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A Message from Our President

"Yonder come day, day is a' breakin', sun is a' risin' in my soul." In early January, the Tampa Convention Center rang with the sound of our song, as almost half of our chapter shared our University of Miami traditions with collegiate music educators from around the state. We started the semester off so strong, beautifully representing ourselves and our family professionally and socially at the FMEA conference in Tampa. Together, we grew closer to each other and we strengthened our love for music and the education of our future students.

Returning from FMEA, we welcomed new members into the family, both MED and not (or not yet), and welcomed our new executive board. Supported by the kind tips and suggestions from our state colleagues, we embarked on a major operational change, developing our very own committee system. I believe that this was the most pivotal decision this chapter has made in my time here because it put responsibilities and opportunities directly in your hands, and many of you ran with it. I did not know how it would turn out, but I am definitely happy we did it.



Our Outreach Committee made great strides with our 4th annual Music Education Advocacy Week by connecting us to the entire university committee. After tabling in the breezeway and at FROST, holding conducting and instrument petting zoos, and taking part in a fun game show night with Hurricane Productions, we completely filled our banner (made by PR Committee) with signatures screaming **#IStandForMusicEducation!**

Speaking of Public Relations Committee, I could not be happier with the new initiatives started and run by committee members. Our social media, scattered with member takeovers, conductor's corners, and event spotlights has never looked better. Neither have our non-forum meetings led by our (party) Planning Committee! I know we all want to thank our very special guests: Jack Knowlton who taught us that chickens can become dinosaurs, Samantha Price who showed us Music Business does not have to be scary, and Kara Iwanowski who gave us a few tricks to use when you find yourself swing dancing.

Right before spring break, our Fundraising Committee worked with our chapter and our incredible Music Education department to raise our annual grant from \$700 to \$1000, double the amount of just two years ago! This would not have been possible if not for the amazing efforts this chapter has made in fundraising over the last year. Unfortunately, we were forced to cancel the grant for this year because of school closures, but I know the increased amount will certainly help a school in need next spring after distance learning has taken its toll.

To our Seniors, I am amazed by what you all have accomplished in your 3.75 years and I am so deeply sorry that you did not get the chance to finish it up as you had expected. I am counting the days until I can see you all in December for commencement. Thank you for being our mentors, our friends, and our guiding lights. We stand on the shoulders of giants – your shoulders.

As I reflect on the wonderful things we have accomplished this semester, I am reminded of the countless events that we were in the process of planning that never got to see the break of day. I am reminded of how much I miss each and every one of you. I am reminded of the brevity of our time together. I do not know how this will turn out or when things will feel 'normal,' but I am comforted knowing that they will eventually get better. We will see each other soon enough. We will make music together soon enough. And the sun will rise in our souls soon enough.

With music in my heart, my heart is with you,

Steven Mailloux-Adler

Translating Yoga to Music-Making

By Isabella Herrera

Yoga is the “union of body with the mind and of mind with the soul.”¹ If you were to ask musicians what “music” means, they would say something along the same thread. The barriers between mind and body dissipate and the mind transcends to the soul. Think of the pianist; the mind and the body become one when the fingers effortlessly do what the mind tells it to, and from there the soul sparks musical interpretation and expressivity. Like music, yoga has many branches to it. There are many keys on a piano, but the music is one. There are many branches on a tree, but the tree of yoga is one. In this article I will be expanding on the similarities between yoga and music and how to incorporate the benefits of yoga into your music making.

Pranayama is the breathwork aspect of yoga. *Prana* means energy; *prana* is the hub of the wheel of life. Through *prana*, all humans live to consume and disperse energy until finally their final breath dissolves into their cosmic breath. In his book, B.K.S Iyengar, author and world-renowned teacher, confesses that “as long as breath is still, *prana* is still, and hence the mind is still.”² In other words, your breath brings balance to your energy and mind through metaphysical interconnection. *Ayama* is the “storing and distribution of energy.”³ In the practice of *pranayama*, the breath is manipulated and held for long periods of time. B.K.S Iyengar’s philosophy believes that nature and the elements are within us. Earth is “our elixir of life (*prana*),”⁴ air is the engine inside of our bodies, churning through inhalation and exhalation. Ether is the distribution of the energy; the space contracting and expanding in our lungs.



Water and fire are elements seen to be complete opposites and when combined creates tension. Iyengar states that “the elements of fire and water are brought together, and this contact of fire and water in the body, with the help of the element of air, releases a new energy, called by yogis divine energy, or kundalini sakti.” It is by channeling this energy through yoga that we meet clarity and become better versions of ourselves.

There are many different *pranayama* methods and exercises aimed at relieving stress, bringing awareness, and being in the moment. *Pranayama* balances your *chittavritti* (movements of consciousness) and eliminates any physical blocking towards a free breath by guiding the energy horizontally, vertically, and circumferentially. In her essay, classical vocalist and children’s choir teacher Maya Davis offers *pranayama* exercises which translate from the mat to vocal pedagogy. One exercise is done by taking a large inhale “filling up the belly, rib cage, and all the way up to the collar

¹ B.K.S Iyengar, *The Tree of Yoga* (Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2002) 1.

² Iyengar, 127.

³ Ibid., 127

⁴ Ibid., 127.

bone.”⁵ The step-by-step process of this exercise is a four second breath, three second retention, and four second inhalation. Not only can this breathwork exercise be incorporated into your *asana* (physical) practice but is also highly recommended to classical vocalists for its efficiency in opening the external intercostal muscles. *Pranayama* also stresses the importance of the quality of breath over how the quantity and length. The flow of the breath should remain constant, unwavering, “long, soft, smooth and interrupted.”⁶ Your mind and *asana* practice is connected with your breath, so if your breath is steady so will be you.



Alternate nostril breathing exercises have also been recommended to singers (also known as *nadi sodhana pranayama*). Maya Davis explains that this exercise focuses on “breathing the sur pavak while holding one nostril closed during inhalation and the other during exhalation” and then alternating between nostrils. This practice energizes the ribs and the lungs through controlled air production and retention, bringing deep awareness to your breathing.

Ocean breath (also known as *ujjayi breath*) utilizes constriction at the back of the throat to slow down and control the breathing, energizing the body and generating focus and concentration. Your *ujjayi* breath opens up the back of the throat, serving as a good warm up for vocalists. As you inhale, the diaphragm lowers and the rib cage rises up, expanding and bringing the naval in. As you exhale, the diaphragm returns to the place, ribs close and belly draws back and in. As you exhale, you are energizing the back of your throat and creating a deep, rooted sound.



These *pranayama* exercises are not limited to vocalists; these breathwork methods benefit every instrumentalist. The more obvious ones may be woodwind and brass instruments, being that they directly utilize their breath. However, string and percussion instruments use their breath in less direct but ever-present ways as well. I myself am a violinist and a pianist. When performing or even simply practicing, I find myself holding my breath,

restricting any space for creative energy in my practice. Like yoga, music making is a form of manifesting “flow state;” a transient state in which your mind is in union with your body, mind, and soul. Breathing is an integral part of piano playing; it is the model for fluid motion where the end of an

⁵ Mia Olson, *Musician’s Yoga: A Guide to Practice, Performance, and Inspiration* (Boston, MA: Berklee Press., 2009), 12.

⁶ Iyengar, 127.

inhalation is the beginning of an exhalation. As stated before, your body will reflect your breath, so if your breath is fluid so will be your body's reaction to it, making your music-making fluid.

While *pranayama* is the internal force of yoga, *asana* is the external. For a tree to flourish, its trunk needs to be grounded by its roots. According to B.K.S Inegar, "asana is posture, which is the art of positioning the body as a whole with a physical, mental, and spiritual attitude." By repetitive practice of asanas you are developing the guidance and awareness to maintain alignment. As a violinist and pianist, I am constantly sitting down, hovered over my music. Over time my tailbone became tucked, my shoulders raised, and my spine rounded. The spine, being the largest root of alignment in your body for its connectivity to the other areas of your body, can very well cause weakness or complete loss of muscular function and sensations in the body if it is damaged. This is why healthy posture and alignment is such an important part of music making.



Since I started practicing yoga, my attention to posture has become much more refined. Many asanas emphasize the opening of the heart for emotional benefits that also transcends to physical benefits. The act of "opening your heart" entails the release of the shoulders and the lifting of the heart. By pulling your shoulders back over your spine you are naturally lifting your chest, creating more space for creativity and love, while also correcting your posture. Your chest must be lifted and gaze steadied at the sky or naturally in front of you. Heart openers can be exaggerated such as a backbend; however, these prove to be very beneficial as a counter-stretch to your usual hunched posture. By consistently practicing heart-openers you are maintaining awareness of your shoulders and spine, a positive practice that I have been able to translate to when I sit on a piano bench for hours.

Dharana means concentration or attention; a method of directing attention to a particular path, region, or spot within or outside the body; the “control of the fluctuations of consciousness to focus it towards a single point.”⁷ Through practice of *dharana*, one will learn to expel all fluctuations and waves of distraction which perplex the mind. When consciousness maintains the intensity of awareness, unfaltering and inflexible, this process becomes meditation. By incorporating meditation into your practice, you will benefit from the consistent strengthening of concentration and translate it to your music making. Musicians spend every second of music making concentrating; the moment that “flow state” falters is the moment your individual music has dissipated even if it is still sounding. Consistent meditation leads to the breaking of the barriers and distractions into stability and fluidity. Iyengar believes it is “the way of discovering the greater self”⁸ by rendering the “art of self-study, observation, reflection and sight of the infinite hidden within.”⁹



To meditate is to be free from the constraints of time. Time is abstract and intangible, however as humans we need to envision something in order to make a sensible judgment on something. So, people see time as a timeline of events, like a wheel of film. Moments become successions of the wheel, blending together and forgotten as the wheel piles on. Meditation is the practice of stopping the wheel and finding reason and clarity in living in that moment, not getting lost in this “movement of moments”¹⁰ This practice of “living in the moment” helps musicians to combat performance anxiety. Harvard PhD students Sat Bir Khalsa,

Bethany Bultzer, Stephanie Shorter, Kristen Reinhardt, and Stephen Cope conducted a research experiment proving the benefits of yoga and meditation in alleviating stress and performance anxiety within adolescent musicians.¹¹ In this study, the research team assigned the participants into two groups. The intervention group took part in a 6 week yoga program and the control group received no treatment, prior to a performance. Yoga participants showed statistically significant reductions in MPA (music performance anxiety) from baseline to the end of the program compared to the control group.

The consistent practice of yoga brings external alignment, internal clarity, and emotional creativity. By practicing yoga and meditation, you will be directly improving your music making. After my yoga practice, I find my piano playing to be much more flexible and unapologetic, and my heart to be more vulnerable and expressive. In this new generational wave of music education in schools,

⁷ Iyengar, 139.

⁸ Ibid., 140.

⁹ Ibid., 140.

¹⁰ Ibid., 140.

¹¹ Sat Bir S. Khalsa, PhD; Bethany Butzer, PhD; Stephanie M. Shorter, PhD; Kristen M. Reinhardt, BM; Stephen Cope, MSW, *Yoga Reduced Performance Anxiety in Adolescent Musicians* https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kristen_Reinhardt/publication/236223778_Yoga_Reduces_Performance_Anxiety_in_Adolescent_Musicians/links/5697ccb508ae1c42790520b4/Yoga-Reduces-Performance-Anxiety-in-Adolescent-Musicians.pdf

perhaps it is time to consider incorporating meditative and yogic practices to our curriculum, or at least encourage it and find ways to bridge the connection in class. As music teachers and music performers, it is important for us to understand, encourage, and teach the interrelation between yoga and music making and their positive manifestations of each other.



Advocacy Week Recap

By Mia Laping

Hello NAFME fam! Hope you all are staying safe and finding comfort in this trying time. I wanted to take this opportunity to look back and reflect on what a wonderful advocacy week we had back in March. First, I want to give a huge shoutout and thank you to everyone who participated in and helped with the planning of the week of events- it was one of the most successful in recent memory! In particular, members of the #cloutreach committee played a huge role in coming up with unique and creative ideas for events, and I look forward to an even bigger and better advocacy week next year.

The week kicked off with the signing of the advocacy week banner in the university breezeway. This was a success as usual (thanks Publix cookies!) and we got to interact with many different students in this busy location. The second day's event was a "Conducting Zoo," where people walking by were invited to come have a short conducting lesson and conduct a small chamber ensemble through fun pop tunes! We had a large



number of people stop by during the saxophone quartet hour, which featured songs such as "You've Got a Friend in Me" and the *Monsters Inc* theme song. On the third day, we held an "Instrument Petting Zoo" near the lake bridge and the patio stage. This event was a challenge, as we could only use percussion instruments due to rising concerns about COVID-19, but we still had a good number of people stop by who were curious to try out some of the instruments! This event also featured banner signing and a few improvisatory performances by the wonderful Justin Braun, Noah Weinburg, and Aly Carminati :). The fourth day was a "break" day during the day, followed by an exciting music trivia night held by HP Patio Jams on the patio stage! Members from our chapter helped set up for and had the opportunity to table at this event and raise awareness for music education. We also had some of our members participate in the game show and help with the creation with some of the music questions. This event went off without a hitch and everyone had a great time; thank you to those who helped plan and work this event! The advocacy week events concluded with a bake sale by Frost and more banner signing. Thank you to everyone who baked or worked a shift at the table!



While all of these Advocacy Week events were happening, the Public Relations committee was hard at work creating graphics for and promoting the Advocacy Week social media campaign! Thank you to everyone who was involved with this effort; it was so far-reaching and impactful that the NAFME chapter from Frostburg State University in Maryland decided to promote and participate in the social media events as well! It was especially fun to see everyone's pictures for each day and to read about your experiences with music education.

Overall, I feel that we did a great job of promoting the importance and appreciation for music education to the greater UM community. Again, your participation and hard work to this end was the driving force behind that success, and I look forward to seeing Advocacy Week grow and improve next year as well. Thanks everyone! Stay safe and see you in the fall :)



post on social media using the hashtag
#IStandForMusicEducation



Share a significant memory that has resonated with you throughout your musical journey.



How have you or one of your musical groups changed or grown through music?



Why is music important to you? Why do you choose to include music in your life? Why should music education be important to others?



Which music teacher(s) have made an impact in your life? Tag them (if you can) and tell us what makes them special.



Tell us about a "family" that you have gained through music or how your family has played a role in your musical life.



What's the next step for you in music? Share a goal that you are working toward.

