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CMEA Bay Section

Editor's Note

A warm, "Back-to-School" greeting to all CMEA Bay Section members from your CMEA Bay Section Board! We hope your summer was healthy and refreshing (how we needed it after this past school year!), and we also hope that the start of your school year has been joyful from being reunited with students and colleagues.

I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the many different hurdles we are all trying to navigate with reopening restrictions, declined program enrollment, curricular shifts due to pandemic restrictions, etc. Faced with a completely altered and continuously changing educational landscape, it's now more important than ever to reach out and lean on one another as music colleagues. We all hopefully have our own support systems of trusted colleagues and mentors for encouragement, guidance, and commiseration, and ultimately, your CMEA Bay Section Board aims to support you in your important service to our Bay Area music students. I have personally had to pick up the phone a few times this year to call and talk through repertoire suggestions for an ensemble outside my main area of expertise, music program design at a new teaching post, and to compare notes about county health guidelines and PPE requirements in different districts. If you find yourself without that crucial support system of trusted music colleagues, I hope you will reach out directly to someone on your CMEA Bay Section Board.

For me, the shift to virtual learning in March 2020 forced a reset and reevaluation of my own teaching priorities and philosophy. The isolation and restrictions of distance learning caused me to further prioritize student well-being and classroom culture/community over ratings, results, and other "hard" achievements, and perhaps, this ought to have been the case even before the pandemic. As I reenter the world of in-person instruction as well as my first in-person ("real") year at Capuchino, I am holding onto those realizations and priorities that are "student first." I'm developing the faith that the standards will be met, the ratings will be achieved, the program's numbers will rebound (this particular point is taking a lot of faith!) and the artistry and highest level of music-making will return, but what continues to be most important to me is the community of "we/us" and the well-being of the students that are in front of me. While tone, rhythmic accuracy, intonation, bow hold, posture, "O" shaped lips, and stepping off with the left foot are all still very near and dear to my heart, my ultimate metric for success this year is the well-being and growth of the students in front of me.

Johnathan Hsu
Tempo Editor
CMEA Bay Section



Johnathan Hsu is the Director of Music at Capuchino High School in San Bruno, CA. He serves as the Tempo Editor for CMEA Bay Section.

President

Keith Johnson



Esteemed Colleagues,

Welcome back to the new school year!

We are emerging from some of the most challenging years educators and students have ever faced. Although most of us have returned to in-person teaching, we continue to face challenges due to the COVID-19 Delta variant. Many of you have reached out seeking guidance and information regarding indoor rehearsals. Unfortunately, information has been spotty and circumstances vary from district to district. The International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study was updated on August 12, 2021. Although this update does not contain guidance on whether or not indoor rehearsals are “permitted,” it does provide guidance on how to hold indoor rehearsals safely. The full update is available on National Federation of State High School Associations [here](#).

Many school districts seem to point to the outdoor option mentioned in this article (“outdoors remains the safest space”) as the only option for music rehearsals. However, many districts in our area are allowing indoor rehearsals using the guidelines mentioned in this article. Unfortunately, it is the discretion of each school district on how they choose to implement these guidelines based on their respective county health recommendations. Our best course of action now is to share our own situation with our colleagues to collectively show what our school districts are allowing.

Another challenge we are facing is the uncertainty of live performances in indoor venues. This has also presented a challenge for Bay Section as it plans for the 2022 festival season. As of now, Bay Section is committed to holding a full slate of in-person festivals this school year, however site restrictions and district policies have prevented us from fully securing sites at this time. As a result, CMEA Bay Section is postponing festival registration this fall to allow our site hosts time to gather necessary guidelines and information from their school districts.

As we work to confirm these dates/sites, we are asking all directors to please fill out the [Festival Attendance Survey](#) located on the Bay Section website. This survey is intended to gauge how many members are planning on attending a festival this year, but also is asking for information regarding your school’s current guidelines on rehearsals and travel. This is NOT a festival registration, but the information you provide will help us best determine how to move forward with festivals this year and provide us with information that we can share with our membership regarding indoor rehearsals and travel.

You can find a full list of tentatively scheduled 2022 festival dates by clicking [HERE](#). In addition to the survey, we ask that you please take the time to read some important updates regarding our large ensemble festivals. Large ensemble festival fees have increased to \$350 per ensemble. While we understand this increase is not ideal, as the cost of running festivals continue to rise, this increase is necessary to ensure that festivals are cost neutral. Bay Section is committed to providing access to all students in our community. In keeping with that mission, Bay Section will continue to offer festival fee waivers for Title 1 schools this festival season. More information on all of these changes are available on our website.

Our annual Winter Conference is scheduled to take place on Friday, January 7-8, 2022 at San José State University. We are excited to plan our first in-person conference in two years! The Bay Section Winter Conference is a highlight for our organization and its membership. Our Special Representatives are working diligently to present a wide-range of high quality sessions that best meet the needs of our members. In a few months be on the look out for our “Conference Preview” issue of *Tempo* with a full schedule of sessions.

While we are excited to be holding our conference in-person this year, the CMEA Executive Board, Special Representatives, and Assistant Special Representatives have decided to postpone our conference honor ensembles until 2023 in an effort to ensure the safety and well-being of our students and membership. This is certainly disappointing news for our middle school and ninth grade student musicians, but we are confident this is the right decision for this school year.

While there are many challenges we are all facing this school year, I hope that reconnecting with your students and making live music (regardless of the location) has provided happiness and source of inspiration for you. Remember, this too shall pass! If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me at keith@cmeabaysection.org.

Keith Johnson
Bay Section President

Keith Johnson has served as Director of Bands at El Cerrito High School since 2009. He is currently the President of CMEA Bay Section.

Past President

Bruce Lengacher



We hope that you are off to a great start to the new school year! CMEA Bay Section is working tirelessly to continue its mission of advancing music education through quality musical experiences for students and professional development opportunities for music educators in the Bay Area. Four years ago, we started our Outreach and Mentorship programs.

The purpose of developing these programs was to provide equity and access to the professional development and festival experiences to All of our members. Our Outreach program has two components; Scholarships for students and directors to the Winter Conference and CMEA in the Classroom.

The 2022 CMEA Bay Section Winter Conference will take place on Friday, January 7th and Saturday, January 8th. Through our Outreach Program, we would like to extend an invitation to Bay Area music educators in Title I schools that have not attended our Winter Conference to attend our 2022 conference free of charge! The Winter Conference is a two-day professional development seminar for music educators and college students held at San Jose State University.

Attendees have the opportunity to participate sessions in Classroom Music, Multicultural Music, Band, Orchestra, Choir, Jazz, and Music Technology. The conference also hosts three honor ensembles (band, orchestra, choir) made up of students nominated by their teachers from all regions of the Bay Area in in grades 7, 8, and 9. Through the Outreach Program we provide scholarships for up to ten students in each of these groups for students from Title I schools!

“CMEA in the Classroom” sends CMEA Bay Section clinicians into the classrooms of Title I music programs that have not experienced a CMEA music festival, or, cannot attend a festival this year due to financial constraints. Clinicians will provide a free session to participating ensembles using the CMEA Bay Section Adjudication Rubrics to expose students and directors to the CMEA festival experience.

The second component of the Outreach Program is our Mentorship Program. It is designed to provide support for emerging music educators or those that have changed to a different discipline, (i.e. I’m a choir teacher who just found out I am teaching orchestra). There are options in the mentorship program. You can have a mentor come in and observe you to give you feedback on what they see. You can also identify areas you’d like feedback on (rehearsal technique/ strategies, classroom management, building community in rehearsal, or any area that you feel you could benefit from by getting quality feedback. The second option is having a mentor assigned to help you develop or revise your curriculum.

CMEA Bay Section is eager to serve you and your students and hope that the opportunities outlined in this letter can benefit your students and communities. For more information on how to take advantage of these opportunities, please contact CMEA Bay Section Past President Bruce Lengacher via email at Bruce@cmeabaysection.org.

Please feel free to share this information with any colleagues you feel may benefit from these programs. We hope to see you at the Winter Conference in January!

Bruce Lengacher is the Director of Performing Arts at the Del Valle Education Center, teaching Vocal Lab, Choir and Musical Theater Workshop. Bruce has served as the General / Classroom Music and the Choral Representative for the Bay Section of the California Music Educators Association and is presently the CMEA Bay Section Past President.

President-Elect

Sandra Lewis



Dear Bay Section Colleagues,

By the time you read this issue of the Tempo we will have returned to the music room and begun the work of doing what we love most, working with students to help them unlock their full musical potential. Though this year will certainly contain some challenges, I wanted to take a moment to encourage you to recognize the outstanding music educators that make up our Bay Section membership.

On June 11th, we held our first virtual awards ceremony and as I listened to the introductions and heard their stories I was completely inspired by the depth of professional knowledge and dedication of these fine educators. From the Gil Freitas, less than seven years of service, to the Lifetime Achievement award that closed out the ceremony, all of the categories revealed amazing examples of CMEA Bay Section educator excellence. Nominating our colleagues for their efforts illuminates their commitment to music education and inspire us all.

As we return to our rooms, schedules, fixing instruments, making calendars of concerts and booster meetings, we should think about acknowledging the many talented music teachers with whom we interact on a regular basis. Nominating people for Bay Section awards is easy! When Executive Secretary Paul Lorigan sends out the Bay Section Awards nomination email blast this fall, just click the link that he will provide on the page to go to the nomination form.

Do not forget to go to the Bay Section Website and cross reference the previous year's award recipients, then submit the name of your deserving candidate along with a short description of why you think the person should be recognized. If you are still in the mood to appreciate outstanding colleagues you can then make your way to the CMEA State website and nominate someone you feel is deserving of a CMEA State Award. As you can imagine nominating someone from Bay Section to be honored at the State level is yet another way we can show gratitude and appreciation for all of our hard-working music colleagues.

This year we will be once again meeting in person at SJSU during the Winter Conference for our Bay Section Awards ceremony. Your efforts to help us nominate and honor outstanding members of Bay Section is deeply appreciated. Prepare to be inspired and awed by the many phenomenal educators and their stories that are happening all around us!

With Gratitude,
Sandra Lewis
CMEA Bay Section President-Elect
Henry M. Gunn High School
Band and Orchestra Director

Sandra Lewis teaches orchestra and band at Henry M. Gunn High School. Sandra also serves as the President-Elect of the CMEA Bay Section.

2022 CMEA Bay Section Bay Section Festivals

Area / Region	Festival	Fri. Date	Fri. Time	Sat. Date	Sat. Time	Site
North (I, VII) Mendocino Sonoma Marin Napa Solano	Jazz North			1/15/2022	9:00 AM - 6:00 PM	Site pending
	B/O North A	4/8/2022	3:00 PM - 9:30 PM	4/9/2022	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Maria Carillo HS
	B/O North B	4/22/2022	3:00 PM - 10:00 PM	4/23/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Benicia Middle School
	Choral North	5/20/2022	1:00 PM - 10:00 PM	5/21/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Maria Carillo HS
Area / Region	Festival	Fri. Date	Fri. Time	Sat. Date	Sat. Time	Site
South (V, VIII) Santa Clara	Jazz South	1/21//2022	4:00 PM - 10:00 PM	1/22/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Gunn HS
	Jazz Combo South			1/22/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Gunn HS
	Orchestra South	4/8/2022	4:00 PM - 10:00 PM	4/9/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Prospect HS
	B/O South A	3/11/2022	4:00 PM - 10:00 PM	3/12/2022	8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Graham MS
	B/O South B	3/25/2022	1:30 PM - 9:30 PM	3/26/2022	8:30 AM - 5:00 PM	Saratoga HS
	B/O South C	4/1/2022	3:00 PM - 9:30 PM	4/2/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Evergreen HS
	B/O South D	4/22/2022	4:00 PM - 10:00 PM	4/23/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Gunn HS
	B/O South E			4/30/2022	8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Cupertino MS
	B/O South F	5/13/2022	3:00 PM - 10:00 PM	5/14/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Independence HS
	Choral South	4/22/2022	4:00 PM - 10:00 PM	4/23/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Graham MS
Area / Region	Festival	Fri. Date	Fri. Time	Sat. Date	Sat. Time	Site
EAST (II, III) Contra Costa Alameda	Jazz East	1/21/2022	3:00 PM - 10:00 PM	1/22/2020	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	El Cerrito HS
	Orchestra East			4/2/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	El Cerrito HS
	B/O East A	3/18/2022	3:00 PM - 10:00 PM	3/19/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Livermore HS
	B/O East B	3/25/2022	3:00 PM - 9:30 PM	3/26/2022	8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	El Cerrito HS
	B/O East C	4/22/2022	3:00 PM - 10:00 PM	4/23/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	San Ramon Valley HS
	B/O East D	4/29/2022	3:00 PM - 10:00 PM	4/30/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Amador Valley HS
	B/O East E	4/29/2022	3:00 PM - 10:00 PM	4/30/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Castro Valley HS
	B/O East F	5/6/2022	4:00 PM - 10:00 PM	5/7/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Irvington HS
	B/O East G	5/6/2022	4:00 PM - 10:00 PM	5/7/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Pittsburg HS
	Choral East	4/22/2022	4:00 PM - 10:00 PM	3/23/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Liberty HS
Area / Region	Festival	Fri. Date	Fri. Time	Sat. Date	Sat. Time	Site
West (VI) San Mateo San Francisco	Jazz West	2/11/2022	3:00 PM - 10:00 PM	2/12/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Mills HS
	B/O West A	4/15/2022	3:30 PM - 10:00 PM	4/16/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Philip Burton HS
	B/O West B	5/13/2022	4:00 PM - 10:00 PM	5/14/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Archbishop Riordan HS
	Choral West	5/20/2022	3:00 PM - 9:00 PM	5/21/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Hillview MS
Area / Region	Festival	Fri. Date	Fri. Time	Sat. Date	Sat. Time	Site
Valley (IV) San Joaquin Stanislaus Alpine Calaveras Tuolumne	B/O Valley A	5/6/2022	3:00 PM - 10:00 PM	5/7/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Downey HS
	B/O Valley B	5/13/2022	3:00 PM - 10:00 PM	5/14/2022	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	CSU Stanislaus

Adjudication

Dr. Robert Calonico



Greetings everyone, and I hope this finds you restored after a most difficult year as you prepare for the academic year ahead. In spite of the challenges of the past year, I have been so impressed with the positive attitudes manifested by all of you during the pandemic. You are deserving of everyone's admiration and respect.

We are planning a full slate of festivals this year with the obvious caveat that continued developments regarding the pandemic/variant will dictate whether or not they actually come to fruition. In an attempt to provide a heightened educational experience for everyone, we will once again pilot a program that provides clinics for all participating groups at large group festivals. This was piloted at a Band/Orchestra festival in 2019, and participants responded positively. In all likelihood, this will tentatively occur at Choral Festivals and Orchestra-Only festivals in 2022. At the festivals where we can include a clinic for all participating groups, there will be six adjudicators, three in the performance venue, one in the sight-reading room, and two others rotating throughout the day providing clinics. There may be some changes to this format, but you will be kept informed as things develop in the coming months. In all other festivals, it will be business as usual with three adjudicators in the performance venue and one in sight-reading.

I typically do not receive many adjudicator evaluations, but they are an important component to the credibility and sustainability of CMEA Bay Section music festivals. If any of you have comments about adjudicators, either positive or negative, from last year's virtual festivals or suggestions for festivals and/or potential adjudicators, please send them to me at the email address below.

My best wishes to all of you for a musically rewarding year.

Robert Calonico, DMA
CMEA Bay Section Adjudication
bob@cmeabaysection.org

Dr. Robert Calonico is the Adjudication director for CMEA Bay Section. He teaches part-time at San José State University.

Solo & Ensemble Festivals

Katie Starnes & Ken Nakamoto



As many of us return to the classroom this fall we are faced with many uncertainties. *Will we get shut down again? Will I even get to do a concert? How will I make musicians masks work?* The fear of having to return to distance learning or a hybrid format is on the minds for many of us, and it can be hard to plan curriculum for the unexpected. One of the silver linings of distance learning is how many students became in charge of guiding their learning. One success I had with my students was using solo and small ensemble performances to create content for virtual concerts. As we return to the classroom, I am hoping to implement more use of this format, and have these in my back pocket in case our learning situation changes. Here are some ways how we can do this in the classroom.

Flex SATB Chorales:

The use of books such as the *32 Chorales for Band* by Aaron McCole, *Bach and Before for Strings* by David Newell, and *Bach and Before for Band* by David Newell can be great resources for small ensemble. These books come with each instrument having a soprano, alto, tenor, and bass part written out for their specific instrument. This allows for all students to have an understanding of ensemble roles, melodic responsibilities, chord structure, and other musical pedagogy. These chorales can be played as a whole ensemble, or as small groups. Try having students perform for each other and practice giving constructive feedback.

Remix of a Tune:

Many elementary music classrooms use familiar songs or folk songs to teach a new musical concept or idea. One of my favorite activities I used in the elementary classroom was to teach students a song (lyrics and instrumental parts) and then split them into groups and come up with a new version of it. Some students rewrote the instrument parts while some chose to create new lyrics for the same melody. Students would then share their “remixes” and you as a teacher can assess what they did to change the song and make it new. This activity was a student favorite of mine, and although the room did get a little loud, I know it was an enjoyed activity that allowed students to guide their learning.

Solo Repertoire:

Solo music seems to be more challenging to incorporate in the ensemble classroom. Schools tend to approach this differently, so here are some ideas. Consider having students learn a solo out of their book or a different repertoire source. They can submit videos and you can give them feedback. This could result in an end-of-unit performance or concert. Some schools also have concerto competition with a prize of playing with the top orchestra at a concert later that year. Students could also choose a favorite song to learn and play from a site like 8notes.com or musescore.

There are many ways for our students to engage their learning through the solo and ensemble medium. Hopefully you can utilize one of these in your classroom (whatever situation you are in).

Katie Starnes is the solo and ensemble coordinator for CMEA Bay Section and works as the instrumental music teacher at Peterson Middle School in Sunnyvale CA.

Ken Nakamoto is the Co-Solo and Ensemble Coordinator for CMEA Bay Section. He is currently the instrumental music teacher at William C. Overfelt High School in San José, CA.

Innovation & Learning

Greg Miller



Allow me a moment to introduce myself to the members of the CMEA Bay Section. My name is Greg Miller and I've just entered my 18th year of teaching music and my 4th year on the CMEA Board as the Innovative Technology Representative. My current teaching assignment has me directing bands at Palo Alto High School and Henry M. Gunn High School in Palo Alto. I have been utilizing technology to teach music for my entire career, and it is my passion to present the brightest and best aspects of technology to you. After this past year, I think we can take a step back from the screens and focus on something greater.

The 2020 - 2021 school year was perhaps the most challenging year of music education ever. Ensemble based classes were thrust into online learning, teachers became audio engineers, and zoom band didn't allow for our students to connect and perform together. Performance based classes became lessons students executed in their individual rooms at best. The connections of music classes were lost. Teachers were forced to pivot quickly and learn to utilize new technology on the fly. We did it! We have overcome the challenges of distance learning, and many of us have returned to the wonderful sounds of making music together with our students.

Now that we are back, whether it's in our rooms or outside, with a huge number of students or just a handful, I'd challenge you to engage your students where they are. They are exactly where they are supposed to be, with a caring and encouraging music teacher. Focus on rebuilding your community and culture. Focus on positive peer relationships. Focus on getting to know your students. Focus on supporting your colleagues.

We'll get back to performances and trips, but first let your students know they can trust you and that you care about them. We all had more than enough technology over the past 2 years. I hope this article will inspire you to put down the screens, and create positive environments for your students to thrive emotionally allowing all of us to thrive musically. Once we've done that, we can get back to utilizing technology to innovate our classrooms.

In January, we hope to bring you some of the brightest educators from the Bay Area and beyond to share their most innovative ideas for the music classroom. We hope you'll commit to joining us at San José State University on Friday January 7, and Saturday January 8, 2022. Professional Development sessions from all our special representatives will be available in the beautiful Student Center convention areas. We hope you'll calendar this event and make it a priority to connect with your colleagues as we gather together to enjoy sharing best practices and learning more about teaching music together, the way it should be.

Greg Miller is the Innovative Technology Rep for the CMEA Bay Section. He currently teaches band in Palo Alto splitting time between Palo Alto High School and Henry M. Gunn High School.

Multicultural

Zach Pitt-Smith



Shall We Build a Fort?

As the new school year begins, this is my journey, and quite possibly it is similar to yours. The day before school started my district changed it's "all systems go as normal" plan and declaring instead that wind band can only be taught outdoors. I spent much of the first week of school spinning my wheels trying to get clear if my energies were better spent trying to inform the district administrators about the effectiveness of band-PPE and the aerosol studies proving their overall safety or figuring out how to build an outdoor band classroom. I have been intensely disturbed that my district chose to institute this plan while many neighboring districts are planning for indoor, masked band rehearsals. Heading into our second week, I have (mostly) let that fight go as I try to do what needs to get done and get behind building our Band-Fort!

While this is entirely new to us in my urban district, perhaps some of you have already been down this road when you went back to in-person instruction in the spring. Mine is a title one school with few resources. There is a moderately strong PTSA I can lean on to help, but it is daunting to think about recreating our space...and for how long? Until it gets too cold? Until it gets too hot? Until the smoke comes? We will need to find a way to share the field with PE classes and construct shade structures, preferably with walls to keep kids from being distracted from the PE classes. We will also need a storage shed for chairs and folding music stands so they don't get stolen, come up with alternatives for inclement weather, and acquire a sound system for voice projection for outdoor rehearsals.

I keep wondering if perhaps this has all been done before... marching band does it all the time, right? This is how they do it in the Midwest, right? I need ideas, you need ideas - and we have to pool our best practices. I want to know what is working for others as you transition to outdoor band classes? What ideas are you considering? Are you teaching wind instruments inside? Are you comfortable with the PPE? Is it necessary to change our curriculum entirely? Should we just table teaching wind instruments for the year and have everyone be a percussionist! (Actually not a bad idea!)

Sometimes I see this situation much like last year's distance learning challenge: an opportunity to change stale patterns and investigate new ways to teach. Maybe sheet music needs to stay inside and the work is more on rote learning, warm up exercises and games that develop technique and some new repertoire. Maybe we need to focus on other things instead of joining our orchestra colleagues at festival this year.

Ultimately I see this year as another opportunity to explore things that we wouldn't normally have had the chance to delve into. I think we could all benefit from a discussion on this topic. I know that I could! We don't have to reinvent the wheel ourselves! If you are interested in meeting for a virtual brainstorming session or simply want to offer some ideas or questions to help guide the discussion please take a quick moment to fill out this [Google Form](#). I will share your responses with the community on the Bay Section website.

Zack Pitt-Smith has been the director of bands at Edna Brewer Middle School in Oakland for fifteen years. He directs the Oakland Eastside All-Star Ensemble (OEASE) and serves on the board of directors for California Music Educators Association as Multicultural Representative and Urban Schools Programs Representative. He was recognized as the Oakland Teacher of the Year in 2013 and is a quarterfinalist for the 2022 Music Educator Grammy Award.

Higher Education

Dr. Vu Nguyen



Greetings! My name is Dr. Vu Nguyen, and it is an honor to serve on the CMEA Bay Section Board as your new Higher Education Representative. I am currently the Director of Bands in the Conservatory of Music at University of the Pacific, and I began this role during the 2020-2021 academic year. As an alumnus of Pacific, I am grateful to have the opportunity to build upon the legacy of my friend and mentor Dr. Eric Hammer and his work with the Pacific Bands program. A native of the Bay Area, I taught in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District before my career in higher education, and I am grateful to return home where my musical career began.

After the unprecedented year and a half of teaching combined with the challenges and trauma we likely experienced and helped others through, I hope that you had some time to rest, recover, and rejuvenate with friends and loved ones over the (what seemed like the shortest) summer. If you are like me, you likely experienced many mixed emotions ranging from excitement and hope to uncertainty sprinkled with a dash of anxiety getting ready for the upcoming year.

To all of the new teachers, and to the teachers who felt like they were new teachers all over again during the pandemic (me included), you showed grit, creativity, and ingenuity as you persisted in providing the best possible experience for your students – even if it was through tiny rectangles on a computer screen. You taught students how to record themselves and expanded the walls of your virtual classrooms by bringing in guests. Many of you learned technologies entirely foreign for you prior to distance learning and shared those with your students and colleagues. You experienced failures (learning opportunities), and hopefully, you experienced some breakthroughs or a degree of feeling success in however you define it.

As music educators, you won't likely get all of the credit you deserve for what you were able to provide, but what I saw in the classrooms I visited last year (primarily via Zoom) while giving presentations and observing colleagues and student teachers is to be commended. I saw some amazing things that many of you were doing to develop and encourage community, creativity, and participation in your classrooms. With that, I encourage each of you to think about the myriad of strategies you attempted and implemented last year to continue your students' learning and provide a caring and nurturing classroom community. As I was reflecting upon this myself, I came across this wonderful article on the NAFME website titled "[Take, Leave, Transform: What Do We Keep From Last School Year?](#)" by Robby Burns, a music educator in Maryland. In it, he explores some practices to "take," "leave," and "transform" our teaching this year in the context of students and technology, teachers and technology, communication, hardware, and assessment.

Is there anything you will continue to do once we return to the classroom this year as we begin our journey "back to normal"? Perhaps it's time to consider the potential benefits of reframing how that could look as we head into this new year and beyond.

Dr. Vu Nguyen is the Higher Education Representative for CMEA Bay Section. He is currently an associate professor of music and Director of Bands at University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA.

Band

Patrick Dandrea



A Joyous Noise!: Resources and Ideas for a Return to In-Person Learning

Welcome back! I hope that you, like me, are revelling in the fulfilling sounds of students getting to share making music together again. It's hard to overstate how much we've missed something that we took for granted for so long. The return to in-person learning has given us and our students back the tools to all get better more effectively, more efficiently and way more enjoyably! Additionally, I imagine many of us are facing similar challenges with restoring and rebuilding musical and social skills and relationships after remote/hybrid learning in addition to navigating the larger structural impacts last year had on music programs.

Though we are back at school, COVID-19 continues to impact teaching and learning in band classes and I want to provide you with a few resources to help provide our students with the best possible learning experience. Guidance on how and where instruction may take place varies throughout the state and is changing regularly. This guidance may also be interpreted differently by different state and local agencies. If looking for clarification on guidance in your county, refer to your county public health department. I recommend calling to speak with someone who can provide you a clear picture of how guidance is being applied. Additionally, the [NAfME and NFHS Return to School, Phase III](#) provides guidance and direction on the most recent study data and recommended mitigation strategies. School districts are receiving COVID-relief funds that can be used to purchase musician's PPE, so be sure to ask your site or district to request these items.

Finally, while much of remote learning provided challenges, finding solutions to these challenges forced us to think and act creatively. I encourage us to think about how some of these innovative teaching strategies might enhance in-person instruction. One tool I found successful in remote learning was the ability to regularly poll and gather student input through the chat function. Since we couldn't listen to students as regularly online as in person, many of us taught our students to listen and assess themselves. Now that we are back together, we can transfer and adapt these tools to in-person learning by giving our students similar prompts and targets to listen for in their own sound, another student's, or the larger group. These prompts can be open-ended such as "Tell your neighbor one thing that you liked/didn't like about your sound" or "Was better, worse, or the same as before?" They can also be more specific such as "Which section had the best start to their sound?" or "Who had the most consistent articulation?" after a section show-and-tell on an excerpt or fundamental. We taught our students these awareness skills, so let's take advantage of them!

I wish you a successful, rewarding and safe start to the year!

Patrick Dandrea is the Band Representative for the CMEA Bay Section, and is the Director of Instrumental Music at Harvest Park Middle School in Pleasanton, CA.

Orchestra

Tiffany Ou-Ponticelli



The sound of students chatting and laughing was everything during this first day of school. As I write this article on my first day back with students, I feel joyful, excited, fulfilled, exhausted, and honestly, a little sweaty. It'll take a minute for us all to get back in the swing of the physicality of our jobs, but getting to have those little moments with students back makes everything so much better. The inside jokes, the in-person check-ins, the ability to hear and see everyone and to once again read the room... ahh. I can hear the collective sigh of relief from teachers all around. Fingers crossed we can keep at it!

My name is Tiffany Ou-Ponticelli, and I have had the pleasure of serving as CMEA Bay Section Orchestra Representative since 2018. I teach orchestra in Palo Alto at Gunn High School (alongside my fantastic co-teacher and CMEA Bay Section President-Elect Sandra Lewis), and at Fletcher Middle School. I currently also serve as the President of CODA, and am grateful to get to work with such strong groups of educators and friends.

Alongside me at CMEA Bay Section is our incredible Assistant Orchestra Representative, Stephanie Holmes. In addition to seeing her amazing orchestra teaching from afar at Edna Brewer Middle School in Oakland, I have had the pleasure of learning so much from her. From bringing opera into the ensemble classroom to extreme lego building (seriously, ask her about it) - she is legendary! Stephanie's wealth of knowledge and heart is yet another reason why I love working with Bay Section. Our area is full of incredible colleagues and collaborators!

When I think about all that we did collectively last year in the service of students, I feel so proud of our profession. We re-invented our jobs, then re-invented them again. We drove instruments to students, found ways to make connections through screens, and all challenged ourselves to learn new things. Many folks did so while also balancing care for family members and suffering losses. Somewhere in the non-stop video editing and Zooming, I felt more burnt out than ever before, and I know many others felt the same.

I'm entering this school year more than ever thinking about centering the whole human. What do our students need most? What needs to be set aside for now to achieve that? How can I encourage community and facilitate interactions that help replenish buckets? How can I find ways to keep balance in my life? I am aiming to approach each day with care and curiosity.

On a more pedagogical note, I'm feeling inspired about re-thinking the repertoire selection process. My fall repertoire selection has led me to purchase directly from composers, to look into rentals I'd never before considered, and to look deeper into who is published and why. I'd love to continue this conversation with any of you if you're interested - feel free to send me an email (touponticelli@pausd.org) with your thoughts!

I am really looking forward to working with our CMEA Board to put on a great Winter Conference in January. More details to come soon, and I can't wait to see you all!

Tiffany Ou-Ponticelli is the Orchestra Rep for CMEA Bay Section. She also directs orchestras at Gunn High School and Fletcher Middle School in the Palo Alto Unified School District.

Choral

Lauren Diez



Greetings, colleagues! My name is Lauren Diez, and I am honored to be your newly elected Choral Representative on the CMEA Bay Section Board (although I'm not exactly new). Last year I served as your interim Choral Representative, and prior to that held the role of Assistant Choral Representative.

For those of you to whom I have not introduced myself, I teach at Los Altos High School and live in San Francisco with my husband, Steven, cat Minty, and an ever-growing collection of over 90 houseplants. I would also like to introduce my sidekick, your Assistant Choral Representative, Andrew Hathaway. Andrew teaches at Castellero Middle School in San Jose and is the assistant director for Resounding Achord Productions. Thank you for your faith in us to lead our community through these dynamic times.

For many of us, our summer optimism in anticipation of this school year has faded to fall uncertainty. I wish I was writing a 'Ding-Dong! The Witch is Dead' article rather than one in our current state ('Livin' on a Prayer'...?). I will say, seeing the top half of my singers' faces and hearing their mask-muffled voices in real life beats the dreaded Zoom rehearsal by a thousand, and I'm beyond grateful for it. It's the little things that keep us going these days. We've gotta hold on to what we've got.

On that note, the past 18 months have taught us lessons in holding on and letting go—holding on to the most important things, and letting go of non-essentials and elements out of our control. Distance learning forced us to strip down what we do to the most essential elements and pour our energy into what really matters. So, while the pandemic lingers and we continue to reinvent our instructional practices, I invite you to join me in going back to the basics.

This fall semester is an orientation to real life choir for many of our students. Our schools have two "freshman" classes on campus this year, and most students have no knowledge of what choir used to be like. Even our most experienced singers could probably use a refresh. With this in mind, my top priority while selecting repertoire for my choirs this fall was finding music that is quick to learn, fun to sing, and will provide instant gratification for my singers. This does not wholly align with my educational philosophy, but that's okay. My normal curriculum and teaching style went straight out the window on March 13, 2020, and I'll go back for them someday. My singers have some basic needs right now: to feel connection within our choir community, and to fall in love with singing again. My job is to set these as primary foundations for learning and making music together. The rest will fall into place in good time.

If you are feeling overwhelmed at the thought of jumping back in and reviving your choir program while times remain unpredictable, I encourage you to slow down (yes, we are terrible at this) and be patient with yourself and your singers. Keep it simple, find joy wherever possible, and remind yourself of why you're here. Write a personal mission statement to center your teaching on what matters most, and let go of the things that don't serve that purpose. Release yourself of the obligation to do every single thing you've done in years past. We have a unique opportunity to restart our programs with a renewed sense of purpose. That is exciting!

Each of you deserves a giant medal and a cash bonus. Thank you for the important work you do in keeping young singers connected and making music, no matter the circumstances. I wish you all happiness, peace, and energy to sustain you this school year!

Lauren Diez is the Choral Representative for CMEA Bay Section, and also serves on the board of the California Choral Directors Association. She is the Choral Music Director at Los Altos High School in Los Altos.

Classroom/General Music

Victoria Schmidt



Welcome back! I hope you all had a restful and well-deserved summer break. With the variety of instructional approaches and ranges of teaching situations that everyone used during distance learning, with its successes and occasional failures, I am sure it was a relief to step away from the computer for a few weeks to relax, recoup and prepare for the new schoolyear.

What are you most excited about with the new year? It will be great to see the students for face to face instruction, to be in the same room and start making music again, even if students have not sung in a while and are not where they would be musically. It will be wonderful to be able to resume teaching your curriculum, and include more movement and dance, games, body percussion, bucket drumming and boomwhackers, to name a few. Technology can be used as well to teach new concepts and reinforce those that they have learned.

What were your best practices from the past school year? I survived the last schoolyear using Google Classroom, Jamboard, rhythm play-a-long videos, dance and movement videos, MusicPlayOnLine, Music First, Sightreading Factory, Musicators.com, and the interactive digital music work-sheets that I created using Canva, Google Slides, and TeacherMade. I designed my classes to accommodate the modified times for instruction and music latency, and learned to utilize and accept the “silence” that came with teaching via zoom. Teaching over zoom did have some benefits: I taught more theory and saw students learn and demonstrate concepts differently, I heard more individual student performances, and I maintained a positive connection with my classes. What I missed the most was hearing my students sing and perform together. I am hoping that this new schoolyear will allow for group performances to start happening again, even with modifications and restrictions.

With the new variants of the virus continuing to develop and spread, I believe it would be wise to be flexible and be prepared to teach in whatever situations that would arise. I would keep the materials and lessons from last school year, as well as live or digital activities like Music Bingo, Escape Rooms, and Scavenger Hunts. What else can you bring back? I would like to know.

I wish you all the luck, the strength and the will power to continue to make beautiful music this year. Be creative with your lesson plans, continue to incorporate technology with teaching and performance, as well as social-emotional learning. And most of all, take care of yourself—take a walk, read a book, spend time with family. But of course, don't

Victoria Schmidt is the Classroom/General Music Representative, and served as a Kodaly classroom music specialist and Choral Director at Eden Gardens Elementary and Ochoa Middle School in Hayward.

Jazz

Andrew Hill



Welcome back to what will hopefully be a year of fantastic music making. I am Andrew Hill, Music Director at Los Gatos High School and I am honored to be serving as the Jazz Representative for the CMEA Bay Section. This year, programs will experience a variety of new challenges emerging from the past year and a half and I will be available as a resource to anyone at any time who needs anything!

Despite what challenges lie ahead, the community of educators and musicians in the Bay Area is dedicated to providing the best music education for our students. Instead of focusing on what each program may or may not be able to do, I want to offer some ideas that should be approachable for every jazz ensemble.

Improv building blocks - Think about the basics, long tones over a one chord progression, easy two to three note patterns. We have to think about where the students are at after not a lot of live performing in front of others, but we also have to think about what we need them to be able to do later in the year. Start early, keep it as part of your daily rehearsal schedule and don't ever let it go by the wayside!

Engage the community - This is the best way to reinvigorate your student's love for performing as well as remind the community of your very important presence. Find a show or two that you can put on the calendar that is easy, outdoors and local to your community. This will give you a performance opportunity that will help give the community an insight to what you do and help build momentum to future opportunities in your area.

Don't be afraid to pick easier rep - I feel this is going to be a constant conversation among music educators right now and without pontificating too much or preaching to the choir - don't stress about how "hard" your charts are. Take the students where they are at in whatever capacity they had in this past year. Some may have taken some lessons or done a summer camp or some may have been completely ignoring their instrument the past year. Find ways to make them engaged as they will be eternally grateful for the effort you as an educator put in.

Continue to reinforce routines & teambuilding - I know this sounds cheesy, but we spent the greater part of my first day back re-learning routines, expectations and having some fun name games. The students are born to have positive social interactions and the last year was a severe interruption. Take the time to be that leader that helps them connect with others and makes them feel a part of something special.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me, even just to chat or bounce ideas! Have a great year.

Andrew Hill is the Jazz Representative for the CMEA Bay Section, an avid trombonist and is the Music Director at Los Gatos High School in Los Gatos, CA.



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- February 12, 2022
- February 26, 2022
- March 12, 2022
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