

# NAfME NEWSLETTER

National Association for Music Education | Florida Collegiate Chapter: University of Miami

Frost School of Music

## A Note from Our President...

The Florida Collegiate Chapter of National Association for Music Education at the University of Miami has had an extremely eventful Spring '16 semester! Starting off a new semester with a brand new executive board, we brought many exciting changes and continuations to NAFME, and bettered local music education in the process.

Beginning the semester with our annual NAFME conference in Tampa, Florida, 18 members of our chapter traveled up and represented our university in professionalism and education. We attended sessions to better ourselves as future music educators, experienced some of the top educators in our field, and most importantly, bonded with each other and had a truly wonderful time! Next year, we hope to bring our entire chapter to experience this important event.

Coupled with the conference, early in the semester was the premiere of the newly introduced Music & Learning Film Series, presented by the Music Education and Music Therapy departments. These film showings were open to the public, and were immediately followed by panel discussions led by faculty and staff at Frost and the University. NAFME had a huge presence at the films, raffling off music education themed baskets and raising a grand total \$117!

Late in the semester, on April 13th, we presented the second annual Secondary Instruments Concert. Here, students presented songs played and sung on their secondary instruments. We raised about \$100 at our bake sale there. It was, as always, an entertaining night.

Fundraising is an important goal of NAFME's, in order to gain the funds to give our annual grant. This year, Dr. Coffman met our \$250 and allowed us to give a \$500 grant to North Miami Middle School's struggling jazz band program! Our monthly bake sales and event partnership with the Frost chapter of the American Choral Director's Association helped us raise the money, and none of it could have been done without our members.

This semester as NAFME President has been a wild ride, and I cannot wait to experience and grow with our chapter next year! I hope you've all enjoyed it as much as I have, because this is nothing without you.

Have a wonderful summer!

—Alexandra Colaizzi, UMFC NAFME President

### Inside...

*An Early Start: Toddlers and Music*

Nicholas Lorenzo

*Rock Ensembles*

Cristian Ayte

*One Month: Meeting your Jury*

*Deadline with Successful Music-Making*

Gaby Argimon

*Staying the Course with Fundamental Skills in the Instrumental Ensemble*

Alex Morales

*Women's Choirs: Why?*

Alexandra Colaizzi

### Our Executive Board

Donna Hewitt – *Advisor*

Alex Colaizzi – *President*

Caterina Papadopulos –

*President-Elect*

Teela Comeau – *Secretary*

Sarah Young – *Treasurer*

Brenda Gonzalez – *Historian*



## *An Early Start: Toddlers and Music*

*Nicholas Lorenzo*

When people think of music education, they often don't immediately think of early childhood development. Music plays an essential role in the lives of infants and toddlers. Whether it is listening to nursery rhymes, their parents singing a lullaby, or singing on their own, it occurs every day. However, it becomes more than just words and entertainment to them. Infants' neurological networks mature in the early stages of life. They encounter many sounds, like language, and their minds try to make sense of them though they cannot comprehend specific words. Much like language, infants need to hear music at an early age in order to make sense of it. This allows them to take up an interest early, which translates to elementary, middle and even high school.

Early introduction to music has the ability to kick-start learning and has life long benefits. "The time to build and maintain those information highways is during the first months of life" (Feierabend). If these neurological pathways are not built in these early stages, the process becomes more difficult with older children. Not every child will continue to pursue music as career when they are older, but there are



benefits outside of the musical realm that possibly result from early introduction to music. They range from social-emotional, motor, thinking (cognitive), and language and literacy skills. It promotes self-esteem and confidence, cultural awareness, relationship building, body awareness, bilateral coordination, memory, dual language learning, and other beneficial qualities. In an infant/toddler music class, concepts like beat, meter, melody, tonality, and expression take a role in building these neurological pathways for music. Though children aren't directly taught these concepts, the concepts can be displayed through motions such as bouncing or clapping. For example, when working with a song or lullaby, parents bounce their child on their lap to the beat of the song. These activities are meant to engage and stimulate the child to recognize the beat of the song, which is an introduction to rhythm.

Most importantly, music makes very young children feel loved. My mother always tells me stories of when she would take me to Frost Music Time, a music education program geared towards children from birth to ten years of age. I probably wasn't even a year old, but she says we would have the best times. She always brings up the time

when we would sing “Humpty Dumpty” in class, she would bounce me on her lap, then when the lyrics “Humpty



Dumpty had a great fall” would come, she would lower me forward, as if I was falling, and bring me back up, to save me. I would laugh hysterically and this would continue for a while. Now, I just happened to come to the place where I was first introduced to music, the Frost School of Music. Maybe, just maybe, there’s a connection.

#### Works Cited

Feierabend, John M., Ph.d. "Music and Movement for Infants and Toddlers: Naturally Wonder-Full." *Feierabend Association for Music Education*. Web. <<http://www.feierabendmusic.org/first-steps-in-music-for-infants-and-toddlers/>>.

"Introducing Toddlers to Music." KidsHealth - the Web's Most Visited Site about Children's Health. The Nemours Foundation. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.

Parlakian, Rebecca, and Claire Lerner. "Beyond Twinkle, Twinkle Using Music with Infants and Toddlers." *Young Children*. 2010. 14-18. Print.

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### *Rock Ensembles*

*Cristian D. Ayte*

As the percentage of students participating in our school’s music programs nation wide diminishes as time goes by, it is important to give students more choices beyond band, choir and orchestra. I believe that not everyone who is interested in participating in school music programs is necessarily interested in being involved with the three traditional ensembles that most schools offer. Perhaps having an ensemble that is more relatable to their musical taste and utilizes both modern instruments and technology will help catch the interest of those students. Hence the rock ensemble.

In today's world, with the low cost of modern instruments such as electric guitars, basses and keyboards, it is easier than ever to facilitate the inclusion in the music classroom of students that love music but probably won't

pick up a tuba or a viola. Another good reason to start a rock ensemble is that it gets the students involved in using PA systems, microphones, and mixers, which help them learn skills that are very relevant in today's music scene.

Although rock ensembles seem to hint only at an ensemble that performs rock music exclusively, a rock ensemble can also perform other music styles that incorporates guitar, bass, keyboard, voice, drums and even



saxophones and/or trumpets. In other words, students can perform modern pop music, R&B, Hip Hop, and reggae, among other styles that utilize instruments commonly used in modern music. In other words, having an ensemble of this nature in your music curriculum will expose students to many different music styles.

In conclusion, having a rock ensemble in your music program will not only help include those students that might not be interested in band, choir, and orchestra in

the music classroom, but will help students build on some of the skills that are essential in the modern music scene as well.

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### *One Month: Meeting your Jury Deadline with Successful Music-Making*

*Gaby Argimon*

When I entered the Frost School, my biggest fear was having to perform on my instrument. I marveled at my acceptance into music school because I once never considered myself a decent player for lacking technical strength and efficiency in the practice room. In October 2015, I found myself in a terrifying predicament, which I think all collegiate-level musicians can agree upon: I was in the process of learning half an hour of



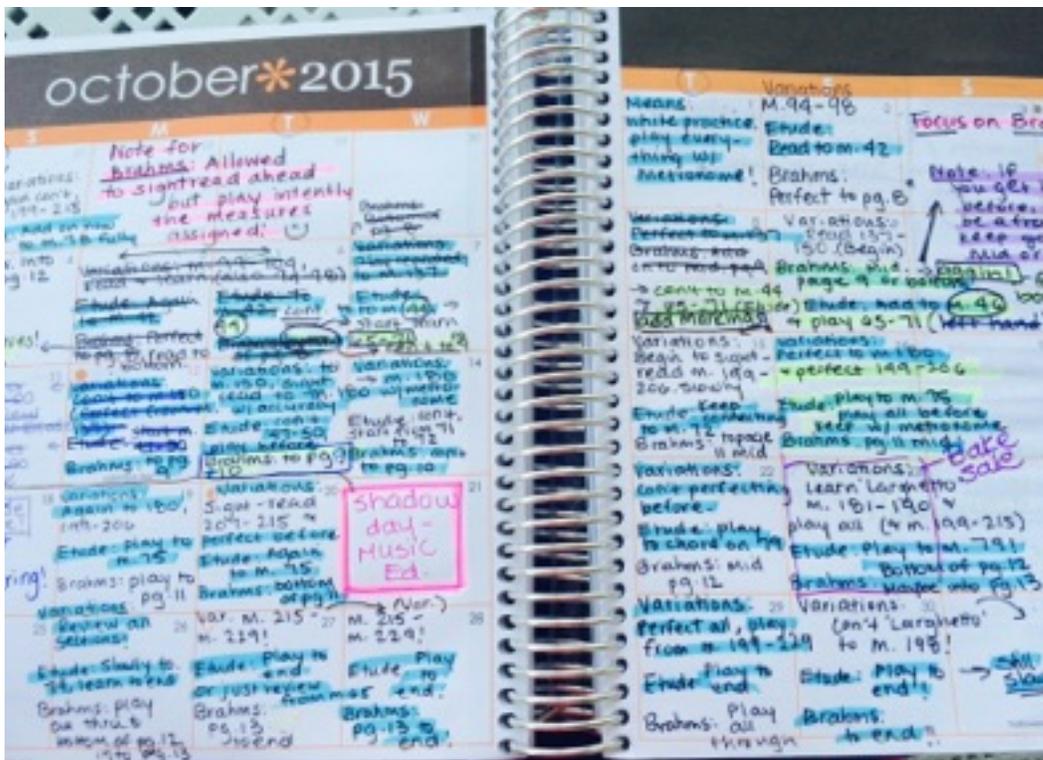
piano repertoire and still could not play through half of either of my pieces without frequent stopping, let alone going off book. The heavy demands of the Fall semester led me to “performance practicing”, or what is commonly seen as neglecting the search for solutions to technical and musicality-related issues and instead performing straight through a work in the practice room with no incentive to improve. Now, it was midway through the semester, and if I planned to have a positively memorable first jury, I knew I had to get my act together. I specifically remember going into panic mode in Foster, grabbing my planner and a few colored pens, and planning the entire month of October. And by planning, I mean *planning*.

Which leads me to sharing the effective rehearsal strategies I picked up along the way, as I planned my practice routine for every single day that month, as the picture shows. Sounds crazy, I know, but maintaining that discipline and consistency ultimately allowed me to perform satisfactorily at my jury and overcome every insecurity I brought with me to Frost, such that I am now working towards a Performance Diploma in piano playing suggested by Santiago Rodriguez. Here’s a synopsis of everything I did to meet my jury deadline in only a month’s time:

1. **Mentally push yourself to learn the material as soon as possible.** I purposely made my life more difficult in an effort to perfect (as much as possible) my playing by the time November came, to allow my approaches in musicality to evolve for a month before juries in December. All metronome-related practice, slow playing, rhythmic changes, and attempts to play off-book happened in October.
2. **NEVER (EVER) enter the practice room without a goal in mind.** I knew the exact measures I would run through before I went navigating for a room in Foster. In addition, I selected only 5-15 measures from each of my pieces, which transitions into my next point:
3. **Whatever your rehearsal objective is, expect to accomplish less.** This way, if you find yourself with enough mental strength to push through 4-6 more measures, your confidence will grow, and you will inevitably meet your deadline faster or with more success.
4. **Take a break every 20 minutes, but set aside at least an hour and a half dedicated to only practicing.** When end-of-semester things run wild, our exhaustion peaks and our ability to concentrate unquestionably weakens. I set a routine such that after the first 20 minutes I spent locating common errors in my pieces, I left Foster to grab a caramel macchiato and returned to do some metronome work. However,

little can be achieved this way if you only have forty-five minutes to practice, so find a time slot where you have the most liberty to focus on your instrument (even if it's 10:00 pm; we've all been there.)

5. **Practice slowly WITH A METRONOME.** I cannot emphasize this further: practicing slowly with your metronome will not only help you locate errors, but it will allow your brain connect with the rest of your body and the way it contributes to (or takes away from) your playing. Moreover, I highly suggest that slow practice come before full-speed performances. This will discipline you to continue using your metronome and slowly increasing the tempo until your entire body understands the flow and has meet the technical demands of the music.



6. **Lastly, you don't have to resort to fully performing your piece until 2-3 weeks before your jury.** We need to spend as much available time as possible understanding all the technical and musical aspects of our pieces so that our jury can be an enjoyable experience where we can actively listen to ourselves making music. After all, when these last 2 weeks come, you'll be glad you spent most of your time pushing through the hardships of repetitive playing and tripping through what seemed to be impossible measures of music; if you sustain your discipline, this time will be ten times less stressful than anticipated.

Good luck with all your juries and final exams, you talented, future music educators!

## *Staying the Course with Fundamental Skills in the Instrumental Ensemble*

*Alex Morales*

Almost every band director will say that there is never enough rehearsal time. I say that often times, these teachers have much more rehearsal time than they could possibly need, but aren't using it in the most effective way. With concerts, contests, festivals, evaluations, and other performance events looming in the near future, it's easy to exclusively dig right into the music and teach to the performance. What will typically happen, though, is when the director sees that very little improvement seems to be made and feels their attempts at refining the repertoire are futile, they fail to realize that the investment has not been made to provide the students with the fundamental skills *behind* the music. Accept the harsh reality that if you've got the big performance in 5 weeks and the ensemble is still not sounding as refined as you'd like it to be, you're fooling yourself to believe that they won't still sound that way 5 weeks from then if the individuals do not have fundamental control of their instruments. If there is one truth about fundamentals, it's this: band directors who's instruction stresses a strong foundation in fundamental musical concepts have the best and most mature sounding ensembles.

The first problem that often occurs in too many band rooms is a short warm-up routine with no real purpose. For example, the ensemble will be asked to play a concert Bb major scale at the beginning of every rehearsal, and students robotically go through the motions with no deep engagement or regard to making music, and

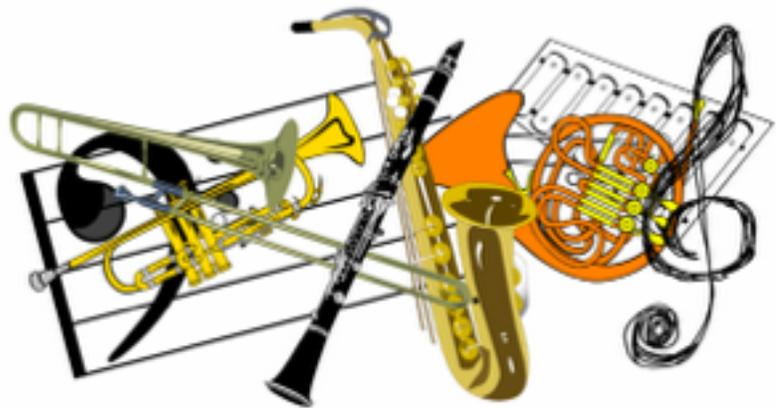


it really ends up being a waste of time. Second, we need to understand the difference between warm-up and the practicing of fundamentals. The “warm-up” should serve the purpose of simply prepping physical and mental mechanics of playing an instrument for rehearsal, and nothing more. Whether this is done individually or as an ensemble, this is not the time to actually teach or refine skills.

Think of fundamentals like this: Most students are not taking private lessons on their individual instruments outside of school. With this mindset, methodically approach rehearsal like a giant group private lesson that ensures that every student can improve their fundamental skills throughout the school year. It is true that certain students can cleanly play the most technical passages but still have no artistry to go along with it. It's also equally true that no matter what interpretive ideas we impart to students, no matter how much musical conviction we pull out of our ensembles, without the strong fundamentals they will still sound like a beautiful building with no foundation. It'll collapse if you even spit on it. We can never get to the finer points of artistic interpretation when our musicians don't have the technical skills. While walking down the hallway of a practice rooms building at any collegiate school of music, more often than not it's not solo or ensemble repertoire that you'll hear being practiced, but the fundamental skills. We must never forget the value.

Develop a section of rehearsal that involves both maintenance routine that covers the basic skills of playing the instrument and exercises that emphasize skills necessary for the literature to be rehearsed that day. Develop ratios that begin the year in favor of the fundamentals over the literature (60/40), and gradually evolve more toward the literature as the year goes on (30/70). Use this time to work at the individual level, using breathing exercises, long tones to develop rich and resonant sounds, technical exercises to develop finger dexterity and brass flexibility, and exercises to refine various articulations.

Make scales and arpeggios a priority, as these are the building blocks of all of Western tonal music and are our vocabulary for this language. Take the time to work on skills as basic as proper embouchures, hand position, posture, voicing, tonguing, and all of the most basic physical mechanics that are easy to take for granted. There is a reason why it is so common for new music majors to arrive to their private lessons in the first year and feel as though they are learning their instrument all over again for the first time. We must take students with bad habits and impart to them the proper habits that will facilitate good playing.



Teach and work on ensemble skills such as ensemble sonority, balance, blend, unison and chordal intonation, and listening skills. Introduce these like a lesson like any other subject. Work on note shape, releases, entrances, rhythm reading, stability of pulse, tension and release, sight-reading, dynamics, phrasing, shaping a line, nuance, the list can go on and on to include all different ingredients to a quality performance of the literature. Determine specific skills needed for specific sections of the literature and use unison etudes to develop those skills (ex. *Symphonic Band Techniques* by Tom Rhodes & Donald Bierschenk). And always keep in mind that instruction must be valuable and engaging enough to never let this fall into a mindless routine, and even technical exercises should be played musically rather than as merely a technical exercise.

If we can approach the school year as a *planned* and mapped out sequence of teaching the basic skills of musicianship, and teach all of these *outside* of the literature before putting it back into context of the literature, the rate of improvement can be astonishing. If we can even have long term goals from year to year (for example resonant body of sound and awareness of pitch one year, developing more technique the next, and detailing musical nuance and articulations the next), and use that to guide the literature selection *and* the fundamental focus, we can improve our ensembles much more productively. Even when rehearsal time seems to be limited, invest time in the fundamentals and trust the process. When we invest in developing and improving the technical, musical, soloistic

abilities of the individual, we really are doing more of a service to our students and indirectly investing in the whole ensemble as well.

We always need to understand technique not as an end within itself, but as a means to an end and clearing of obstacles. If we can develop musicians who have a strong foundation in fundamental musical skills,

it is at that point where we can truly dive into what makes a musical performance truly compelling and impacting and move people with our art.



## *Women's Choirs: Why?*

*Alexandra Colaizzi*

In the world of choral music education, there lies a stigma surrounding entirely female choirs. Instances of a women's choir being shoved to the side for the "extra" ladies, singing songs of love and babies at a concert filled with SATB voices and men's choirs getting ravenous applause for their sea-chanties and war-songs. Mediocre rehearsal technique and poor attitudes often surround these scenes, all because it's "only a women's choir".

Actually, it is never, "only" a women's choir.

It is an art form filled with history, dating back to Pope Leo IV (847 – 855), after he forbade choirs of women to sing in churches, Hildegard von Bingen having to hide her compositions during her life in monastery, and castrated males taking the place of female choristers for thousands of years. For centuries, women suffered in silence as their male counterparts directed, composed, and performed works which were met with all male voices and instrumentalists. The stories of Anna Magdalena Bach, Maria Anna Mozart, and Clara Schumann are all too well-known (or lack-thereof).



In modern day music education, girl's and women's choirs are often utilized as an extra ensemble for women to take if they do not qualify for the mixed-voice ensemble. A local example, the FMEA Conference's All State choirs, allow the high-scoring women into the mixed ensemble, while the qualifying women with lower-sided scores are placed into the Women's Choir. Many female students experience disdain toward these all-female ensembles due to the stereotype that they are not, and will not, be as "good" as the men's or male ensembles. It is our job as future educators to begin washing out the old attitudes, and begin to welcome advanced women's ensembles and literature into our schools and communities.

A local semi-professional girl choir resides here in South Florida. The Girl Choir of South Florida, founded by Mrs. Wallis Peterson in 2005, has spent the last 11 years changing minds and opening eyes to the beauty that female choirs can hold, and bringing to life the developing women's voice. Ranging in age from 6-18, the choir focuses on empowering young women and allowing beginning-advanced choral literature to gain light. All of these attributes give true meaning to GCSF's motto: "Transforming girls' lives through musical excellence" ([girlchoir.org](http://girlchoir.org)).

I asked girls who had been members of GCSF for over 6 years the question, “What impact has a women’s choir had on your musical and professional growth?”

The answers?

“I don’t know where I’d be if I didn’t join this choir. Singing with other girls my age has allowed me to be

comfortable in my own skin, even when my voice feels vulnerable.

All of our voices combined resonate into a sound that is incredible.”

—Mariana, age 16

“Being in a women’s choir gives me the chance to make beautiful music with people I can easily relate to. We always have each other’s backs, musically and emotionally.”

—Emme, age 17



Women’s choirs deserve a place in our schools as more than an “other” ensemble. Teaching and empowering young girls to feel comfortable, while enhancing their musical ability simultaneously, brings a change too great to put into words.

\*To learn more about the Girl Choir of South Florida, please visit <http://www.girlchoir.org/>.



## Announcements

### Upcoming Dates:

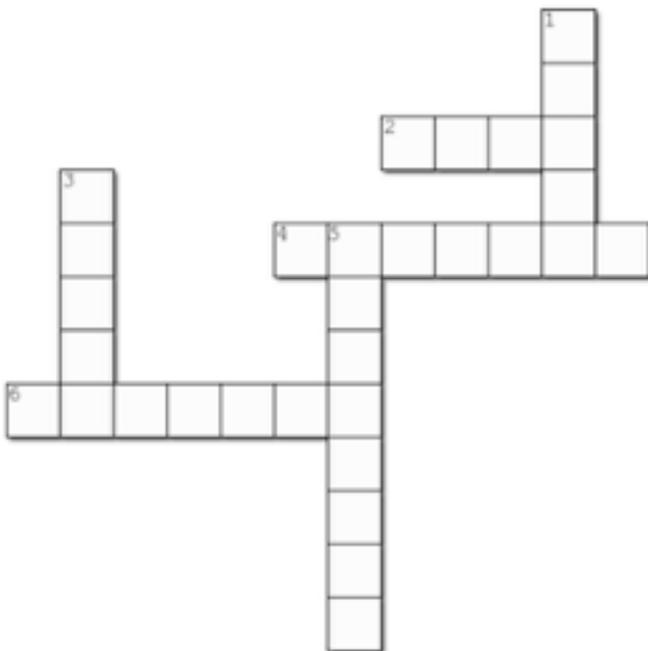
Hill Day: June 22-24, Washington, D.C.

First Day of Classes: August 22nd

Shadow Day: TBA

Benefit Concert: TBA

Bake Sales: Ongoing



Across

- 2. The structure or organization of a piece of music.
- 4. A double-reeded bass instrument in the woodwind family.
- 6. A pause or stopping point.

Down

- 1. The speed of music.
- 3. The middle instrument of the violin family; one of few instruments to use the alto clef.
- 5. A chord that is played one note at a time.

Answers

1. tempo 2. form 3. viola 4. bassoon  
5. arpeggio 6. cadence