



TEACHING POPULAR MUSIC

a conference for teachers, by teachers

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Saturday, February 28th, 2026

Important Links:

[Conference Registration](#)

[Conference Schedule](#)

1 Credit for Teaching License Renewal and/or Salary Advancement
(more information will be available the week of February 23rd)

Contact: Jonathan Dillon, j.dillon@utah.edu



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9:30–9:55am, Room 318

Session Title	<i>Creative Fusions: Combining Classical and Popular Music for Motivated, Multi-Level Learning</i>
Presenter	TawnaLyn Mangelson Hearts in Harmony Suzuki Studio / Eclectic Strings
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/qGM1TPqaV9U
Session Description	This session explores the pedagogical benefits of combining classical repertoire with popular and movie soundtrack music through genre-blending musical arrangements. Drawing from several years of experience implementing this idea in a private studio setting, I will demonstrate how this approach fosters rhythmic accuracy and technique development, enhances sight-reading, encourages ensemble collaboration, and bridges age and skill gaps within group classes. By integrating student-favorite themes with classical works, educators can inspire motivation and deepen musical understanding while still meeting technical and expressive learning goals.
About the Presenter	I am a Suzuki violin teacher. I have been teaching for over 20 years and am registered with the SAA in books 1-10. I have incorporated folk music into my teaching from the beginning and recently began adding popular and movie soundtrack music into my studio. I love using multiple music genres to broaden my students' music experience and also increase motivation.



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9:30–10:25am, Room 324

Session Title	<i>Songwriting Workshop: Empowering Educators to Create Original, Arts-Integrated Songs for their Classrooms</i>
Presenter	Olivia Murphy Majestic Elementary Arts Academy
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/btKglYwoLZU
Session Description	This session will provide an overview of the benefits of writing your own music as an elementary music educator, and why it can make programming easier for the teacher, and learning more impactful for the students. This session will go over different examples of songwriting techniques, tips, tricks, and how to get started if you've never attempted songwriting before. There will be hands-on workshop time where participants can start writing their own song and experiment with the process. The session will also demonstrate some free resources and technology programs that teachers can use to create and produce their songs.
About the Presenter	I am the K-3 music teacher at Majestic Elementary Arts Academy in Jordan School District. I integrate every day in my classroom, as well as have 2 school-wide performances a year that are integrated with the students' academic subjects. To achieve this, I write many of the songs sung in the performances myself so they meet both the musical and academic needs of my students. I have been doing this for 5 years, so although I am no songwriting expert, I do have successful experience that can be shared with other music educators.



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9:30–10:25am, Dumke Recital Hall (4th Floor)

Session Title	<i>Simple, effective recording techniques</i>
Presenter	Mike Cottle University of Utah
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/PhhwOAugZck
Session Description	Exploding myths about quality recordings for popular music styles and classical performances. It turns out, simple and inexpensive is better, almost magic.
About the Presenter	My degrees are in composition, specializing in computer and electro-acoustic music. I've published (MIT press) on SuperCollider, the modern equivalent to the modular synthesizer. I also teach and do recordings for the school of music (300+ concerts a year), Utah Symphony, Utah Opera, Utah Chamber Artists, Salt Lake Choral artists, BYU Choirs, Nova and Intermezzo concert series, to mention a few.



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10:00–10:25am, Room 318	
Session Title	<i>The Big Picture Focus on Teaching Popular Music</i>
Presenter	John Costa University of Utah
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/cWk_LSRRNwQ
Session Description	The aim of this proposal is to suggest an effective approach to teaching courses covering popular music by focusing on the “big picture” – a common thread that binds various aspects of the subject together in an unfolding, unified, and sensible manner. Creating any course dealing with this subject can be challenging because the scope of popular music (or rock ‘n’ roll in general) is so vast with many different styles, genres, anecdotes, artists, and a seemingly endless array of possible educational approaches. Focusing on a big picture can enable one to take this endless scope and condense it into a pointed, finite sense of clarity. There are various examples of defining the big picture vis-a-vis popular music in the following ways: • Cause and Effect: a process of beginning – development – legacy. A distinct sense of direction where the process unfolds into a step by step, developmental scenario. • Extraction: to extract from a vast scope, a focal point, a strategy that on the surface, should be simple and direct. Where the underlying details could gravitate to a focused thread of thought without getting mired in superfluous items and information. • Influences: a process of unfolding influences and originality within a particular era in popular music by addressing the following questions: • Who originated a particular musical period? • How did these artists utilize their influences in order to achieve an



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	original sound? • How did subsequent artists further elevate the musical development of a particular period – especially to a new level? • How did some of these artists influence the originality of others? • How did some of these artists influence mainstream culture either during their height of popularity or later in the future? • What became their musical and cultural legacies? • Technology: the development of recording technology and its relationship with popular music's development. This would include producers and their influences on pop's development by creative use of technologies. • Various Scenes: the creative development of various scenes that spawned a culture and the music that reflected it. Central meeting points where bands would form with artists influencing one another. Some of the elements in addition to music, were visual art, literature, performance venues, and networking. Regardless of which concept to embrace, it is important to note that it must be supported by solid, reliable sources. This can prevent the course from becoming a possible soap box – focusing on what the instructor likes - as opposed to legitimate objects of study supported by evidence drawn from the big picture. In other words, precluding the instructor's imposition upon the student of a preconceived bias.
About the Presenter	John Costa is a Professor/Lecturer at The University of Utah and is published by Frank E. Warren Music Service of Boston and AVA Musical Editions in Lisbon, Portugal. He has chaired the Board of Directors for the Utah Arts Festival (2007/8) and is producer/coordinator of the Utah Arts Festival's National Composer Commissioning Program. In addition to his composing, he has also written a text, A History of Rock 'n' Roll: 12th Edition that is published through Pearson Learning Solutions.



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10:30–10:55am, Room 318

Session Title	<i>Examining the Intersection of Hidden Public Music Theory and Popular Music via the Music of Steam Powered Giraffe</i>
Presenter	Michael Chikinda University of Utah
Session Video Link	No video available
Session Description	In this session I will explain the benefit of using pop music, specifically the genre of steam punk, as a way to introduce the topic of public music theory, which can be defined as, "a variety of media and activities. Public music theory can be found in pre-concert lectures, radio broadcasts, courtroom testimony, journalism, criticism, program notes, podcasts, videocasts, social media, video games, museums, and in many other locations and interactions focused on improving musical understanding or using musical skills to improve people's lives." (Danny Jenkins, <i>The Oxford Handbook of Public Music Theory</i>, 2022). Moreover, 'hidden' public music theory occurs when this discourse is not done couched explicitly as music theory. Thus, rather than using pop music in the classroom solely as a way to diversify the musical examples consulted, it can empower students to reevaluate the way in which theory is talked about and the context in which this conversation happens. The genre of steam punk is used because, just as the idea of public music theory, prompts us to reconsider the ways in which music theory is discussed, and by whom, the retro-futuristic aesthetic cultivated by this band (i.e., the fusion of music, theater and puppetry) prompts us to reconsider the delineation between the organic and the mechanical, which acts as a metaphor for hidden public music theory.
About the Presenter	I have taught music theory at the University of Utah School of Music since 2010; in addition, I am head of the theory area. I have presented my research, and published papers, on music and politics and form in music. My recent research interest has shifted to the intersection of



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	public music theory and popular music. Thus, having a opportunity present on this topic and receive valuable feedback is ideal
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10:30–11:25am, Room 324

Session Title	<i>Implementing West African Rhythmic Architecture Principles in Teaching Popular Music Ensembles to Groove Collectively</i>
Presenter	Matthew Harding Utah Valley University / Wasatch Academy
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/BXJmcVhl3Is
Session Description	This professional development session is designed to equip music educators with multi-culturally grounded strategies for fostering rhythmic cohesion in popular music ensembles. Drawing upon West African rhythmic architecture—characterized by interlocking parts, timbral differentiation, and cyclical perception of time—this session will demonstrate how these principles can be applied to help ensembles “gel” together rhythmically. Emphasis will be placed on a diasporic rhythmic model, the reggae “One Drop” groove, which provides a clear, familiar, and accessible rhythmic framework for teaching students to listen and sense deeply, perceive and respect timbral space, and lock into an embodied collective feel. West African music traditions can be viewed as being built upon an architecture-like approach to rhythm in which each instrumental part occupies a defined space in the temporal cycle, interlocks with complementary parts, and contributes to a composite whole (Agawu, 2016; Chernoff, 1979). This framework has profoundly influenced music of the African diaspora, including reggae, and blues, where rhythmic layers are distributed with precision and feel across the ensemble to create sustained collective groove.
About the Presenter	Matthew Harding received his B.A. in Music with an emphasis in Classical Guitar from Brigham Young University. He holds a M.A. in Cognitive Psychology, specializing in Musical Rhythm Perception, from Wesleyan University, and an Ed.S. degree in Educational Technology from Boise State University, where he is currently a doctoral candidate (ABD). Since joining Wasatch Academy in 2018, Matthew has taught



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Modern Ensemble, Vocal Ensemble, Guitar, and Songwriting.

For the past 25 years, Matthew's musical focus has been on performance as a singer/songwriter and recording artist, though he has since transitioned to an educational focus. He has extensive experience in various aspects of the music industry, including songwriting/composition, recording, production, tour management, live sound, concert promotion, and creating music for film, TV, and radio. His performance and production collaborations span the globe, working with artists from Spain, Brazil, Romania, Ecuador, Togo, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Senegal, France, Germany, India, the Philippines, Nigeria, Cuba, China, and the United States, among others, in both recording and live performance settings.

Originally from Orem, Utah, Matthew has lived in Shanghai, China; San Sebastián, Spain; Bahia, Brazil; New York City; and the Philippines. He is passionate about languages and speaks Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, Tagalog, and Ilonggo.



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10:30–10:55am, Dumke Recital Hall (4th Floor)	
Session Title	<i>Engaging Students Through Modern/Rock Band: An Experience-Based Approach to Collaborative Learning</i>
Presenter	Mel Leone University of Utah
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/qrQwIMfujU
Session Description	Traditional band classes, focused on classical or concert repertoire, often face challenges engaging students drawn to popular music. This workshop offers an alternative approach through a modern/rock band format, fostering engagement, collaboration, and personal growth. Based on my experience teaching Year 2 to Year 10 in an international school, I will show how a non-traditional curriculum can deliver strong musical and social-emotional results. In this interactive session, participants will experience a modern/rock band class firsthand. We will explore non-traditional music notation using chords and bass root notes. In small groups, teachers will take on different roles, select a popular song, and arrange it for a final “performance” during the session. Instruments will include piano, guitar, bass, drums/percussion, and vocals. This hands-on approach will demonstrate how student-led song choices and teamwork can build cohesion, making music learning more engaging, relevant, and meaningful for all students.
About the Presenter	I hold a Master’s in Music and am currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Utah. My work combines teaching, performing, and creating, with experiences ranging from music education in Brazil to musical projects in Dublin. More recently, I taught music for elementary and secondary and directed the glee club and musical plays at an international school. I have a deep appreciation for popular music, which has inspired initiatives like the ‘Escritores de Canções’ group (collaborative songwriting), the band ‘Garotas de Liverpool’ (all



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	female Beatles Tribute Band) and my debut EP, Time Machine, released in 2018.
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11:00–11:25am, Room 318	
Session Title	<i>Minor Falls, Major Lifts: Popular Music Theory Course Strategies</i>
Presenter	Brandon Derfler Westminster University
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/Ljv85ma6dwo
Session Description	This presentation explores effective teaching strategies in a course devoted to the theory and analysis of popular music. From choosing an appropriate textbook to writing a well-paced syllabus, designing thoughtful reading and homework assignments, creating dynamic spaces for class discussions, engaging the students' interests and inspiring them to research their favorite musicians, and scaffolding tasks leading up to a term paper and class presentation, I will reflect on pedagogies that worked well, some pitfalls inherent in courses like this, and offer advice to those who are thinking of creating their own upper-division/graduate level popular music theory courses.
About the Presenter	I am a music professor at Westminster University in Salt Lake City, where I teach music theory, history, and general education courses. My PhD in Music Theory is from the University of Washington. I have taught a course on the Theory and Analysis of Popular Music at Westminster over the last few years.



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11:00–11:25am, Dumke Recital Hall (4th Floor)

Session Title	<i>Pop with Purpose: Building Musical Skills Through Students' Favorite Songs</i>
Presenter	Heather Christiansen University of Utah
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/aX3Tkhs9X8Q
Session Description	Many secondary choral educators value popular music as students' musical mother tongue, but bringing it into traditional ensemble settings can feel complicated. More than just performing popular music in concerts, popular music can also serve as rigorous material to teach musical concepts. Traditional ensemble classes are often the most direct entry point for introducing popular music into school music programs. In this session, participants will experience a complete lesson as they sing and move, exploring one possible approach: using a Kodály-inspired teaching arc (prepare–present–practice) to teach sol through a popular song. Informed by the work of Houlihan & Tacka, Lois Choksy, and Rosalind Hall, this session focuses on student-centered engagement. Participants will leave with practical tools for weaving popular music into their own traditional ensemble classrooms. Join us to explore how Kodály-inspired teaching can bridge students' musical worlds and the choral classroom.
About the Presenter	Heather Christiansen is currently a doctoral student in music education at the University of Utah. She taught choir at Valley View Middle School and conducted the Mapleton Chorale for 5 years. Her research focuses on adapting Kodály-inspired strategies for secondary students, including integrating popular music to build musical literacy. She is committed to sharing practical tools that make teachers' lives easier while enriching student learning.



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12:30–1:25pm, Room 318	
Session Title	<i>Using Free Improvisation to Teach Jazz & Pop</i>
Presenter	Josiah Boornazian University of Utah
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/Aoj3pGLPd5A
Session Description	Learn how to teach improvisation and the “jazz language” in a larger socio-cultural context. Verbal language can serve as a metaphor to focus on mastering and adapting various “dialects” of musical vocabulary. Using this model and incorporating new musical technology such as digital audio workstations, students can learn how to practice free improvisation by engaging in creative play with a set of structured “games” that involve improvising with creative predetermined parameters. Even if students never perform free improvisation live, practicing free improvisation is a fun, creative, and challenging way to improve one’s musicianship and isolate and work on one aspect of music making at a time. This approach is open and welcoming to musicians of all levels and backgrounds and is applicable to all styles.
About the Presenter	Dr. Josiah Boornazian is an award-winning saxophonist, composer, educator, electronic musician, and scholar of music most recently active in Utah, Europe, South Texas, Miami, New York City, Washington state, and California. He is currently the Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. His playing and composing have been featured recently on albums released on record labels including Fresh Sound New Talent, Elegant Noise Records, and Jazz Hang Records. Dr. Boornazian’s recordings feature his original compositions and include over thirty self-published jazz and electronic albums available on Bandcamp.com and all major online music streaming platforms.



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12:30–1:25pm, Room 324

Session Title	<i>Langston Hughes and the Blues</i>
Presenter	Sherise Longhurst Ridgecrest Elementary School
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/WZXKD4GpH6k
Session Description	My session is based on a lesson I've used successfully with fourth- and fifth-grade students at my school. The original idea came from a lesson plan on the Smithsonian Education website, and I have expanded and adapted the material for my classroom. I talk about the poet Langston Hughes and use his poems to introduce blues music. I play examples of blues songs and teach the form of a blues stanza (two repeated lines, followed by a rhyming third line). We compose a blues stanza as a class, and then students compose their own stanzas and perform them with a twelve-bar blues backing track. Next, we talk about improvisation, and I have them improvise with the backing track on xylophones set up in a blues scale. My students have enjoyed this lesson every time I've taught it, and I would love to share it with conference attendees.
About the Presenter	I've been the Beverley Taylor Music Specialist at Ridgecrest Elementary for 10 years. I also conduct two after-school choirs and an instrumental ensemble at Ridgecrest. I have a Bachelor's degree in Music Education from BYU and a Master's in Teaching Fine Arts from the University of Utah. I believe every child is musical and deserves a high-quality music education filled with joyful, purposeful, active music-making. I was named the Outstanding Elementary Music Educator of the Year by the Utah Music Education Association in 2023, and I received the Sorenson Legacy Award for Excellence in Arts Education in 2024.



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12:30–12:55pm, Dumke Recital Hall (4th Floor)

Session Title	<i>Nine Years of Popular Music Teaching: What Worked, What Didn't, and What's Next</i>
Presenter	Devin Maxwell Westminster University / University of Utah
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/1RBSY2pjHHw
Session Description	What happens when you bring popular music into the classroom—and let students take the lead? After nine years of teaching popular music at Westminster University, I've seen firsthand how this approach can transform student engagement, creativity, and identity. In this talk, I'll share the lessons learned from nearly a decade of trial, error, and evolution in popular music pedagogy. We'll explore real-world classroom strategies for songwriting, production, improvisation, and collaboration, as well as the logistical and philosophical challenges of shifting from traditional models to more student-centered ones. I'll also discuss the changing role of the music teacher in a world where students are already creating music outside of school. Whether you're just starting to explore popular music in your teaching or looking to deepen your practice, this session will offer honest reflections, practical tools, and big-picture questions to take back to your students.
About the Presenter	I am an Adjunct Associate Professor, Composition at University of Utah and Director of Composition and Music Technology, Westminster University. Before dedicating myself to teaching, I co-founded the LoudLoudLoudest Music Production Company in Brooklyn, NY, and was responsible for many firsts in mobile game sound, taking on clients such as Sony, Warner Music Group, Universal Music Group, Atlantic Records, HBO and Disney. I've recorded and released work on 4AD, Polyvinyl, Parlophone, Cantaloupe Records, and Mode and can be heard



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	on music for TV, film, and video games including Grand Theft Auto IV, The Independent Film Channel, Grey's Anatomy, and BBC.
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12:30–1:25pm, Room 270	
Session Title	<i>Barbershop Tag Singing: A Music Educator's Guide to Using Barbershop Tags in the Classroom</i>
Presenter	Steve Scott Barbershop Harmony Society
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/or5iapwzIdo
Session Description	This session showcases how music educators can use barbershop tags (song codas) to teach a variety of topics in a microlearning format: music theory, sight singing, ear training, vocal techniques, performance techniques, music history, improvisation, composition, etc. There will be plenty of audience participation (singing!) in this fun demonstration of an American art form that can be seamlessly transitioned into a classroom.
About the Presenter	Steve Scott is the Director of Music Education for the Barbershop Harmony Society, where he leads educational strategy for thousands of barbershop singers across North America and beyond. A respected vocal pedagogue, he works closely with vocalists, quartets, choruses, and directors to promote healthy, expressive singing in the barbershop style. Steve has taught at the university level and is a frequent conference presenter, clinician, and author, with expertise in vocal acoustics, choral pedagogy, and contemporary techniques. His work bridges evidence-based voice science with practical application for ensemble singers, music educators, and a cappella performers worldwide.



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1:00–1:25pm, Dumke Recital Hall (4th Floor)	
Session Title	<i>Everyone Can Write a Song: Teaching Songwriting to Students of All Skill Levels</i>
Presenter	Thomas Baggaley Salt Lake Community College
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/LUC5Qli5WxA <i>Note: Due to a technical error, this video cuts off after about 5 minutes. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause the viewer.</i>
Session Description	At Salt Lake Community College, our general education songwriting course welcomes students from all backgrounds—ranging from complete musical novices to experienced songwriters. With no prior musical training required, the class creates a unique and dynamic learning environment. While this diversity presents instructional challenges, it also opens the door to innovative teaching strategies that engage all learners. Songwriting becomes both an accessible entry point for beginners and a meaningful challenge for advanced students. Many discover, often for the first time, that they can participate in music creation—even if they never took lessons or gave up early. In this session, we'll explore our inclusive, student-centered approach to teaching songwriting and share practical strategies for fostering creativity, confidence, and community in a mixed-experience classroom.
About the Presenter	I am a professor of music at Salt Lake Community College, where I have taught for the past 23 years. I am a primary designer of most of the curriculum for the Commercial Music program at SLCC. I teach classes in songwriting, video game sound design/composition, music theory/aural skills, and music production. I am also director of the SLCC Studio Ensemble. I am active as a professional composer, songwriter, and author and have written two music textbooks: "Songwriting from the Beginning" and "So, You Want to Write Music?: A Handbook of Fundamentals for the Learning Composer."



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1:30–2:25pm, Room 318	
Session Title	<i>Universal Jazz Clinic/Masterclass Techniques</i>
Presenter	Josiah Boornazian University of Utah
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/pTYuoNaaTic
Session Description	After more than a decade of offering jazz clinics and masterclasses on a variety of topics across the United States and Europe, I've noticed many common patterns. Due to the nature of modern culture and the current state of jazz education, there are some universally common areas of musical weakness that can be constructively addressed in a structured way in a masterclass environment. I have also noted regional and national trends. This presentation will focus on sharing a small handful of sample teaching techniques that are based on applying very concrete exercises and pieces of advice after listening to and then responding to students in an individualized manner. The goal of this presentation is to give jazz teachers a practical tool kit of clinic/masterclass techniques that can help them to better help students sound better faster. The topics that will be covered include sound production for wind players, rhythm section coaching, rehearsal/warm-up techniques, and scaffolded improvisation teaching techniques.
About the Presenter	Dr. Josiah Boornazian is an award-winning saxophonist, composer, educator, electronic musician, and scholar of music most recently active in Utah, Europe, South Texas, Miami, New York City, Washington state, and California. He is currently the Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. His playing and composing have been featured recently on albums released on record labels including Fresh Sound New Talent, Elegant Noise Records, and Jazz Hang Records. Dr. Boornazian's recordings feature his original compositions and include over thirty self-published jazz and electronic albums available on Bandcamp.com and all major online music



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	streaming platforms.
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1:30–1:55pm, Room 324

Session Title	<i>Active Listening in the Early Years: Baba Yetu by Christopher Tin</i>
Presenter	Emilee Knell Brigham Young University / University of Utah
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/1Cbstv7r754
Session Description	Active listening is a powerful way of connecting young children with a variety of music genres. Join me as we explore a variety of techniques for active listening with "Baba Yetu" from the video game Civilizations IV. We will move, read, and play along to this engaging piece of music.
About the Presenter	I am pursuing a PhD in Music Education with an emphasis on Early Childhood and Elementary music education. I am the director of a music lab preschool called the Young Musicians Academy. I have also taught elementary music in the public schools and courses at the collegiate level. I am a faculty member for certification through the SongWorks Educators Association.



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1:30–2:25pm, Dumke Recital Hall (4th Floor)	
Session Title	<i>Collaborative Songwriting in the Music Classroom: Nurturing Musical and Social-Emotional Growth</i>
Presenter	Mel Leone University of Utah
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/37Ybg2eDB8M
Session Description	While many educators recognize the importance of songwriting, it is often approached as an individual, notation-based task. This session presents a collaborative alternative inspired by the “Escritores de Canções” songwriting group in Salvador, Brazil, which fosters rapid, low-stakes creation in a team environment. We will explore how to adapt this co-writing model for the classroom to promote both musical and personal growth. Participants will learn to teach foundational concepts of popular music—such as structure, harmony, and melody—within a group setting. Through a hands-on activity, attendees will work in small groups to brainstorm and co-write a short song segment, with the focus on the process over a finished product. A brief listening session will follow. This presentation provides educators with a practical framework for implementing collaborative songwriting projects that also build essential interpersonal skills like communication, negotiation, and flexibility in their students.
About the Presenter	I hold a Master’s in Music and am currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Utah. My work combines teaching, performing, and creating, with experiences ranging from music education in Brazil to musical projects in Dublin. More recently, I taught music for elementary and secondary and directed the glee club and musical plays at an international school. I have a deep appreciation for popular music, which has inspired initiatives like the ‘Escritores de Canções’ group (collaborative songwriting), the band ‘Garotas de Liverpool’ (all



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2:00–2:25pm, Room 324

Session Title	<i>Music Ed in a Theatre Ed World</i>
Presenter	Laura Taylor Uintah Elementary School
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/rwc_yLAqY68
Session Description	In this session I would share my experience with music directing very young students (3rd grade) in a formal musical. I have video and lesson plans to share as well as some tips and tricks I use as someone who sings, plays piano, and has a musical theatre background. These are POV from a theatre educator and more theatre based tips rather than music based tips. I'll also share some challenges/areas to focus on with the process from 15 years of working with secondary music directors and then acting as an elementary music director myself. We'll also have a Q&A.
About the Presenter	I'm a K-12 theatre educator currently working as a BTS Drama Specialist at Uintah Elementary where I am in charge of a formal third grade musical. One of the many hats I wear in this role is music director though I don't have a music education degree or formal music background like most music educators. I also work supervising pre-service teachers at the U and a Professional Development Partner for the BTS program's U of U region.



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2:30–3:25pm, Room 318

Session Title	<i>Deciphering Your Rhythm Section Parts and Applying it Across the Ensemble</i>
Presenter	Steven Heffner University of Utah
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/hhlAKYwLp2g
Session Description	This presentation offers practical skills in deciphering and interpreting guitar, piano, bass, and drum charts, focusing specifically on methods that can be transmitted to students. With this practical information, we dive into how the ideology of rhythm section parts can be applied to interpretation of horn parts as well as creative decisions by ensemble directors.
About the Presenter	Over the past twenty years, I have worked as a performer and music educator. My performance experience spans a wide range of musical styles—including classical, jazz, Motown, Contemporary Christian Music (CCM), and gospel—and has taken me across Washington, Ohio, Texas, Indiana, Iowa, and Utah. My scholastic research focuses on enhancing pedagogical approaches within jazz studies and improvisation generally.



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2:30–3:25pm, Room 324

Session Title	<i>Zine-ing with Tweens: Punk and DIY Publishing in the Upper Grades</i>
Presenter	Caitlyn Bramble Granite School District
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/hSpTtfhW9Fo
Session Description	Zines have been a way for fans and practitioners in all kinds of media to share their philosophies, talents, and visions for the future. Even in 2025, musicians and fans alike are turning to the ways of 90s Riot Grrls through a renewed interest in zines and DIY culture. Though many of the ways students engage with music in the 21st century are digital, looking to more "analog" methods for engagement in the classroom is still worth pursuing. In this session, participants will learn more about the history of zines and their intersections with popular music subcultures. But this session isn't your average park-and-bark lecture-- we'll also have plenty of time to experiment and create our own zines!
About the Presenter	I am a 5th year music teacher in Granite District, a classical musician in recovery, and an amateur zine artist. I think that in these turbulent times, art and music have the very important role of helping us all to cope with and heal from the state of the world. With that in mind, I've been searching for ways to guide students in experiences that can empower them through the arts. The ethos of punk rock and DIY culture have inspired me throughout my life, and how I'm bringing them together in the elementary music classroom feels important to share.



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2:30–3:25pm, Dumke Recital Hall (4th Floor)

Session Title	<i>Game On: Teaching Students to Compose Music for Interactive Media</i>
Presenter	Thomas Baggaley Salt Lake Community College Jon Clark Salt Lake Community College
Session Video Link	https://youtu.be/ofMJol8JVyo
Session Description	Salt Lake Community College was the first institution in Utah to offer a dedicated course in video game music—an area that has become one of the fastest-growing employment sectors for professional musicians since 2009. With average salaries for employees in game audio exceeding \$128,000 annually, the field offers exciting career opportunities for students. But composing for games requires a unique mindset: music must adapt dynamically to unpredictable gameplay, creating an immersive experience without traditional synchronization. In this session, we'll explore why teaching interactive audio should be considered essential in today's music curriculum and how SLCC's course equips students with real-world skills. Through hands-on projects, students compose music, design sound effects, and implement their work using industry-standard middleware like Wwise and FMOD. Attendees will gain insights into our pedagogical approach, project design, and the tools we use to prepare students for success in the evolving world of game audio.
About the Presenter	<u>Thomas Baggaley</u> I am a professor of music at Salt Lake Community College, where I have taught for the past 23 years. I am a primary designer of most of the curriculum for the Commercial Music program at SLCC. I teach classes in songwriting, video game sound design/composition, music theory/aural skills, and music production. I am also director of the SLCC Studio Ensemble. I am active as a professional composer,



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songwriter, and author and have written two music textbooks:
"Songwriting from the Beginning" and "So, You Want to Write Music?: A Handbook of Fundamentals for the Learning Composer."

Jon Clark

Jon Clark is an Emeritus Associate Professor of Audio at Salt Lake Community College.