



**DCMEA'S WINTER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE AT COLUMBIA HEIGHTS EDUCATION
CAMPUS**



FRIDAY JANUARY 30, 2026

7:15 AM - 4:00 PM

7:15 AM – 1:00 PM; REGISTRATION TABLES OPEN

7:15 AM - 8:00 AM; BREAKFAST (E111)

PARTNER ORGANIZATION TABLES LOCATED ON THE AUDITORIUM STAGE OPEN FROM

8:00 - 2:30 PM

7:30 – 8:00

Coffee and light breakfast sponsored by DCMEA President and Executive Director, Joshua Krohn



8:00 – 8:45 AM

Paul Fox: SELF-CARE COOKBOOK - Reflections, RECIPES, and Resources for Music Teachers (D108)



ABSTRACT: Do you find the harried pace of our profession overwhelming and even at times crushing when buried beneath decades of keeping your nose to the grindstone and putting everyone else's needs above your own? Do you feel you are at the end of your rope, plagued by one ailment after another, constantly tired, and wondering how you're going to "keep it all together" even for five more minutes? If your health is interfering with your ability to do your job and find success, balance, and meaning in your life, it is time for a change. The purpose of this session is to empower teachers with skills and attitudes needed to make informed decisions to promote their own lifelong health and wellbeing, and to remediate stress and burnout.

BIO: For five decades, Paul K. Fox has taught music and directed community and youth orchestras, choruses, and theater productions. He is State Retired Member Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA), Past State Chair (2016-2024) and current member of the PMEA Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment, and Retention. He retired in June 2013 from the Upper St. Clair School District (Western Pennsylvania) and since 2012, has presented 80+ professional development workshops/webinars and written more than 200 articles about care/health/wellness of educators, creativity in education, interview techniques, marketing professionalism, pre-service training, educator ethics, and retirement resources for a variety of websites and publications, most archived at his website: <https://paulfox.blog/>.

Justin Jacobs (DCPS MUSIC TEACHER); From Bach To Rap: A 9-Week Journey for Non-Musicians (E107)



ABSTRACT: How do you spark creativity in students who have never played an instrument? This session explores a practical, engaging approach to teaching music composition to non-musicians. Justin Jacobs shares how he designed a nine-week course that introduces students to the fundamentals of music theory, digital tools, and creative processes—without requiring prior musical experience. Participants will learn strategies for fostering confidence, curiosity, and a love for music through accessible composition projects.

BIO: Justin Jacobs is a dedicated music educator with over 20 years of teaching experience. Originally from South Florida, he discovered his passion for music in middle school, with the alto saxophone as his primary instrument. Throughout high school, he performed in marching, concert, and chamber ensembles, later earning a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Morehouse College. Justin has arranged music for his college band and published several music arrangements. His lifelong commitment to music education continues to inspire students to explore creativity and self-expression through sound.

Brad Linde (DC MUSIC TEACHER): The ABZs: Teaching Improvisation through the works of Anthony Braxton, Butch Morris, and John Zorn (E111)



ABSTRACT: This presentation will reveal strategies for teaching musicians of all levels and styles to improvise together through common language and performance practice.

BIO: Hailed as "the capital city's contemporary cool king" (Giovanni Russonello, Capitalbop), Brad Linde is a saxophonist, educator, bandleader, and impresario in the Washington DC metro area. He is the director of Jazz and Creative Music at Georgetown Day School and founder of the Bohemian Caverns Jazz Orchestra. Raised in North Carolina, he studied music at Elon University (BA), and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill before moving to attend graduate school at the University of Maryland, College Park (MM). He additionally studied privately with Lee Konitz and attended weekly workshops by Barry Harris in New York. In 2013 was a participant in the Banff International Jazz and Creative Music Workshop. Brad maintained a long performance relationship with the legendary hardbop pianist/composer Freddie Redd (2009-2013), worked with bassist Butch Warren, and recorded four albums with original Tristano School members, tenor saxophonist Ted Brown (2010-2020). Additionally, he has performed and/or recorded with Matt Wilson, Jeff Lederer, Caroline Davis, Sara Serpa, Allison Miller, Grachan Moncur III, Andrew Cyrille, Wadada Leo Smith, Fay Victor, Lee Konitz,

among others. As an impresario, Brad has curated series for the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland, the Atlas Performing Arts Center in Northeast Washington DC, the Drawing Room in Brooklyn, and others. He continues to present performances and collaborations in the Washington DC area, Baltimore, New York City, and in Durham and Chapel Hill, NC. Brad is a Rampone & Cazzani Handmade Italian Saxophones artist ambassador.

Rhoda Bernard: Making Music Education Accessible: Strategies to Reach and Teach Every Student (E125A)



ABSTRACT: As our students' learning schemes become more diverse, including all learners becomes increasingly challenging. Accessible Music Education provides strategies that combine evidence-based practices from music education, special education, and general education. Through presentation, activities, and discussion, this session will introduce you to Accessible Music Education tools that you can use right away to make your teaching more accessible for all.

BIO: Dr. Rhoda Bernard is the Founding Managing Director of the Berklee Institute for Accessible Arts Education and the Assistant Chair of the Music Education Department at Berklee College of Music. She holds a Bachelor of Arts cum laude in government from Harvard University and a Bachelor of Music with academic honors in jazz voice from New England Conservatory. She earned both her Master of Education and Doctor of Education degrees from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Bernard regularly presents keynote presentations and research at conferences throughout the U.S. and abroad, and she provides professional development workshops for educators in local, national, and international forums. Her book, *Accessible Arts Education: Principles, Habits, and Strategies to Unleash Every Student's Creativity and Learning* was published in September 2025. Her work has been published in several book chapters and in numerous journals. Bernard has been honored with the Irene Buck Service to Arts Education Award from Arts|Learning (2023), the Berklee Urban Service Award (2017), the Boston Conservatory Community Service Award (2011), the Boston Conservatory Faculty/Staff Spirit Award (2007), and the Outstanding Dissertation Award, Honorable Mention (Second Place) from the Arts and Learning Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association. An active arts education advocate, she is the immediate past chair of the Arts Education Advisory Council of Americans for the Arts, and she serves on its speakers bureau. A vocalist and pianist who specializes in jazz music and Jewish music in Yiddish and Hebrew, she performs regularly with a number of klezmer bands and has recorded two CDs with the band Klezamir.

Rob Amchin: Morning Songs (E205)



ABSTRACT: It's more than just taking attendance! Start with music! Find new ideas and materials to start your music class through singing, moving, exploring and improvising as a spark to exciting musical adventures in each class.

BIO: Dr. Rob Amchin is Emeritus Professor of Music Education at the University of Louisville (KY). He studied Orff pedagogy at New England Conservatory of Music, Hofstra University, Memphis State, Hamline University, University of Michigan, and the Orff Institute (Salzburg). He has presented numerous Orff-based workshops nationally and around the world, for over 40 years including presentations in throughout the United States, China, Canada, Russia, Hong Kong, Poland, Austria, Israel, Finland and Singapore all focusing on Orff-based general music pedagogy music and movement pedagogy. He is the author of books related to Orff Schulwerk and general music. He is the level I, II, and III Orff pedagogy and Master Class teacher at many summer programs around the country. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award from the American Orff Schulwerk Association. He currently lives in the Washington DC area with his wife and family.

9:00 – 9:45

Leslie Dennis: Little Ears, Big Impact (PRE-RECORDED SESSION; CLICK THE LINK TO ACCESS)

ABSTRACT: Looking for new ideas to engage your students in active listening? Join us for a hands-on session where we will delve into innovative methods for fostering critical thinking using diverse musical genres. You will leave this session with tools you can immediately implement in your classroom. Participants will be able to have their students discover tools to support active music listening, demonstrate strategies to explore musical elements, and analyze the benefits of listening to diverse musical styles.

Rob Amchin: Folk Dance Fun (E205)



ABSTRACT: Learn ways to teach easy-to-follow folk dances to share with your students KG-5. Find ways to adapt instruction to allow all of your students to enjoy folk dances from around the world.

BIO: Dr. Rob Amchin is Emeritus Professor of Music Education at the University of Louisville (KY). He studied Orff pedagogy at New England Conservatory of Music, Hofstra University, Memphis State, Hamline University, University of Michigan, and the Orff Institute (Salzburg). He has presented numerous Orff-based workshops nationally and around the world, for over 40 years including presentations in throughout the United States, China, Canada, Russia, Hong Kong, Poland, Austria, Israel, Finland and Singapore all focusing on Orff-based general music pedagogy music and movement pedagogy. He is the author of books related to Orff Schulwerk and general music. He is the level I, II, and III Orff pedagogy and Master Class teacher at many summer programs around the country. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award from the American Orff Schulwerk Association. He currently lives in the Washington DC area with his wife and family.

Scott Sheehan (NAfME Immediate-Past President): “Culture Counts: Building an Inclusive Music Classroom” (Advocacy, Curriculum, DEIAB)
(E111)



ABSTRACT: Educator, Advocate, and Leader, Scott Sheehan will share ideas and strategies to create a culture where students see themselves in their music program. Attendees will also examine their beliefs, learning preferences, and personal experiences as they relate to cultural responsiveness and reaching students. This session will focus on music and repertoire selection, rehearsal strategies, curriculum and assessment, and advocacy all related to the development of a highly engaging, comprehensive music program.

BIO: A nationally recognized advocate and leader for the advancement of music education, Scott Sheehan is the Director of Bands and Music Department Chairperson at the Hollidaysburg Area Senior High School in Hollidaysburg, PA where he directs the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Concert Band, Jazz Band, Marching Band and teaches AP Music Theory, Fundamentals of Guitar, and Rock, Rap, and Revolution!. Hollidaysburg has been named one of the Best Communities for Music Education in the United States by the NAMM Foundation for the past eight years under Scott’s leadership. In addition to his duties at Hollidaysburg, Mr. Sheehan was a finalist for the 2019 GRAMMY Music Educator Award and is an Educational Clinician for Conn-Selmer. He is also a consultant for strategic planning and association development. As the President of the NAFME Eastern Division from 2015-2017, Mr. Sheehan served on the National Executive Band and Executive Committee. He is currently the Program Chair for the NAFME All-National Honors Ensembles. As an active member of the PMEA, Scott has served as State President, as well as a District President and Curriculum and Instruction State Representative. He coordinates the PMEA Leadership Academy, serves on the PMEA Mentoring Program Steering Committee, and is chair of the PMEA Model Curriculum Framework project. Mr. Sheehan is a member of Phi Beta Mu, the International Bandmasters Fraternity, and served as a liaison to the NAFME National Band Council. He was recognized at the state level as a Pennsylvania Keystone Technology Integrator by the Department of Education, was named Teacher of the Year in 2013 by the Hollidaysburg Area School District and received the Outstanding Music Educator Award from Penn State University’s College of Arts and Architecture in 2016. He is an active guest conductor and clinician throughout the country and performs trumpet with the Hollidaysburg Community Band and with the Altoona Brass Collective. Scott holds a B.S. Degree in Music Education and a B.M. Degree in Music Marketing from Clarion University, and holds a Master’s Degree in Music Education from the Pennsylvania State University. Scott and his wife Amy are the proud parents of their daughter Ellie.

Lily Ye (DC MUSIC TEACHER): Inclusive Instructional Approaches for a Neurodiverse Elementary Music Classroom (D108)



ABSTRACT: This session focuses on inclusive teaching frameworks for an elementary music class of students with special needs, learning differences, or simply a class of diverse learners. We will be interrogating traditional notions of ability versus disability, as well as current behaviorism approaches that are heavily deficit based. We will also draw upon approaches in special education to explore and reflect upon various pedagogical approaches that can support different learning profiles in meaningful and respectful ways. Ultimately, it's important for music teachers to provide an inclusive environment that leans more on the unique strengths of students, and the music classroom can be fertile grounds to experiment and affirm neurodiversity. Research shows that most music educators are increasingly burdened by larger classes, as well as teaching more students with special needs without sufficient support. As elementary music educators navigate SPED terminology to comprehend a large load of IEPs and 504s, it's crucial for music educators to find teaching strategies that can help ease some of that burden whilst also becoming more inclusive and neuro-affirming in their teaching.

BIO: Lily Ye is a violinist, songwriter, and music educator with DC public schools. She has been teaching music in public schools of New York City before relocating to DC during the pandemic. She currently teaches general music at Dorothy I. Height Elementary School and directs their after-school choir and musical theater program. She works with multiple contained classes of students with autism and other special needs at varying ages. She is currently also pursuing her doctorate of education at Teachers College, Columbia University, with a research focus on music education, autism and special needs. Lily is also the co-director of the Four Seasons Chamber Orchestra, often performing with the string ensemble around the DMV area.

10:00 – 10:45 (KEYNOTE PRESENTATION)

E111

Scott Sheehan (NAfME Immediate-Past President): Finding Your Fire: Lead & Inspire



Nationally recognized leader, educator, and advocate, Scott Sheehan will present ideas to ignite your passion and commitment to a fulfilling career in music education. He will share thoughts on how together, we can build a brighter future through advocacy, leadership, curriculum, and so much more!

A nationally recognized advocate and leader for the advancement of music education, Scott Sheehan is the Director of Bands and Music Department Chairperson at the Hollidaysburg Area Senior High School in Hollidaysburg, PA where he directs the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Concert Band, Jazz Band, Marching Band and teaches AP Music Theory, Fundamentals of Guitar, and Rock, Rap, and Revolution!. Hollidaysburg has been named one of the Best Communities for Music Education in the United States by the NAMM Foundation for the past eight years under Scott's leadership. In addition to his duties at Hollidaysburg, Mr. Sheehan was a finalist for the 2019 GRAMMY Music Educator Award and is an Educational Clinician for Conn-Selmer. He is also a consultant for strategic planning and association development. As the President of the NAFME Eastern Division from 2015-2017, Mr. Sheehan served on the National Executive Band and Executive Committee. He is currently the Program Chair for the NAFME All-National Honors Ensembles. As an active member of the PMEA, Scott has served as State President, as well as a District President and Curriculum and Instruction State Representative. He coordinates the PMEA Leadership Academy, serves on the PMEA Mentoring Program Steering Committee, is chair of the PMEA Model Curriculum Framework project. Mr. Sheehan is a member of Phi Beta Mu, the International Bandmasters Fraternity, and served as a liaison to the NAFME National Band Council. He was recognized at the state level as a Pennsylvania Keystone Technology Integrator by the Department of Education, was named Teacher of the Year in 2013 by the Hollidaysburg Area School District and received the Outstanding Music Educator Award from Penn State University's College of Arts and Architecture in 2016. He is an active guest conductor and clinician throughout the country and performs trumpet with the Hollidaysburg Community Band and with the Altoona Brass Collective. Scott holds a B.S. Degree in Music Education and a B.M. Degree in Music Marketing from Clarion University, and holds a Master's Degree in Music Education from the Pennsylvania State University. Scott and his wife Amy are the proud parents of their daughter Ellie.

11:00 – 11:45

Jenna Day (Day Violins Sponsored): Careers in Music - From Passion to Paycheck (E125A)



ABSTRACT: What happens when your students love music, but can't see it as part of their future? This session offers music educators practical tools, resources, and real-life models to introduce students to the wide world of careers in music—far beyond just performance or education. Learn how to integrate a Careers in Music initiative into your curriculum, build cross-curricular connections, and inspire students to stay connected to music for life. From luthiers to music therapists, audio engineers to arts administrators, this session gives educators the blueprint to show students that music is more than a passion—it's a viable career path. Music education has long been focused on performance and teaching pathways, but today's music industry offers students a broad array of career opportunities that can keep them involved in music for a lifetime—regardless of their path. This session proposes a Careers in Music initiative that music educators can implement in their schools, with resources including guest speaker templates, classroom activities, video profiles, and interdisciplinary lesson plans that align with state learning standards.

BIO: Jenna Day is a passionate advocate for music education and community outreach. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), as Vice President of the Fairfax Arts Coalition for Education (FACE), a board member of the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestras (AYPO), and Vice President of Advocacy for the Virginia chapter of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA). Jenna also served as chair on the Board of DC Strings Workshop, an organization dedicated to bringing music, concerts, and lessons to underserved neighborhoods in the Washington, DC area. Jenna's unwavering belief that talent is universal, opportunity is what fuels her daily work. Through her leadership at Day Violins, she ensures that students from all backgrounds have access to quality instruments, instruction, internships, and the resources they need to thrive. Her background in social work and advocacy continues to shape the heart of the company's mission. Growing up in a musical family, Jenna was surrounded by singing, dancing, and every kind of instrument imaginable. As an accomplished pianist, she frequently accompanied student performances and was a collaborative force in her high school choir. Though her educational path took her into social work, her love for the arts never waned—instead, it grew into a lifelong commitment to removing barriers to music education. Jenna is also a dedicated supporter of Instruments in the Attic, a program that collects and refurbishes donated instruments and redistributes them to children around the world. Her efforts, both locally and globally, continue to make music more accessible and inclusive for all.

Paul Fox: Social Media - Boon or Nemesis (D108)



ABSTRACT: During this interactive session, we will explore the pros and cons of emerging online technology for veteran music teachers, new or pre-service educators, and even retirees. The presentation will touch-on various legal issues, the ethical framework necessary to guide teacher decision-making and the avoidance of unacceptable “appearances or actions,” and precautions for the use of digital communications and social networks. Sample success stories and failures, “exemplars,” and resources for the safe use of tech tools and applications of social media will be shared. Participants will be able to review and recall examples of “safe social media” as well as the risks associated with using social networks and be able to apply effective strategies for using emerging technology in their music classrooms.

BIO: For five decades, Paul K. Fox has taught music and directed community and youth orchestras, choruses, and theater productions. He is State Retired Member Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA), Past State Chair (2016-2024) and current member of the PMEA Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment, and Retention. He retired in June 2013 from the Upper St. Clair School District (Western Pennsylvania) and since 2012, has presented 80+ professional development workshops/webinars and written more than 200 articles about care/health/wellness of educators, creativity in education, interview techniques, marketing professionalism, pre-service training, educator ethics, and retirement resources for a variety of websites and publications, most archived at his website: <https://paulfox.blog/>.

Rob Amchin: Engaging General Music Adventures (E205)



ABSTRACT: Add Joyous singing, dancing and playing into your General Music Classroom! Something for everyone for Monday and beyond.

BIO: Dr. Rob Amchin is Emeritus Professor of Music Education at the University of Louisville (KY). He studied Orff pedagogy at New England Conservatory of Music, Hofstra University, Memphis State, Hamline University, University of Michigan, and the Orff Institute (Salzburg). He has presented numerous Orff-based workshops nationally and around the world, for over 40 years including presentations in throughout the United States, China, Canada, Russia, Hong Kong, Poland, Austria, Israel, Finland and Singapore all focusing on Orff-based general music pedagogy music and movement pedagogy. He is the author of books related to Orff Schulwerk and general music. He is the level I, II, and III Orff pedagogy and Master Class teacher at many summer programs around the country. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award from the American Orff Schulwerk Association. He currently lives in the Washington DC area with his wife and family.

Scott Sheehan (NAfME Immediate-Past President): Essentials for Success: Strategies and Tools for Building Young Bands (Hal Leonard Sponsored)

E111



ABSTRACT: Dive deep into the essential ingredients that go into a successful band program. Helping our students thrive goes beyond just the notes, rhythms, and dynamics. It's the connection, the culture, and the community that are the recipe for unlocking exponential potential and maximizing our reach and relevance. Bring your "best" ideas to share and be ready to unlock endless possibilities for you and your students.

BIO: A nationally recognized advocate and leader for the advancement of music education, Scott Sheehan is the Director of Bands and Music Department Chairperson at the Hollidaysburg Area Senior High School in Hollidaysburg, PA where he directs the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Concert Band, Jazz Band, Marching Band and teaches AP Music Theory, Fundamentals of Guitar, and Rock, Rap, and Revolution!. Hollidaysburg has been named one of the Best Communities for Music Education in the United States by the NAMM Foundation for the past eight years under Scott's leadership. In addition to his duties at Hollidaysburg, Mr. Sheehan was a finalist for the 2019 GRAMMY Music Educator Award and is an Educational Clinician for Conn-Selmer. He is also a consultant for strategic planning and association development. As the President of the NAfME Eastern Division from 2015-2017, Mr. Sheehan served on the National Executive Band and Executive Committee. He is currently the Program Chair for the NAfME All-National Honors Ensembles. As an active member of the PMEA, Scott has served as State President, as well as a District President and Curriculum and Instruction State Representative. He coordinates the PMEA Leadership Academy, serves on the PMEA Mentoring Program Steering Committee, is chair of the PMEA Model Curriculum Framework project. Mr. Sheehan is a member of Phi Beta Mu, the International Bandmasters Fraternity, and served as a liaison to the NAfME National Band Council. He was recognized at the state level as a Pennsylvania Keystone Technology Integrator by the Department of Education, was named Teacher of the Year in 2013 by the Hollidaysburg Area School District

and received the Outstanding Music Educator Award from Penn State University's College of Arts and Architecture in 2016. He is an active guest conductor and clinician throughout the country and performs trumpet with the Hollidaysburg Community Band and with the Altoona Brass Collective. Scott holds a B.S. Degree in Music Education and a B.M. Degree in Music Marketing from Clarion University, and holds a Master's Degree in Music Education from the Pennsylvania State University. Scott and his wife Amy are the proud parents of their daughter Ellie.

Matthew Johnson: Body Based Belt- Musical Theatre Belting Styles for Classical and Choral Singers (E107)



ABSTRACT: This workshop focuses on the anatomical structures at play in the musical theatre belting technique. This workshop focuses on the anatomical foundations of the musical theatre belting technique, allowing participants to engage in body awareness and muscle isolation exercises that enhance vocal support. Attendees will explore unique approaches that differ from Western classical singing, experimenting with laryngeal positioning, vocal tract shaping, and the use of "twang" to achieve a powerful belt. Participants are encouraged to bring their musical theatre repertoire, enabling practical application of the discussed techniques. The collaborative atmosphere will also foster discussion on effective teaching strategies, promoting a deeper understanding of how to cultivate belting skills in others. Overall, this workshop offers a rich blend of anatomical insight and hands-on experience for developing confident musical theatre performers.

BIO: Matthew Johnson is a collegiate educator, vocalist, saxophonist, and conductor. He is a member of the music and theatre faculty, the Chair of the Performing Arts Department, and the Coordinator of Music at Rowan College Burlington County, where he teaches music theory, music appreciation, applied voice, voice and diction, and music and the child. Before teaching college, Matthew taught music to students in grades PK-12 for six years, during which he covered all levels of vocal, band, and general music across private, public, and specialized settings, including acute psychiatric and behavioral facilities, serving as a teacher, department head, instructional coach, and curriculum developer. He holds certifications from the Chicago Voice Lab in Gender-Affirming Voice and Speech, the Estill Voice Method from Estill International, and Contemporary Commercial Music from the CCM Institute of Shenandoah Conservatory at Shenandoah University. He also maintains a voice studio working with performance career-oriented high school students, musical theatre professionals in the greater Philadelphia region, and gender-affirming voice students interested in vocal masculinization or feminization.

11:45 – 12:45

LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

1:00 – 1:45

Chris Harper: Ten Lessons After College: What Textbooks Don't Teach (E111)



ABSTRACT: College textbooks often overlook the practical, day-to-day realities that determine whether a music educator thrives. This session examines ten essential aspects of instrumental music teaching that every new—and even veteran—director must master but rarely receives formal training in. Drawing on twenty-five years of experience across multiple programs, the clinician will provide practical guidance on planning and managing a year-long calendar of events; collaborating effectively with colleagues; selecting literature that aligns with ensemble readiness; and navigating relationships with parents, administrators, and booster organizations. Attendees will also explore real-world strategies for budgeting, basic instrument repair, and sustaining personal health and well-being in a demanding profession. Most importantly, the session emphasizes building healthy, professional, and productive relationships with students. Participants will leave with actionable insights and field-tested tools that bridge the gap between coursework and the realities of the band room, empowering them to lead confident, balanced, and successful music programs. This session is appropriate for all areas of music education.

BIO: Dr. Chris Harper, band director at McIntosh County Academy in Darien, Georgia, brings 25 years of music education experience. He holds degrees from Valdosta State University, Troy University, and Liberty University. Dr. Harper has expanded his expertise internationally, studying musician motivation under Dr. Dale Lonis and Dr. Fraser Linklater through the Canadian Wind Conductors Development Program. In 2011, his innovative approach to ensemble programming and music technology integration was featured in *The Instrumentalist* magazine. A sought-after presenter, Dr. Harper has delivered impactful sessions at music conferences nationwide, covering topics such as recruitment and retention in small/rural schools, practical interview preparation, and strategies for overcoming cognitive conflicts in the workplace. His engaging clinics have made a lasting impact on the music education community.

Paul Fox: ALL ABOARD THE 3E TRAIN! Essential Ethics for Educators (D108)



ABSTRACT: Teachers make thousands of decisions every day resolving conflicts in pedagogy, enforcement, resource allocation, relationships, and diversity. Many of these are “snap judgments” relying on gut feelings, intuition, past experiences, and a personal moral compass. And, although Johnny Cash may have sung “I walk the line...” in his love song, in education it is often a perilous “fine line” to maintain the standards and appearances of professionalism, integrity, and ethical codes both in and outside the school community. This workshop will foster interactive facilitated discussions on risk assessment and resolution of ethical disputes and “conundrums” both in and outside the workplace. We will introduce the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE) and empanel a mock jury of volunteer attendees to analyze and judge sample (real or hypothetical – “what would you do?”) scenarios for new perspectives in managing day-to-day decision-making in music education.

BIO: For five decades, Paul K. Fox has taught music and directed community and youth orchestras, choruses, and theater productions. He is State Retired Member Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA), Past State Chair (2016-2024) and current member of the PMEA Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment, and Retention. He retired in June 2013 from the Upper St. Clair School District (Western Pennsylvania) and since 2012, has presented 80+ professional development workshops/webinars and written more than 200 articles about care/health/wellness of educators, creativity in education, interview techniques, marketing professionalism, pre-service training, educator ethics, and retirement resources for a variety of websites and publications, most archived at his website: <https://paulfox.blog/>.

Matthew Johnson: Creating Intentional Warm-Ups: Aligning Vocal Pedagogy and Lesson Design for Choral Success (E107)



ABSTRACT: Effective choral rehearsals begin with purposeful warm-ups that do more than “get voices going.” This session explores how to design intentional warm-up sequences for choirs, rooted in best practices from vocal pedagogy and educational lesson planning. Participants will learn strategies to craft warm-ups that directly support the technical and musical demands of their repertoire, with a focus on matching styles, genres, vocal techniques, and ranges. The session will provide practical frameworks for integrating warm-up planning into overall rehearsal design, ensuring that every warm-up serves a clear pedagogical goal. Attendees will leave equipped to create targeted, engaging, and effective warm-ups that foster vocal development and ensemble cohesion, ultimately elevating both rehearsal productivity and musical artistry.

BIO: Matthew Johnson is a collegiate educator, vocalist, saxophonist, and conductor. He is a member of the music and theatre faculty, the Chair of the Performing Arts Department, and the Coordinator of Music at Rowan College Burlington County, where he teaches music theory, music appreciation, applied voice, voice and diction, and music and the child. Before teaching college, Matthew taught music to students in grades PK-12 for six years, during which he covered all levels of vocal, band, and general music across private, public, and specialized settings, including acute psychiatric and behavioral facilities, serving as a teacher, department head, instructional coach, and curriculum developer. He holds certifications from the Chicago Voice Lab in Gender-Affirming Voice and Speech, the Estill Voice Method from Estill International, and Contemporary Commercial Music from the CCM Institute of Shenandoah Conservatory at Shenandoah University. He also maintains a voice studio working with performance career-oriented high school students, musical theatre professionals in the greater Philadelphia region, and gender-affirming voice students interested in vocal masculinization or feminization.

Rob Amchin: Exploring Children’s Literature in the General Music Classroom (E205)



ABSTRACT: Ideas for bringing children’s books and folk tales to life in the general music classroom (K-5). We will look at samples of children’s books and folk tales and ways to add singing, dancing, and playing to each example. Ideas will include ideas for creating a school program based on children’s literature!

BIO: Dr. Rob Amchin is Emeritus Professor of Music Education at the University of Louisville (KY). He studied Orff pedagogy at New England Conservatory of Music, Hofstra University, Memphis State, Hamline University, University of Michigan, and the Orff Institute (Salzburg). He has presented numerous Orff-based workshops nationally and around the world, for over 40 years including presentations in throughout the United States, China, Canada, Russia, Hong Kong, Poland, Austria, Israel, Finland and Singapore all focusing on Orff-based

general music pedagogy music and movement pedagogy. He is the author of books related to Orff Schulwerk and general music. He is the level I, II, and III Orff pedagogy and Master Class teacher at many summer programs around the country. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award from the American Orff Schulwerk Association. He currently lives in the Washington DC area with his wife and family.

2:00 – 2:45:

Chris Harper: Overcoming Burnout: Ideas to Rekindle Your Passion to Teach (E111)



ABSTRACT: This session explores the growing challenges contributing to burnout in today's music educators. Early-career teachers often enter the profession with unrealistic expectations, while veteran educators face evolving philosophies, increased responsibilities, and personal pressures—all of which can diminish job satisfaction and threaten long-term career retention. The session examines the causes, warning signs, and far-reaching consequences of burnout, including its impact on health, relationships, and workplace culture. In addition, it addresses the increasing challenge of declining student work ethic and motivation in the classroom. Drawing on current research and the clinician's personal experience, this session provides practical, evidence-based strategies for preventing and managing burnout, protecting mental and physical well-being, and reigniting passion for a sustainable and fulfilling career in music education.

BIO: Dr. Chris Harper, band director at McIntosh County Academy in Darien, Georgia, brings 25 years of music education experience. He holds degrees from Valdosta State University, Troy University, and Liberty University. Dr. Harper has expanded his expertise internationally, studying musician motivation under Dr. Dale Lonis and Dr. Fraser Linklater through the Canadian Wind Conductors Development Program. In 2011, his innovative approach to ensemble programming and music technology integration was featured in *The Instrumentalist* magazine. A sought-after presenter, Dr. Harper has delivered impactful sessions at music conferences nationwide, covering topics such as recruitment and retention in small/rural schools, practical interview preparation, and strategies for overcoming cognitive conflicts in the workplace. His engaging clinics have made a lasting impact on the music education community.

Evan Combs: Instructional Design Fundamentals for Music Educators (E107)



ABSTRACT: Instructional design is the art and science of creating learning experiences that truly work. By combining educational theory with program development principles, it helps educators target skill growth, knowledge application, and meaningful transfer. This session introduces practical methods used in instructional design, such as the ADDIE model, cognitive load and rigor frameworks, and learning pattern design, exploring how they can elevate music curriculum at any level. Participants will engage hands-on with the instructional design process, drafting their own learning pattern and leaving with tools to enhance learning outcomes in their classrooms.

BIO: Evan designs learning experiences that blend creativity, technology, and educational science, helping learners of all ages grow in meaningful, measurable ways. His work spans K-12, higher education, workforce, and organizational development, where he leads teams in building authentic, human-centered learning. He provides FREE workshops and musical compositions under the brand name PIXEL. To explore the services and educational music for band, orchestra, and choir available, visit www.PIXELartist.net

Phil Swasey: Why Guitar? Artistry and Engagement (AUSTIN CLASSICAL GUITAR SPONSORED SESSION)

D108



ABSTRACT: Join Phil Swasey, ACG's Director of Curriculum to explore strategies to start and maintain healthy guitar learning environments and encourage your young guitar learners to find beauty in the everyday practice of being expressive collaborators in a guitar classroom. Austin Classical Guitar is a non-profit organization that focuses on fostering moments of deep personal significance through the guitar in the growing landscape of classroom guitar education. For the past 20 years ACG has developed a philosophy of engaging young learners and creating a standard for the guitar ensemble that offers new and relevant options for performing arts engagement. Through enrollment and participation information, it is becoming clearer that the guitar is

attracting students that were less likely to enroll and participate in Fine Arts offerings. Although advocacy and service is at the heart of the mission, a curriculum that supports the learner and the teacher was critical to create thriving learning environments. GuitarCurriculum.com, a literacy based approach, was developed to fill that need. Now in use in over 40 states, the print and web resource gives educators a platform to rely on for thoughtful sequential instruction that always focuses on the good stuff; performance, celebration, and moments of deep personal significance.

BIO: Phil Swasey served as the Director of Guitar at Bedichek Middle School in the Austin Independent School District from 2011-23. Having developed outstanding programs and district events for over a decade, Phil served as the district content lead for middle school guitar and mariachi and was named the campus Teacher of the Year in 2016. In the classroom, he was motivated by finding creative and empowering strategies to remove common obstacles in the way of student success. Now excited to be working full-time with ACG Education as the Director of Curriculum and Partnerships, Phil is focusing on curriculum design, teacher training, and exploring new connections and potential partnerships. He has earned degrees from the University of Florida (2008, M.M.) and University of Central Florida (2005, B.A.).

Chad Harris (DCPS MUSIC TEACHER) and Premila Mistry (DCPS MUSIC TEACHER): Orff Africa! (E205)



ABSTRACT: We will learn 2 traditional pieces, one from Tanzania and one from South Africa. Participants will learn to play a singing game from Tanzania, where we will then learn a percussion and xylophone accompaniment. We will also learn a song from South Africa in which we will sing the Xhosa words but then add movement, percussion, and xylophones.

BIO: Premila Mistry, composer, is a certified Orff music teacher who currently teaches at John Eaton Elementary school in Washington, DC. In February 2019 Premila was the recipient of the prestigious Rubenstein Award for Excellence in Teaching in DC Public Schools. Born in Bombay, India, Premila came to America as an infant and grew up in Ithaca, NY. Learning piano at age 3, Premila was classically trained through college. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from Wells College, where she also minored in music. Premila moved to Washington DC where she has been teaching and composing music in various venues for over 20 years. In 2014, Premila founded her own citywide ensemble “Sticks+Bars Youth Marimba Ensemble” (www.sticksandbars.org). The only one of its kind in Washington DC, Sticks+Bars is for students in grades 5-12 who want to learn to play marimbas African style. Playing the music of Zimbabwe, South Africa and beyond, Sticks+Bars students have learned to play complex rhythms from many different cultures, and they have become composers and arrangers of their own music. The group has played at various high profile events such

as a recent jam session with Ladysmith Black Mambazo, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and a TEDxMidAtlantic Conference.

Eytan Wurman: From Ensemble to Endowment: Empowering High School Musicians to Navigate the 2025 College Scholarship Landscape (COMMONTIME PATHWAYS SPONSORED)

[THIS SESSION IS A VIRTUAL SESSION! PLEASE CLICK THIS LINK TO ACCESS THIS SESSION IN REAL TIME](#)



ABSTRACT: In today's evolving higher education environment, music students, whether aspiring performers, composers, or industry professionals—face a dual challenge: mastering their craft and navigating a complex scholarship ecosystem. Drawing on the latest guidance from CommonTime Pathways' 2025 guide, this panel draws together high school music educators, college admissions/recruiting officers, and scholarship professionals to offer a strategic roadmap for supporting student-musicians in securing meaningful funding.

BIO: Eytan Wurman is the Founder and CEO of CommonTime Pathways (CTPathways.com) - a platform connecting music students and their families with college recruiters nationally. Eytan was a middle and high school music teacher and administrator in the Boston area for more than twelve years. Eytan earned his music and education degrees from Boston University and is a member of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus where he performs regularly with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Pops.

3:00 – 3:45

Jenna Day (DAY VIOLINS SPONSORED): Why It Matters: Using Impact Statements to Advocate for Music Education (E125A)



ABSTRACT: This session will explore the power of impact statements—short, meaningful narratives from students, teachers, and community members—as a practical and powerful tool in advocating for music education. Drawing on examples from ongoing grassroots advocacy efforts, this session will guide attendees in how to collect, craft, and share these statements to communicate the real-world value of music programs. Whether you are preparing to speak to Council members, defending a program budget, or simply hoping to remind your community why music matters, impact statements provide a way to humanize the data and elevate the voices of those most affected.

BIO: Jenna Day is a passionate advocate for music education and community outreach. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), as Vice President of the Fairfax Arts Coalition for Education (FACE), a board member of the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestras (AYPO), and Vice President of Advocacy for the Virginia chapter of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA). Jenna also served as chair on the Board of DC Strings Workshop, an organization dedicated to bringing music, concerts, and lessons to underserved neighborhoods in the Washington, DC area. Jenna’s unwavering belief that talent is universal, opportunity is what fuels her daily work. Through her leadership at Day Violins, she ensures that students from all backgrounds have access to quality instruments, instruction, internships, and the resources they need to thrive. Her background in social work and advocacy continues to shape the heart of the company’s mission. Growing up in a musical family, Jenna was surrounded by singing, dancing, and every kind of instrument imaginable. As an accomplished pianist, she frequently accompanied student performances and was a collaborative force in her high school choir. Though her educational path took her into social work, her love for the arts never waned—instead, it grew into a lifelong commitment to removing barriers to music education. Jenna is also a dedicated supporter of Instruments in the Attic, a program that collects and refurbishes donated instruments and redistributes them to children around the world. Her efforts, both locally and globally, continue to make music more accessible and inclusive for all.

Chris Harper: Creating Meaningful Relationships in Music Programs (E111)



ABSTRACT: Music educators face an abundance of challenges—limited resources, unrealistic expectations, and the ongoing need for recruitment—yet these programs also offer powerful opportunities for connection and growth. This session presents practical, experience-driven strategies for building meaningful, sustainable music programs in small-school settings. Drawing from 25 years of successful rural teaching, the clinician will explore effective recruitment and retention practices, rebuilding program culture, establishing mission and vision statements, selecting appropriate repertoire, and fostering strong relationships with students, parents, administrators, and the broader community. Participants will also learn to navigate local politics, strengthen school partnerships, and create positive performance experiences that boost visibility and student pride. Attendees will leave with actionable tools and insights that elevate their program’s impact—no matter the size, setting, or starting point.

BIO: Dr. Chris Harper, band director at McIntosh County Academy in Darien, Georgia, brings 25 years of music education experience. He holds degrees from Valdosta State University, Troy University, and Liberty University. Dr. Harper has expanded his expertise internationally, studying musician motivation under Dr. Dale Lonis and Dr. Fraser Linklater through the Canadian Wind Conductors Development Program. In 2011, his innovative approach to ensemble programming and music technology integration was featured in *The Instrumentalist* magazine. A sought-after presenter, Dr. Harper has delivered impactful sessions at music conferences nationwide, covering topics such as recruitment and retention in small/rural schools, practical interview preparation, and strategies for overcoming cognitive conflicts in the workplace. His engaging clinics have made a lasting impact on the music education community.

Nicole Jenkins: A Survey of Collegiate Voice Students with Asthma and Allergies and Their Perceived Impact on Singer Health and Performance Experiences": A Pilot Study

[THIS SESSION WILL BE VIRTUAL! PLEASE CLICK THIS ZOOM LINK TO ACCESS THE VIRTUAL SESSION](#)



ABSTRACT: An increasing body of research evidence indicates that college students of all majors with asthma and/or allergies represent a vulnerable population due to their inability to experience a consistent and dependable quality of life compared with their healthy collegiate peers. Further, in terms of their impact specifically on collegiate singers, the intricate network of co-morbid conditions associated with asthma and allergies, including pain, wheezing, and discomfort combined with physical symptoms of stress, disturbed sleep, fatigue, diminished concentration, depression, and high-risk behaviors, cannot be underestimated. As such, this study aimed to identify and analyze the health impediments caused by asthma and/or allergies for developing singers during their collegiate vocal studies and to ameliorate their negative impact on vocal performance success. A review of literature on asthma and allergies related to college students' voices and quality of life, including overviews of the physical, emotional, and psychological effects of current treatment trends and the impact of COVID-19 on asthma and allergy sufferers, led to the following overarching research questions: two on the impact of asthma and allergies on singing and two on the impact of COVID-19 on existing asthma and/or allergy conditions.

BIO: Dr. Nicole D. Jenkins is the Assistant Professor of Voice at Duquesne University. Dr. Jenkins has degrees from the University of Maryland at College Park (BA), The Conservatory of Music at Brooklyn College (MM), and James Madison University (DMA). At Duquesne University, Dr. Jenkins teaches Applied Voice, Italian and English Diction, German and French Diction, and Opera Workshop. While a DMA Candidate in Voice at James Madison University (JMU), Dr. Jenkins was one of two chosen winners of the JMU School of Music 2020 Concerto/Aria Competition and performed her winning aria, Gaetano Donizetti's "Piangete voi...al dolce guidami," from the opera *Anna Bolena* in 2022 with the JMU Symphony Orchestra. In 2019, at the JMU Institute for Creative Inquiry, Dr. Jenkins also presented a lecture and performed Patrick Oswald's Songs of Vienna, a song cycle set with her poetry taken from her short stories about her life in Vienna, Austria. She also presented Songs of Vienna as a panelist at the JMU 10th Annual African, African American and Diaspora Studies (AAAD) Interdisciplinary Conference in 2020. She was invited to the conference in 2022 as a moderator on the Voices of Race, Modes of Advocacy: Panel 5b. Power of Performance to underscore the importance of expanding the canon of opera and musical theater. Dr. Jenkins also presented a lecture and performed the song cycle "Moments in Sonder: A Guided Narrative Analysis of the Poetry of Dr. Maya Angelou as set by Composer B.E. Boykin." Dr. Jenkins also served for three years as the Chancel Choir Director and soloist at Dayton United Methodist Church, where she supported their mission and goals by selecting appropriate music to help communicate the weekly worship service sermon theme and by assisting beyond the music director duties during the COVID-19 pandemic with scripture readings and preaching.

4:00 – 5:00 PM

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