The compositions are endless. An orchestra concert entitled “English Invasion!” Holst, Vaughn Williams, don’t forget the Beatles. I hear many bands perform Frank Ticheli’s “Cajun Folk Songs.” Have your students heard the collected field recordings or available versions of the original folk songs? How about the text and the story that each movement is based on. Do band students know what “strophic” means? What is a “Cajun?” From what part of our nation did these songs originate? Not every piece on your next concert needs to have this focus. Find just one that is centered on these comprehensive aspects and make that your focus.

These kinds of approaches to what we do help connect our students and audiences to how the music we teach is so very closely related to everyday life. Remember that simply participating in music does not imply that learning has occurred and rehearsing does not always mean that teaching has taken place. Find the connections; share your successes with others. Let’s build a generation of musically aware and informed students and adults. Accountability is inevitable. Let’s meet it head on with dedicated and creative teaching. Let’s be prepared to show everyone what we do and how music impacts all of our lives.

Conference Planning is going well and we are excited about the offerings that will be available to you. I am sure that the Vice Presidents in each area will report on the many and varied offerings as part of their reports in this issue. I know that the performing groups are of outstanding quality and you will be treated to some wonderful musical examples of Music Education at its best. I encourage everyone to give us feedback concerning the conference and how we can make your conference more educational and professionally rewarding. Now we begin planning for the next 75 years.

I also want to encourage you to visit the MMEA web site often. It is our goal to make this web site a resource for you as well as a place of information. Rob Nichols has done a tremendous job of establishing a site that will serve us well into the future. I am learning the process and I am enjoying posting and updating this site regularly. I have many ideas on how to continue to develop this site. I would appreciate your input and suggestions as to how this web site can best serve you and your teaching. The MMEA web site is a wonderful means for us to stay connected!

### **Missouri's Model Educator Evaluation**

On behalf of MMEA I have volunteered to participate in the "Use of Measures of Growth in Student Learning" focus group as part of the Model Educator Evaluation System now being piloted in Missouri. We had our first webinar meeting on Monday, October 29. This committee will make recommendations and develop guidelines for creating and collecting evidence of student learning as part of the teacher evaluation process. This is a positive aspect of the evaluation process because it evaluates student learning in the specific subject area taught by the teacher being evaluated. I know that sounds like an obvious part of an evaluation process but because music falls in the "NTSG" (Non-Tested Subject or Grade) category and there is no standardized or recognized testing procedure. Therefore we will need to develop a means by which the teacher can be fairly evaluated based on a student's progress in the music classroom. We are reviewing many different examples of this evaluation process from various states. This type of assessment as part of the evaluation process is very positive. There are states in which the teachers in non-tested subject areas have their evaluation based on how well students do on Math and English exams. I will keep the membership posted to the best of my ability as this process develops. If you teach in one of the volunteer schools that are piloting the Evaluation System I would be grateful if you would keep me informed on what criteria is being used and any feedback that you want to share. Once we have some positive developments to share I will make postings to the MMEA web site with updates and the status of this project.

Dr. Thomas Trimborn, Professor at Truman State University, has developed a scholarship fund to benefit Music Education Majors who are finishing their degree. The scholarship funds will be generated through the sale of his art work that has graced the covers of our MSM for so many years. Please visit the MMEA web site to place your orders. Orders will be picked up at the 75<sup>th</sup> In-Service/Workshop Conference. Thank you Dr. Trimborn for your support of our future Music Educators.

A special thank you to Dan McCaffrey and Jupiter Instruments for their sponsorship of percussion equipment for use on the Salon A stage. Jupiter is providing five timpani, a five octave rosewood marimba, one four octave rosewood xylophone, one four octave gold vibraphone, twenty two note chrome chimes, and a 36" x 22" suspended bass drum. All of this equipment is available for use by all groups performing on the Salon A stage. I have spoken with Dan about future agreements with Jupiter and MMEA concerning equipment for our conference. I encourage you to visit with Dan during the MMEA conference if you are interested in any equipment that would be used at our conference and then available of purchase through your local Jupiter dealer.

The annual Urban Music Leadership Conference was held in St. Louis October 24 – 26. St. Louis City Public Schools and University of Missouri-St. Louis were host for the three day conference. Music Educators from Missouri, Texas, Georgia, Colorado, New Jersey, Illinois, Indiana and many more were in attendance. This conference helped me understand the importance of staying connected with the public and private schools in our urban areas. I attended Thursday evening's opening session. Prior to the official start of the program a jazz trio that is part of the Jazz St. Louis High School Jazz All-Stars performed for the reception. We were treated to a choir concert by Central Visual and Performing Arts High School. This was a high energy and extremely entertaining program that featured some absolutely outstanding young voices. Bravo to students and Ms. Yvonne Crockett, director, on a wonderful performance. Michael Butera, CEO for NAFME was in attendance and gave opening remarks to all conference participants. I spoke briefly with Mr. Butera after his presentation. Mr. Butera is always ready to discuss policy and trends in education and legislation. I enjoyed our visit.

Connections! The MMEA 75<sup>th</sup> In-Service Workshop is a wonderful time to connect, renew, network and make new acquaintances. I look forward to seeing all of you again at the conference. It is a sincere pleasure to serve the association. Please let me know how MMEA can best serve you. Music Education Orchestrates Success!