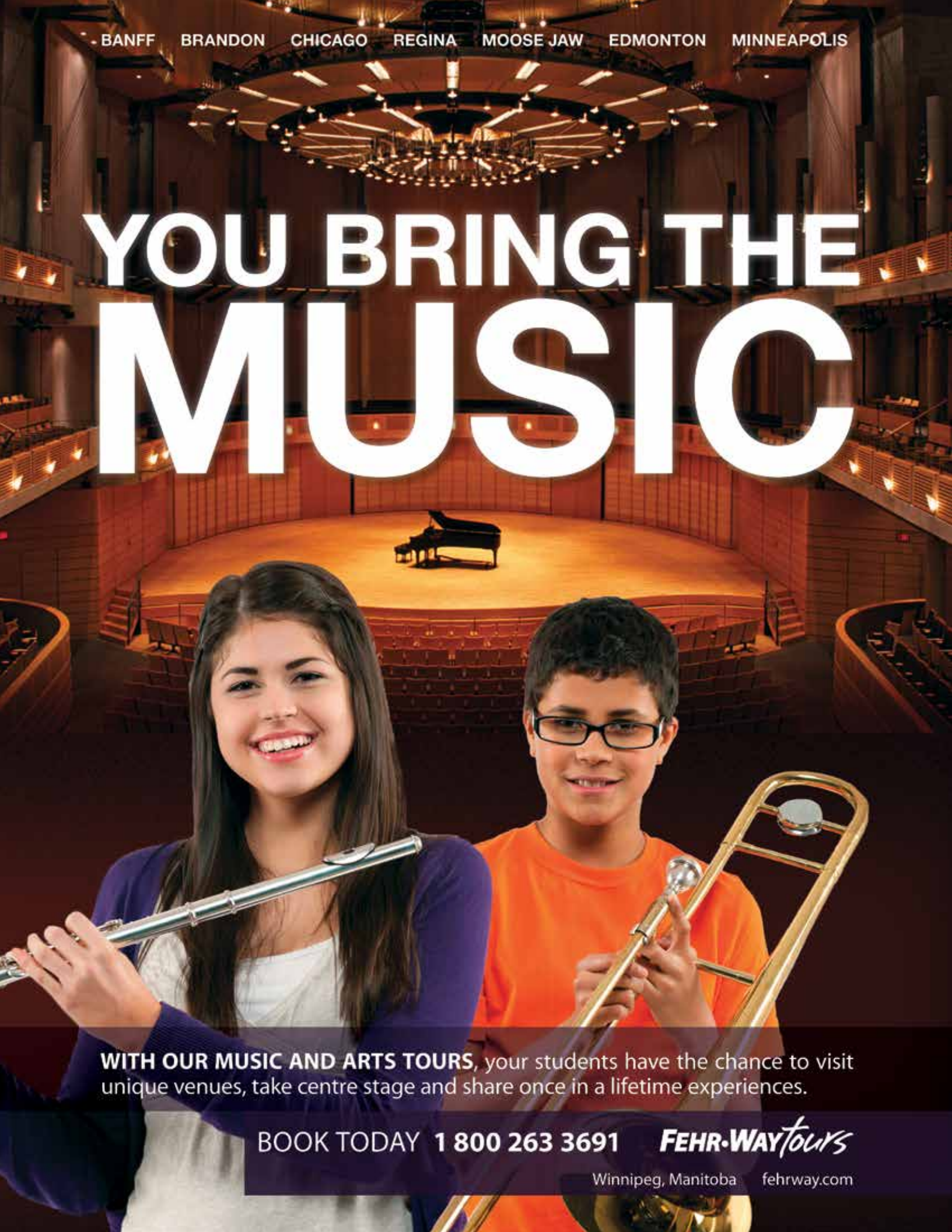
# *Canadian Winds • Vents canadiens*

Revue de l'Association canadienne des Harmonies
Journal of the Canadian Band Association
FALL • 2018 • AUTOMNE
Vol. 17, No. 1


- MEET THE COMPOSER, Kenley Kristofferson
- IN PROFILE: St. Mary's Band
- STUDY GUIDE for Cait Nishimura's *Chasing Sunlight*
- The BIG Drum
- MEET THE PROFESSOR, Ardith Haley
- Incorporating Ear Training into Rehearsal Settings
- STUDY GUIDE for Paul Suchan's *Swift River Passage*
- Culture in the Instrumental-Music Classroom (I)
- Seasoning and Adjusting Single Reeds


BANFF BRANDON CHICAGO REGINA MOOSE JAW EDMONTON MINNEAPOLIS
YOU BRING THE
MUSIC
WITH OUR MUSIC AND ARTS TOURS, your students have the chance to visit unique venues, take centre stage and share once in a lifetime experiences.
BOOK TODAY 1 800 263 3691
FEHR-WAY tours
Winnipeg, Manitoba
fehrway.com

# Canadian Winds • Vents canadiens

JOURNAL OF THE CANADIAN BAND ASSOCIATION
REVUE DE L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES HARMONIES

VOL. 17, NO. 1 FALL / AUTOMNE 2018





**Subscriptions / Abonnements**
John Balsillie (204) 663-1226 / mbband@shaw.ca

The Canadian Band Association is a voluntary, non-profit organization that promotes and develops the musical, educational, and cultural values of bands and band music in Canada. *Canadian Winds* is the official journal of the Canadian Band Association and is issued to all CBA members twice yearly, in the spring and autumn.

L'Association canadienne des harmonies est un organisme bénévole, sans but lucratif, voué à la promotion et au développement des valeurs musicales, éducatives et culturelles des harmonies et de la musique d'harmonie au Canada. *Vents Canadiens* est la revue officielle de l'ACH et est envoyée deux fois l'an, au printemps et à l'automne, à tous ses membres.

Non-member and school library subscriptions are available for $50.00 per annum (US$50.00 for non-Canadian addresses). University and college library subscriptions are available for $210.00 per annum.

Les abonnements aux non-membres et aux bibliothèques scolaires sont offerts à 50 $ par année (50 $ US à l'extérieur du Canada). Des abonnements pour les bibliothèques universitaires et collégiales sont offerts à 210 $ par année.

Contact your provincial band association for CBA membership and information.

Pour devenir membre, ou pour toute autre information, veuillez contacter votre association provinciale.

**Advertising / Publicité:**
John Balsillie (204) 663-1226 / mbband@shaw.ca

**Production:**
Avenue 4 Communications (204) 946-5001
customerservice@avenue4.com

For advertising rates visit http://www.canadianband.ca/

ISSN 1703-5295

Publications Mail Agreement Number **PM40731124**

Please return undelivered Canadian addresses to:
John Balsillie
Canadian Band Association
131 Rouge Road
Winnipeg, MB R3K 1J5
Tel: (204) 663-1226 mbband@shaw.ca


## TABLE OF CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | STUDY GUIDE / GUIDE D'ÉTUDE : Cait Nishimura's *Chasing Sunlight* | *Erik Leung* |
| 10 | MEET THE PROFESSOR / RECONTRE AVEC UNE PROFESSEURE : Interview with Ardith Haley (Acadia University and the Nova Scotia Department of Education & Early Childhood Development) | *Pamela Paddock* |
| 14 | SPOTLIGHT ON PERCUSSION / LES PERCUSSIONS DE PLUS PRÈS : The BIG Drum | *Victoria Sparks* |
| 17 | STUDY GUIDE / GUIDE D'ÉTUDE : Paul Suchan's *Swiftriver Passage* | *Kelsey Demond* |
| 22 | MEET THE COMPOSER / RENCONTRE AVEC UN COMPOSITEUR : Interview with Kenley Kristofferson | *Fraser Linklater* |
| 27 | SPOTLIGHT ON WOODWINDS / LES BOIS DE PLUS PRÈS : Seasoning and Adjusting Single Reeds | *Chuck Currie* |
| 32 | MUSICIANSHIP / SENS MUSICAL : Aural Skills for Making Music : Incorporating Ear Training into Rehearsal Settings | *Aaron Wilson* |
| 36 | WELLNESS / BIEN-ÊTRE : Self-Care for Instrumental-Music Teachers (II): In the Best Possible Way, I Don't Care | *Alexis Silver* |
| 2 | PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE / MESSAGE DU PRÉSIDENT | *Scott Harrison* |
| 3 | IN PROFILE / EN PERSPECTIVE : St. Mary's Band: Going Strong after 115 Years | *Kelly VanBuskirk* |
| 39 | REPAIR BENCH / ATELIER DE RÉPARATION : Spending on Instrument Repairs | *Dennis Adcock* |
| 40 | IN REVIEW / CRITIQUES ET COMPTES-RENDUS : "Skyscapes: The Music of Peter Meechan" [CD] | *Cheryl Ferguson* |
| 43 | IN MEMORIAM: Russell D. Stachiw, 1938-2018 | *Timothy Maloney* |
| 45 | CBA NEWS / NOUVELLES DE L'ACH : Conducting and Selecting Repertoire for the 2018 National Youth Band | *Wendy McCallum* |
| 51 | IDEA FILE / TIROIR À IDÉES : Band Together (I): The Intersection of Qualitative Interviews and Published Research about Culture in the Instrumental-Music Classroom | *Kenley Kristofferson* |
| 56 | SUBMISSION GUIDELINES / DIRECTIVES DE RÉDACTION | |


**Cover Photo / Photo de la page couverture**
St. Mary's Band at the historic King's Square Bandstand in St. John (NB) in 2016. The bandstand, dating from 1908, features a fountain at ground level. Musicians perform on the upper level (seen in the background here, surrounded by a railing). Photo courtesy of Catherine Beckingham and St. Mary's Band. Used with permission.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE / MESSAGE DU PRÉSIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

As we enter a very busy holiday concert season, fresh off honour bands, fall-fair performances, and, of course, the beginning of the academic year, I want to remind all of you to take some time for yourself. It truly is amazing how even one evening of "you time" can provide the much-needed energy to stand in front of your ensembles every day. So, read a book, go to bed early, leave the broken trumpet until the next day, and, as my father always says, "Look out for number one."

I mentioned in my last message that the CBA is navigating some change with regards to this fine journal. This is our editor, Tim Maloney's, final issue of *Canadian Winds*. Tim has been with the CBA and at the helm of *Canadian Winds* for 18 years, and has retired his positions at the University of Minnesota and the CBA. Congratulations, Tim, and thank you for your tireless work for wind-band music in Canada! The CBA Executive is entering the next stage in the search for a new editor, and we are excited to see the changes 2019 will bring for *Canadian Winds!* If you are interested in becoming involved with *Canadian Winds*, either as editor or as part of the editorial team, please let us know.

The submission deadline for the 2019 Howard Cable Memorial Prize in Composition competition is December 1st, 2018. Jason Caslor is once again heading up this wonderful program that brings new and exciting Canadian concert-band literature to the world. This is the preëminent wind-band composition competition in Canada. If you are interested in supporting the project by becoming a member of the consortium, please e-mail Jason at jcaslor@asu.edu. Submission of pieces can be done through the CBA web site (www.canadianband.org/composition-competition). For more information, e-mail CBA Past-President, Darrin Oehlerking, at darrin.oehlerking@usask.ca.

The 2019 National Youth Band is shaping up to be another amazing experience for all involved. Our friends in the Manitoba Band Association and the NYB Band Manager have been working diligently to bring the NYB back for another year. Mark Hopkins, from Acadia University, will conduct the band, and concerts will be hosted by schools and community groups throughout Manitoba.

Looking to the near future, I hope to see many of you at the Canada Reception this year at the Midwest Band & Orchestra Clinic. "Midwest" is a great opportunity to network with other educators, learn from our industry's best, listen to some very fine ensembles, and, most importantly, re-charge your batteries after a busy fall season.

Thank you, members, for all of the awesome work you do every day in support of our art and of your students. Enjoy your holiday season with friends and family. I wish you the happiest of holidays and all the best for the New Year.

Respectfully,
**Scott Harrison**
President, Canadian Band Association

Chers Collègues,

Alors que nous entrons dans une saison de concerts des fêtes très chargée, et à peine finis les orchestres d'honneur, les performances d'automne, et bien sûr, le début de l'année scolaire, à tous, je tiens à vous rappeler de prendre du temps pour vous-même. C'est vraiment incroyable, que même un soir de « temps pour soi-même » peut fournir l'énergie dont vous avez besoin lorsque vous vous présenter devant vos ensembles chaque jour. Alors, lisez un livre, couchez-vous tôt, laisse la trompette cassée jusqu'au lendemain, et comme mon père le dit toujours: « penser d'abord à soi. »

J'ai mentionné dans mon dernier message que l'ACH est en train de faire quelques changements concernant cet excellent journal. Ceci est le dernier numéro des *Vents canadiens* mené par notre rédacteur en chef, Tim Maloney. Tim a fait parti de l'ACH et été à la tête des *Vents canadiens* pendant 18 ans et il a pris sa retraite de son poste à l'Université du Minnesota et de l'ACH.

Félicitations, et merci, Tim, pour votre travail inlassable pour la musique d'harmonie au Canada! L'exécutif de l'ACH entre dans sa prochaine étape à la recherche d'un nouveau rédacteur et nous sommes ravis de voir ce que les changements 2019 apporteront pour *les Vents canadiens!* Si vous êtes intéressé à appuyer la production des *Vents canadiens*, comme rédacteur en chef ou dans le cadre de l'équipe de rédaction, SVP, veuillez nous le faire savoir.

La date limite de soumission du concours en composition en mémoire de Howard Cable 2019 est le 1er décembre 2018. Jason Caslor encore une fois dirigera ce magnifique programme qui apporte au monde entier de la nouvelle littérature excitante d'orchestre à vent canadienne. Il s'agit du concours en composition d'orchestre à vent prééminent au Canada. Si vous êtes intéressé(e) à appuyer ce projet en devenant membre du consortium, SVP envoyer un courriel à Jason (jcaslor@asu.edu). La soumission des morceaux peut se faire par le moyen du site Web de l'ACH (www.canadianband.org/composition-competition). Pour plus d'informations, contacter par courriel, l'ancien président de l'ACH Darrin Oehlerking, à darrin.oehlerking@usask.ca.

L'harmonie nationale des jeunes 2019 s'annonce comme une expérience extraordinaire pour tous les participants. Nos amis de l'Association d'Orchestre du Manitoba et le gérant de l'Orchestre l'HNJ ont travaillé avec soin pour ramener l'HNJ pour une autre année. Mark Hopkins, de l'Université Acadia, dirigera l'orchestre et les concerts seront accueillis par des écoles et des groupes communautaires partout dans le Manitoba.

En regardant vers l'avenir, j'espère voir beaucoup d'entre vous à la réception du Canada cette année aux Midwest Band & Orchestra Clinic, une excellente occasion aux éducateurs d'échanger avec d'autres éducateurs, apprendre des meilleures de notre industrie, écouter de très bons ensembles et le plus important, recharger vos batteries après une saison d'automne bien chargée.

Chers membres, merci, pour tout le travail incroyable que vous faites chaque jour à l'appui de notre art et de vos élèves. Profiter de la période des fêtes avec votre famille et vos amis. Je vous souhaite les vacances les plus heureuses et mes meilleurs voeux pour la nouvelle année.

Respectueusement,
**Scott Harrison**
Président, L'Association canadienne des Harmonies
*(Traduit de l'anglais par Norm Ferraris)*

# St. Mary's Band: Going Strong after 115 Years

Kelly VanBuskirk

***Figure 1. St. Mary's Band on parade, Charlotte Street at King's Square, Saint John, 1952.***

For more than a century, St. Mary's Band has entertained audiences. Gone are the days, however, when bands played the most familiar melodies. There was a time, in the early years of the twentieth century, when sound recording and radio broadcasting were in their infancy, that the only music most people heard outside of church was played either on the parlour piano or by wind bands on parade or in park bandstands.

## The Beginnings

In 1903, St. Mary's Church, an Anglican parish in the blue-collar East Side neighbourhood of Saint John (NB), decided to create a brass band as an outreach mission for boys. Brass bands, sometimes also referred to as "silver bands"[1] or "cornet bands,"[2] are distinguished from "concert bands" by the complete absence of woodwind instruments. They enjoyed tremendous popularity in England beginning in the first half of the nineteenth century, and the brass-band phenomenon spread throughout the British Empire, as well as to continental Europe, Asia, and the United States.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the area around St. Mary's Church was densely populated, as was much of Saint John, a thriving port city of manufacturers and businesses. The church was perched halfway up the steep incline of Waterloo Street, looking out over Haymarket Square, the East End Fair Grounds, Marsh Creek, and the tenement houses of City Road, Prince Edward Street, Exmouth Street, and beyond. With its tight assemblage of brick and wooden factories and apartment houses, and its famous fog, it could have easily been the setting for a Charles Dickens novel.

From the outset, St. Mary's Band (SMB) had to overcome serious challenges. Lacking significant funding, the church rented instruments from Rothesay Collegiate School (RCS), a private Anglican institution in a nearby town. It also recruited professor Charles Williams as the band's first conductor. The SMB archives suggest that Williams may have earned his income by providing lessons to band members, who paid membership dues of twenty cents per week. The church's purpose in establishing the band seems to have resonated not only with the young musicians but with the larger community as well, and enduring community interest has likely played a significant role in helping the band surmount various difficulties over the years.

In November 1903, SMB was officially launched with $15.46 to its credit. Based in St. Mary's Church Hall, the band's first members included Richard Dooe, a young physical-education teacher at RCS, and his brother, Ellis; and members of St. Mary's parish, including William Knowles, Henry and Herbert Barton, George and James Lynch, Charles Knight, and James and Charles Patterson. Throughout its history, SMB has benefitted from an intricate web of family connections.

Within a matter of months, SMB emerged into Saint John's then-booming brass-band milieu, often performing in parades and concerts in mild competition with the City Cornet Band, the Carleton Cornet Band, the Royal New Brunswick Regiment Band, and the Lancaster Legion Band.[3]

## Challenges

In the lead-up to World War I (1914-1918), though many band members were too young to sign up for military service, SMB performed at numerous military rallies and recruiting events. Eventually, enough band members enlisted to form the nucleus of a new military band attached to Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, a regiment that saw action primarily in France during the war.

That band was also the first non-British band to perform at a royal wedding in Westminster Abbey (London), for the nuptials of Princess Patricia in February 1917. The honour provided some consolation to the band, which had lost its director, Charles Williams II, and several musicians, in the Battle of Cambrai. Following Charles's death, his brother, Harold "Pete" Williams, took over as director, and remained at the helm until the 1960s.

During the latter years of Pete Williams's tenure, SMB felt the effects of declining interest in band music, which was happening around the world. The first half of SMB's existence, from 1903 to the 1950s, coincided with the heyday of band music. In Saint John and beyond, SMB was a common presence, performing on CFBC Radio, at the annual Saint John Exhibition, in its own regularly scheduled concerts, and in countless parades.

By the 1960s, however, society's tastes had changed, and SMB experienced the full effects of that shift, driven by advances in recording and broadcasting technologies, among other factors. Despite instituting a dramatic transformation in its make-up in the 1950s, changing from a strictly brass-band format to the fuller concert-band instrumentation, and thereby opening up membership to the full range of woodwind and brass instruments, SMB experienced a sharp fall-off in demand for its performances.

In June 1978, during SMB's 75th-anniversary year, a by-then rare performance in the King's Square Bandstand was covered by an *Evening Times Globe* reporter, who interviewed a young audience-member. The teenager described how he had come

upon the concert: "We were just driving along listening to some song on the radio and we turned it off. Then we heard this music playing and decided to investigate. It's pretty good. There's a good selection of music, and it's nice to see the bandstand back in shape."[4] In contrast, when the bandstand was inaugurated in 1908, the first concert attracted an audience of 5,000.

In addition to the shift in popular tastes, SMB also experienced the consequences of more localized change. Beginning in the 1990s, the commitment of southern New Brunswick school districts to offering instruction in instrumental music waned, and far fewer students were being taught to play woodwind and brass instruments. The once-thriving school programs led by Heini Henkes gradually dwindled, leaving few members of that generation capable of, or interested in, playing in St. Mary's Band.

## Lessons

Despite these and other challenges, SMB continues to exist as an ambassador for band music. Today, one hundred and fifteen years after its inception, the band maintains its weekly Thursday-night rehearsal time in the recently upgraded band hall on Brinley Street, just steps away from where old St. Mary's Church once stood on Waterloo Street. In the past century, most of the city's other bands have disappeared. How has SMB survived?

One factor may be its deep network of family connections, some of which can still be traced back to its earliest members. The band also attracts first-generation members, for whom the motivation may be in the cultivation of the precision teamwork required for thirty or more musicians to meld their individual sounds into first-class ensemble performances.

The band's current president, Davin Sooley, thinks the secret to the organization's longevity is the family atmosphere and the shared love of music: "As with any family, we fight and we argue, but in the end we like and respect each other. And we love being able to perform our music for any audience, no matter the size. "

Whatever the combination of reasons for its enduring success, St. Mary's Band teaches a lesson that transcends bands and music: a shared passion is a powerful motivator that can drive success in the face of significant obstacles. In Saint John, St. Mary's Band is a reminder of what is possible.

[1] Which used silver-plated brass instruments.

[2] The mellow-sounding cornet has a conical bore, while the more brilliant trumpet has a cylindrical bore. Brass bands normally include only conical-bore instruments.

[3] Jack, Ronald J. "Forever on Parade in Saint John History: The City Cornet Band." Blog article 16, http://thelostvalley.blogspot.ca/2007/12/on-parade-in-valley-city-cornet-band.html.

[4] Travis, Mary. "Teen Finds Concert Beats Music on Radio." Saint John *Evening Times Globe*, 15 June 1978.

**KELLY VANBUSKIRK** practices law in Saint John (NB). He first joined St. Mary's Band as a drummer at the age of 7 because his arms were too short to reach 6th position on the slide trombone. For the last 40 years, he has played trombone in the band, an instrument that his brother, grandfather, and great-grand uncle have all played in St. Mary's Band.

# Cait Nishimura's *Chasing Sunlight*

Erik Leung

## Unit 1: The Composer

Born in 1991, Cait Nishimura is a self-taught composer based in Toronto. After earning Bachelor's degrees in Music and Education at the University of Toronto, Nishimura taught instrumental music in schools before transitioning to composing full-time. Playing clarinet in wind bands combined with her music-education background has been invaluable in helping her adopt best practices in writing for wind instruments and understand the kinds of ensemble-writing musicians enjoy playing. She cites, in particular, music by composers including Frank Ticheli, Alfred Reed, John Mackey, Eric Whitacre, and Gustav Holst as having directly influenced her writing.

Nishimura's experience as a songwriter also comes into play in the crafting of singable melodies, a hallmark of her instrumental music. In this arena, Nishimura notes influences from jazz and pop-music artists as diverse as Ella Voss, Novo Amor, Sigur Ros, City & Colour, Oh Wonder, Coldplay, Bon Iver, and Nora Jones. Her music integrates popular and classical styles, drawing inspiration from synth-sampling, minimalism, and repetition.

## Unit 2: The Work

*Chasing Sunlight* was the 2017 winner of the CBA's Howard Cable Memorial Prize in Composition, an annual competition that supports the creation of new band music by emerging Canadian composers. Scored for standard wind-band instrumentation, *Chasing Sunlight* is Nishimura's fourth work for band, after *Night Light* (2011), *Awaken* (2016), and *The Sweet Sound of Snowfall* (2016). Most recently, she composed a large-scale, five-movement work entitled, *Lake Superior Suite* (2018), which was premiered earlier this year by the University of Toronto Wind Ensemble under the direction of Gillian MacKay.

All of Nishimura's works are self-published and available through her web site (www.caitnishimura.com). Her music can also be purchased through J. W. Pepper and Midwestern Music.

**The instrumentation for *Chasing Sunlight* is as follows:**

- Flutes 1, 2
- Oboe
- Clarinets 1, 2
- Bass Clarinet
- Alto Saxophones 1, 2
- Tenor Saxophone
- Baritone Saxophone
- Xylophone (may also be played on Marimba)
- Trumpets 1, 2
- Horns 1, 2
- Trombones 1, 2
- Euphonium
- Tuba
- Timpani
- Chimes (tubular bells)
- Percussion (triangle, sus. cymbal, bass drum)

For ensembles lacking four percussionists, Nishimura suggests prioritizing the percussion parts as follows:

1. Xylophone (or Marimba)
2. Chimes (tubular bells)
3. Timpani
4. Percussion (triangle, sus. cymbal, bass drum)

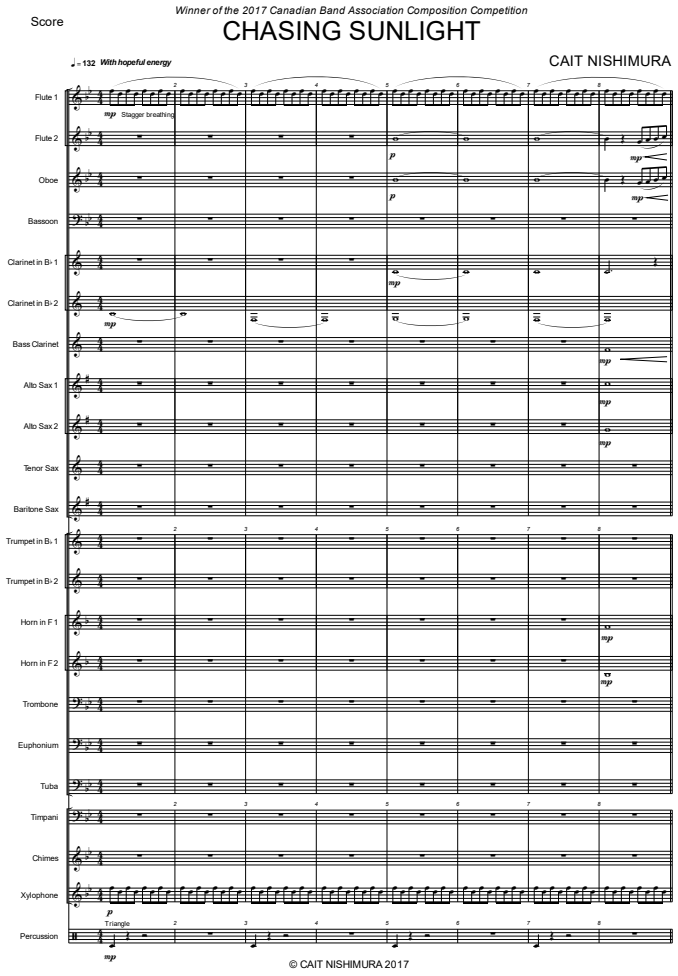



***Figure 1. First page of Kate Nishimura's* Chasing Sunlight.**

## Unit 3: Historical Perspective

Since childhood, Nishimura has felt a close connection to nature. The inspiration for *Chasing Sunlight* came as she was driving through a forest in rural Ontario. With the sunlight streaming through the trees, she wondered, "Will the sunset stay the same if I continue driving westward at the same rate?"[1] From this question came the idea of literally chasing the sunlight through successive time zones.

As the music developed, Nishimura began to realize that the notion of chasing sunlight could also serve as a metaphor for her personal journey in music: sunlight came to represent hope and optimism in her abilities and identity as a composer. Asked whether she believes she has finally "caught the sunlight," Nishimura answers in the affirmative, noting that the success of *Chasing Sunlight* has allowed her to fulfill her dream of devoting herself to composing full-time.

In a program note for *Chasing Sunlight,* she writes:

> *Chasing Sunlight* was inspired by the experience of driving west into the setting sun, as if trying to keep up with the earth's rotation to catch the last few rays of light before dusk. The steady eighth-note motif throughout the piece represents this sense of urgency, while the soaring, lyrical themes depict the warmth and radiance of the sun low in the sky.
>
> Just as the sun will always set, humans must accept the impermanence of all things in life, and make the most of every opportunity before it has passed. *Chasing Sunlight* also represents the ongoing pursuit of these opportunities.[2]

## Unit 4: Musical Elements

*Chasing Sunlight* is organized into two distinct sections, the first encompassing measures 1-36, and the second, measures 37-end. In the opening section, the composer intentionally evokes the notion of 'chasing' by frequently beginning melodic ideas on traditionally weak beats of the measure, such as beat two, thereby creating momentum towards the next downbeat. (See Figure 2.)

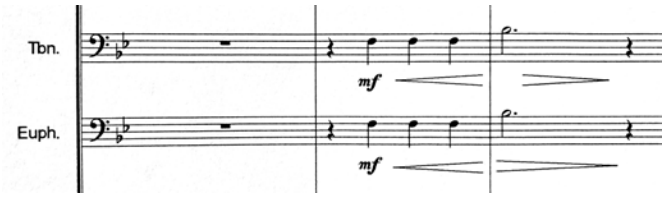



***Figure 2. Melodic figure beginning on beat 2 in the trombone and euphonium, mm. 10-11,* Chasing Sunlight. *(All score excerpts in this article are used with permission.)***

In addition to melodic ideas starting on weak beats, the composer also delays important arrival points (as seen in Figure 3).

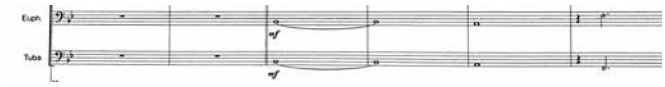


***Figure 3. Delayed arrival point in the euphonium, tuba, timpani, and chimes, mm. 53-54,* Chasing Sunlight.**

The second part of the work introduces a new theme first heard in the solo trumpet (see Figure 4). For Nishimura, this theme was the initial spark that set in motion the rest of the music. Marked 'Longingly' in the score, the melody is meant to evoke the warmth and radiance of the sunlight. Timbral support tones or what Nishimura refers to as "echo tones," are used to give the soloist added reinforcement. These "echo tones" can be found in the clarinet, horn, trombone, and euphonium parts.

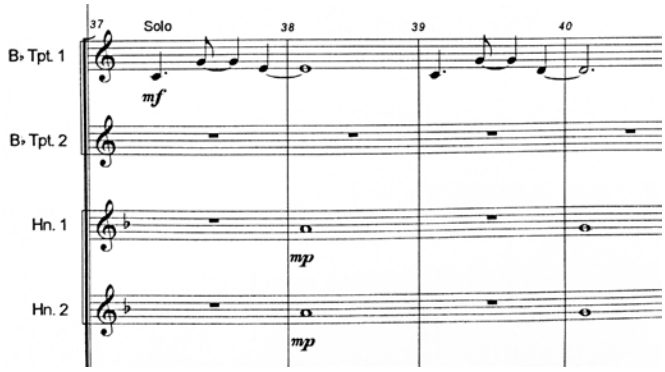



***Figure 4. 'Longingly' theme excerpt in the solo trumpet, with "echo tones" in the horns, mm. 37-40,* Chasing Sunlight.**

In addition to the 'Longingly' theme, Nishimura also introduces another idea in the second section. First heard in the flutes and oboes as an accompaniment to the main melody, this descending, three-note motive utilizes the pitches B♭-A-F (see Figure 5). As the second section unfolds, the motive's importance grows: e.g., in measures 61-70 various woodwind, brass, and mallet instruments play it in call-and-response fashion, and the low woodwinds use it as harmonic support. In the grand restatement of the 'Longingly' theme, this motive becomes the bass line.

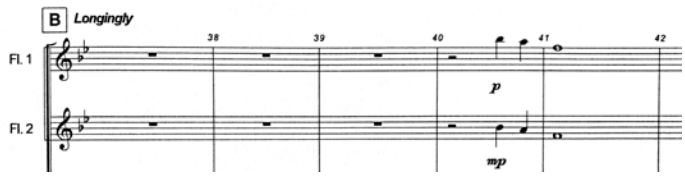



***Figure 5. B♭-A-F motive introduced as an accompaniment figure in Flutes 1 & 2, mm. 37-41,* Chasing Sunlight.**

Referring to her lack of formal training in composition, Nishimura explains that she often disregards traditional concepts of musical architecture when composing. In *Chasing Sunlight*, large formal considerations are superseded by the use of two recurring motives that help unify the entire work. The first of these is the descending, four-note, eighth-note motive first heard in measure 9 in the clarinets, which serves as an anchor between the two sections (see Figure 6). This descending four-note motive also concludes the piece.

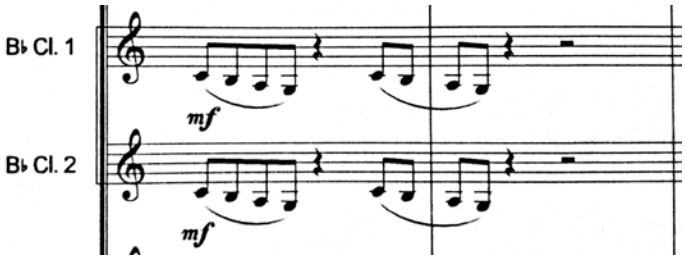



***Figure 6. Descending four-note motive in Clarinets 1 & 2, mm. 9-10,* Chasing Sunlight.**

The second unifying motive is the steady, alternating, two-note, eighth-note figure that begins the work and is heard frequently throughout (see Figure 7). This motive is meant to represent a sense of urgency.

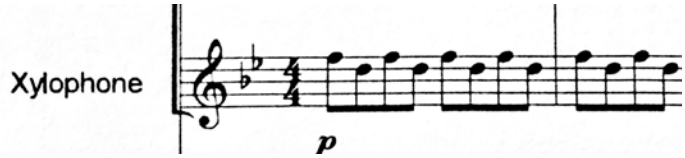



***Figure 7. Alternating two-note eighth-note motive in the xylophone, mm. 1-2,* Chasing Sunlight. *Also played by Flute 1 as the work begins (see Figure 1).***

## Unit 5: Form and Structure

| PART | MEASURE | EVENT AND SCORING |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | mm. 1-8 | **Introduction**<br>Alternating 2-note, eighth-note motive in flute and xylophone. |
| | mm. 9-24 | Descending eighth-note scale pattern.<br>Delayed-arrival motive introduced in tenor sax, trombone, and euphonium.<br>Harmonic progression introduced (I-IV-V-vi-V). |
| | mm. 25-36 | Harmonic progression continues, with varied rhythm.<br>Variation and augmentation of descending, eighth-note pattern in trumpet. |
| 2 | mm. 37-60 | "Longingly" theme introduced in solo trumpet. Descending Bb-A-F motive introduced in upper WW. |
| | mm. 61-70 | **Interlude**<br>Restatement of descending, 4-note, eighth-note pattern.<br>Call and response between upper WW's and Brass using B$^{b}$-A-F motive.<br>Fragment of 'Longingly' theme in horns (mm.73-74). |
| | mm. 71-74 | **Transition**<br>Descending, 4-note, eighth-note passage, *accelerando*. |
| | mm. 75-80 | "Longingly" theme restated in grand fashion.<br>Descending B$^{b}$-A-F in augmentation in low WW and Brass. |
| | mm. 81-91 | Return of descending, 4-note, eighth-note patterns from m. 9. Final statement of descending, 4-note, eighth-note pattern in augmentation in low brass. |

## Unit 6:Technical and Stylistic Considerations

*Chasing Sunlight*, while not a technically demanding work, can be used to develop higher-level concepts such as tone, intonation, balance, blend, and ensemble listening. The piece also requires musicians to play with a controlled lyrical style. Proper breath support and tone is crucial to sustain pitches throughout the work.

For the conductor, the tempo of the piece can also be a challenge. Because it is written in Common Time, the conductor may be tempted to conduct the piece in a fast 4/4 pattern. However, the author has found that when conducted in this manner, the work sounds heavy and lacks the mometum needed to provide the sense of freedom the piece needs. Therefore, the author recommends that the piece be conducted in a slow, flowing two, to help facilitate the sense of flow required for this work.

## Unit 7: Suggested Listening

The following pieces, while not directly related to *Chasing Sunlight*, did inspire Nishimura to compose for wind band:

Holst, Gustav. *Second Suite in F*
Mackey, John. *Aurora Awakes*
Whitacre, Eric. *October*

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Leung, Erik. *Interview with Cait Nishimura*. March 9, 2018. Erik Leung Personal Collection, Fresno, CA.

Nishimura, Cait. *Chasing Sunlight*. Cait Nishimura Music, 2017.

### REFERENCES

[1] Erik Leung, *Interview with Cait Nishimura*, March 9, 2018.
[2] Cait Nishimura, *Chasing Sunlight* Program Notes, Cait Nishimura Music, 2017.

## ERIK LEUNG

A native of Calgary, Erik Leung is an Assistant Professor of Music at Fresno Pacific University in California, where he serves as the Director of Bands and Chair of the Music Department. In addition to teaching graduate and undergraduate conducting, he directs the Fresno Pacific University Chamber Winds, Symphonic Band, and the Pacific Brass Ensemble. Leung holds a D.M.A. in Wind Conducting from Northwestern University, a Master's degree from the University of Toronto, and Bachelor's degrees in Music (*with distinction*) and Education from the University of Calgary. Among his conducting teachers are Mallory Thompson, Gillian Mackay, Glenn Price, Mark Hopkins, and Jeremy Brown.

Groups under his direction have been featured in the CBDNA National Small Band Program Showcase, the Western International Band Clinic, and the Percy Grainger Wind Festival. Leung has had research articles published in *Canadian Winds*, and he edited a critical edition of Jan Meyerowitz's *Three Comments on War* for concert band, published by E. B. Marks Music Company. He has presented at scholarly conferences in North America and Europe, including the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, the College Band Directors National Association convention, the World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles, and the California All-State Music Educators Conference.

Leung has been nominated for the Edwin Parr Teaching Award, was a semi-finalist for the Alberta Excellence in Teaching Award, and received the Merit Award for teaching excellence at Fresno Pacific University. He holds memberships in CBDNA, WASBE, the CBA, and the California Music Educators Association.

CONN-SELMER DIVISION OF EDUCATION

*Industry and Education Partnering Together*

**Conn-Selmer Institute**

**Educational Clinics**

**School Partnership Program**

**Music Administration Collaborative**

**VIP Program**

## Supporting Music Education Worldwide Through Personalized Service and Support

Tim Lautzenheiser
Vice President of Education

**Connect with us today!**

**education.conn-selmer.com** **@CSIconnect**

# Interview with Ardith Haley (Acadia University & the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)

***Figure 1. Ardith Haley in the classroom.***

As a passionate and creative educator, Ardith Haley has focused her work on creating learner-centred environments and assisting others to become more effective in their professional practice. A recipient of the Canadian Music Educators' Association Jubilate Award of Merit for significant contributions to music education in Canada, Ardith currently holds the position of Arts Education Consultant with the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and is responsible for the delivery of education programs in dance, drama, music, and visual arts. She is also the co-founder and program leader of the Distance Learning Master's degree in Curriculum Studies with a focus on Music Education at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. In addition, Ardith is the co-founder and a managing partner of Music Mentors International, which is dedicated to helping teachers across the world.

Ardith's passion and experience as a successful public-school teacher, university professor, and education consultant has informed her practice and that of those with whom she works. Her knowledge and mastery of best practices in curriculum and instruction, current pedagogy, and assessment models, as well as the psychology of success, has guided the development and implementation of innovative and exciting new arts curricula for Nova Scotia public schools. The models she has created have attracted national and international attention, and are currently being used as a guide by Singapore's Ministry of Education in its quest to implement music and arts pedagogies that nurture 21st-century competencies. She is working with the Ministry in the professional development of teachers as they move to a learner-centric orientation, and develop strategies to facilitate creativity in the learning opportunities they offer their learners.

Ardith was interviewed for *Canadian Winds* by Pam Paddock on 4 July 2018. The following is an edited transcript of their in-person conversation.

***CW: Please tell us about your early musical background and that of your family.***

***AH:*** Other than my grandmother, no-one in my family has shown more than a passing interest in music. I have fond memories from my early childhood of her playing Baptist hymns on an old pump organ. There was a piano in our house, and Mom and Dad have told me I was always "playing" it from the time I was tall enough to reach the keyboard. It has been fun to be the musical pioneer of the family, and my parents were unbelievably supportive. Beginning in grade school, I practiced piano at 5:30 in the morning. The piano was in the living room right beside Mom and Dad's bedroom, and they always claimed they loved starting their day with music.

Music wasn't a popular or well-supported activity in the small town where I grew up. There was no school music program past Grade Six, and I was one of a very few students who took private music lessons. My piano teacher, Owen Stevens, introduced me to classical music. Later he become one of my professors at Acadia University. I am so thankful for his mentoring, and the love of music he shared with me and all his students.

Kaye Pottie (Dimock) was my elementary-music teacher. The day I met her, I knew I wanted to be a music teacher just like her. Music class was so joyful and it deeply filled my soul – she brought out the life in me. After I graduated from university and embarked on my teaching career, she was in my life again. As a music supervisor in Halifax, Kay hired me for my first music teaching job. It was full circle – she was such a champion for me. I was so fortunate to have such passionate teachers and great mentors in Kay and Owen.

***CW: What experiences did you have while in university that helped to prepare you for your career?***

***AH:*** I started at Acadia as a piano major, with flute as my minor. During my second year, I determined I wanted to switch to flute as my major, so I worked very hard in pursuit of this goal. I auditioned in the fall of my third year and was successful in changing my major to flute. In the process, I learned much about setting high goals, working hard, and pursuing passions.

We had a unique practice-teaching experience. There was no band program at Wolfville School, so we, the music-education students, created, administered, and directed an instrumental-music program. Not having been in a formal high-school music program, I didn't have a model to guide me, so I carved out my

own ideas and experimented. It was pretty much gut instinct, but it was a wonderful learning experience.

***CW: After university, where did you teach?***

***AH:*** My first position was at an inner-city school, teaching elementary music. Wow! I learned so much about life and teaching while I was there. When I began, it was a P-6 school, and gradually transitioned to include Grades 7-9. I was able to establish a band program before leaving. From there, I moved to Bedford Junior High and taught instrumental music. In my third year, we did a band exchange with Wolfville Junior High. At the end of that school year, the band director at Wolfville left his job, and the principal convinced me to move to Wolfville and take a 50% position at Wolfville and 50% at the new Evangeline Middle School, the very first middle school in the province.

It was a big move for my family, but I am so happy I took the opportunity. Giving up nine years of seniority/service to move from Halifax to the Annapolis Valley was a bit daunting, but I have never regretted it. From there I went to King's County Academy (Grades 6-12), then to Windsor High School, and finally to Horton High School, before going to the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. It sounds like a lot of moves, but each job offered me new experiences, challenges, and opportunities to build programs and grow as a professional.

***CW: What were some of your biggest challenges when you started teaching, and what helped you get through them?***

***AH:*** Perhaps the biggest challenge for me was figuring out how best to meet the needs of learners whose daily, lived experiences were so different from my own. I quickly realized how diverse some students' needs and challenges could be. As a brand-new teacher, I struggled with how my personal values system would fit and inform my teaching in this inner-city setting. I wanted so much for these children.

As difficult as it was, I am so grateful for the opportunity to have taught there for six years. It shaped me, first as a person (most importantly), and then as a music educator. I learned that I was teaching children first, not a subject. I learned to see my students as individuals, each with their own set of needs, loves, and desires. I learned never to judge my students. I learned that our students need us, they need a safe place, they need to be loved, they need to have hope, and they need to know that we care and that they are valued. My service there profoundly influenced me, helped me develop into the kind of teacher I aspired to be, and it forever altered my trajectory.

***CW: Besides music and teacher training, what do you feel are the elements of success for a music educator?***

***AH:*** There are three key elements that are important to me. I believe in building relationships (trust), good communication, and constantly working to develop pedagogical skills. When people see that I am passionate, that I care, and that I work hard for the benefit of the learners, I feel trusted and supported.

***CW: Who were your mentors along the way, and what did they teach you?***

***AH:*** My father was my greatest mentor. My Dad taught me to seek beauty every day, to be thankful, and to look for the good in all people. He also would say, *"If you're going to do something, do it with passion and with everything you have. Be the best you can be, be happy, and be joyful."* Most importantly, he taught me to be kind, and that every person matters.

One of my most influential mentors was Rachel, a Grade 2 student at my first school. There was a huge event at the Metro Centre that involved thousands of student musicians from Grades 2 to 12. One of the presentations comprised 250 Grade 2 students performing choreographed singing games. I was asked to bring one student to participate in the number, and I chose Rachel. She was terrified. She knew nobody. I feared she might not be able to get through it, but in the end she triumphed and had a wonderful time.

Eighteen years later, I met 26-year old Rachel at a wedding. She ran over to me, wrapped her arms around me, and told me her story. *"Do you recall the event at the Metro Centre?"* I responded, *"Of course! You performed that singing game."* Rachel replied, *"No, Mrs. Haley. I danced. I danced! Do you remember how scared I was? You got down on the floor right at my level and looked me in the eye, held my hands, and convinced me I could do it, and I believed you. I knew I could do it. That is one of the most treasured memories of my life."*

Then she said to me, *"Do you remember what we did next? (whispering) You took me to Burger King. No-one had ever done anything like that for me. I felt so special, and you meant so much to me. Mrs. Haley, all through my life, whenever I was in a situation where I thought I could not do something, I imagined you sitting on my (right) shoulder, like you were my angel. I would turn my head, look at you, and you would help me. You got me through some tough times. Mrs. Haley, you changed my life…I thought I wanted to be a social worker because I, too, wanted to change a little girl's life. So, I became a social worker. But it didn't fulfil me. Now I'm taking Education, because if I really want to change somebody's life, I need to be a teacher."*

This experience made me think very deeply about what it means to be a teacher. Instead of being happy with what she shared, I started to ask myself many questions. Did I miss the opportunity to spend that extra minute with a child who needed me? Did I ever brush aside someone without thinking? It broke my heart to imagine I might *not* have been there for one of my students. If this is something that could affect a little girl's life…This was a pivotal moment in my teaching career. I became even more mindful of being there for every student, to be sure they know I care about them. Our students teach us so much.

***CW: What other people or experiences have helped to shape your philosophy?***

***AH:*** Dennis Tupman engaged me in a lifelong discovery with these three questions: *"Who am I? What is my purpose? Why am I here on this Earth?"* If that doesn't cause cognitive and creative dissonance in a music teacher's brain, I am not sure what would!

This reminded me I needed to think about the bigger picture – it is not about this concert or that festival. These are but single experiences along the journey of what I am trying to provide for my students.

Meeting Dale Lonis thirty years ago was, perhaps, one of the biggest gifts in my professional life. I met him after several years of searching for someone who could teach me how to help my students play and sing with emotion. Many people could tell me how to improve the technical elements, but the emotional aspect remained elusive. I finally found some understanding in talking to, and learning from, Dale.

What provided me with a great amount of emotional and philosophical insight was my Dad's death. He died September 1st, 2002, just as I was about to begin a new job at Horton High School. I was paralyzed with grief, and was unable to return to school until the end of October. Arriving so late into the school year, I didn't know the students, and I was a shell of the person who had so many dreams and expectations for the work we would accomplish together. Unfortunately, I was not an inspiring or effective teacher. A month later, a student shared with me that many students were disappointed with their musical experiences since I started. They had much higher expectations, and she asked me *"When are we going to meet the teacher who loves music and is going to inspire and teach us, because you are not doing it for us."*

Once again, it reinforced to me that our students can be mentors to us. I needed to hear what she had to say, and she needed to say it. If we listen to the voices of our students, they will teach us every day. The next day, I shared with my students how my grief had affected me, and we spoke openly about many things. That was the beginning of my healing. From that day forward, I worked hard to be, once again, an effective and caring teacher.

***CW: What is one of your biggest highlights of teaching at Acadia University?***

***AH:*** I am very excited about the creation of the Master's degree program in Curriculum Studies with a focus in Music Education. We have been able to create a cohort-based, blended Master's degree. When we started, the School of Education's only condition was that we needed a minimum of 12 people. That was no problem. For our first year (2012), we had 45 applicants and accepted 37, enough to start two cohorts! We are now working with our fifth cohort, and, when the current group graduates in 2019, we will have over 100 graduates who did not need to leave their jobs to obtain more training and education. It has been amazing to work with so many wonderful educators from across Canada and the world.

***CW: How about highlights within the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development?***

***AH:*** I am most proud of the junior-high music curriculum created a few years ago. It was a progressive and innovative curriculum that challenged teachers to deliver their programs in new and exciting ways. Key features were the learner-centered design, a focus on creativity, authentic assessment practices, and the development of 21st-century competencies.

These elements drew the attention of many jurisdictions, including the Ministry of Education in Singapore. This led to an invitation for me to lead the professional development of Singapore's music teachers as they moved to a more learner-centric orientation in program delivery and assessment practices, and to assist in the development of strategies to facilitate creativity. For the past seven years, I have immensely enjoyed my annual visits, and look forward to our continued work together. This has been one of the greatest and most satisfying accomplishments of my career.

***CW: Were there other pivotal moments in your career you would like to share?***

***AH:*** Recently, the Canadian composer, John Estacio, was commissioned by the family of [the former Prime Minister], the Right Honourable Joe Clark, to create a musical score to give voice to Mi'kmaq elder, Rita Joe's, poem, *I Lost My Talk*. The poem is about Rita Joe's experience at a residential school in Nova Scotia. As part of the National Arts Centre Orchestra's "Canada 150" Tour, the orchestra came to the First Nations community of Eskasoni in Cape Breton to perform this work, with a film presentation and a live narration by Guna and Rappahannock actor, Monique Mojica.

What an amazing experience! The day started with a band clinic for more than 200 Cape Breton music students led by NAC conductor Alexander Shelly and the orchestra musicians. The performance was then held in the local arena, and the entire community attended. Before the music began, one of the national chiefs delivered a very important and meaningful message to the audience around reconciliation. The ensuing performance was brilliant and incredibly emotional.

I am confident that the lives of 200 music students were forever impacted by this experience, as was mine. The power of music to bring attention to important issues, to bring communities together, to cause people to think profoundly and to feel deeply is something that we, as music educators, must consider. How can we leverage this to create a better place in which to live? What can we do in our daily work to accomplish great things through music?

Another pivotal moment for me was the distribution of Mi'kmaq drums (made by native elders) to every elementary school in the province, accompanied by professional development delivered by an elder. In this session, music teachers were taught the history of the drum, the importance of the drum to the Mi'kmaq culture, protocols around the drum, the Mi'kmaq Honour Song, the Round Dance, and the Snake Dance. This has had a huge impact on our elementary classrooms, and we hope to continue this with our junior- and senior-high programs.

Projects and events such as these lead to so much more dialogue, sharing, and understanding. The music teachers are grateful for this, as are our First Nations communities. I look forward to more of this very important work together.

***CW: Are there other places where you provide PD opportunities for music teachers?***

***AH:*** Through my work at the department, and later with the Acadia Master's degree program, I have come to realize that, while I always love teaching younger musicians, my true passion has shifted to teaching teachers. This has led to the creation of Music Mentors International, a company co-founded by Dale Lonis and myself. Grounded in the four pillars of Artistry, Philosophy, Psychology, and Pedagogy, we create opportunities to assist teachers to find their own voices and provide them with tools to be their best.

***CW: What advice do you have for those who are just entering the profession?***

***AH:*** Constantly seek opportunities to improve your skills. Be the very best teacher you can be. Inspire your learners to be creative and confident.

Every day is a clean slate. You cannot know what lives our learners are living outside our classrooms. Make time for them, be kind, and be open to listen to what they are truly trying to tell you. Build relationships with all your learners. They need to know you are there for them.

Ask a lot of questions. No question is silly except the one you do not ask. But, at the same time, learn to solve problems on your own. Sometimes you just need to figure it out yourself.

Learn to laugh at yourself, and to find joy and beauty every day. Put little "foibles" in perspective of the big picture.

Think about what you value and believe in. Build your philosophy and ground yourself in that philosophy. When you encounter new situations, it will provide a platform through which you can be consistent in your messaging.

Above all, be "you." We learn so much from mentors, colleagues, and students, but it is important to be authentic. Find your own voice and be genuine, reliable, and trustworthy. You just might make a difference in a Rachel's life or a Joseph's, or an Annie's… The beauty is, you may never know that you did.

***CW: Thank you, Ardith Haley.***

# The BIG Drum

Victoria Sparks

It's not the star of the show, it's not the drum we turn to for glory and fame, it's often an unsung hero, but don't let that mentality fool you into thinking that the bass drum doesn't have an impact (pun intended).

At its core, the instrumentation of the percussion section can be boiled down to: snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, auxiliary, bells/xylophone, and timpani. Check the score for most band pieces played from middle school through early high school, and you'll be hard-pressed to find any that don't follow that basic instrumentation.

The bass drum part is often thought of as the 'lame' part because it doesn't get noticed the way a tambourine, snare drum, or *Glockenspiel* get noticed. It isn't high-pitched or shiny, and sometimes gets a reputation for being a less significant part to play. Educators and musicians know how far that is from the truth, and yet, to the students, the bass drum parts often feel like something that is assigned to a weak player, or someone who 'can't handle' a 'real' part. This mentality prevents us from talking about the emotional and creative impact a bass drum part can have on a player. By opening up a drummer's imagination, we can encourage a thoughtful player to play a leadership role in the percussion section and the full ensemble.

While it's true that the bass drum part usually lacks rhythmic complexity, with a few ideas and some imagination, there is so much opportunity to be creative and expressive, and, dare I say, influential, when playing these parts. There is a lot of hidden power in that drum. As a performer, I enjoy the contrast between the supportive role the bass drum plays and the importance of the moments when it's my turn to push the ensemble when they need it. I feel engaged in the music when I use my ears, my intuition, and the tools available to me to subtly lead from the back.

Let's talk a little about the instrument itself. Bass drums are typically 36 inches in diameter and 18 inches deep. For some middle-school players, it can be difficult to reach around from one side to the other! A 32-inch x16-inch drum might be a better choice when you are working with smaller students, or if you need a drum with just a little less sound. If it's possible to have a stand that adjusts from side to side, that is wonderful. This gives you the chance to tilt the drum from vertical, to 45 degrees, to horizontal, and everything in between. If you have a folding stand, you can still play with these angles, and I strongly encourage you to do so!

When I turn the bass drum on its side in front of young students, their eyes usually go wide because they didn't know it was possible (or allowed!). Just changing the angle of the drum before striking it opens up their imagination to the possible sounds they can try to make. When they are encouraged to explore the possibilities and try new sounds, they become inspired to think of new ways to play, and are more engaged in the repetition of rehearsals because there are more variables available them.

Generally, bass drum batter heads (the heads that you hit or 'beat') are tuned quite low, so as to not sound a specific pitch. We want to hear a resonant "bhoom" when we strike the drum. It's a bit of a goldilocks situation: you don't want the head too tight, or you'll hear an actual pitch; and you don't want it too loose, or it will sound flabby (a loose bass drum head always conjures up the image of striking wet cardboard in my imagination).

But if you find the spot that is *just right,* you'll hear a round and beautiful tone that has character and personality. It may take a little experimentation, but you'll know it when you hear it! Typically, the resonant head (the head that resonates – opposite the batter head) is tuned lower than the batter head. Some people swear by a minor third, others a major second, and some a perfect fourth. I don't like to live in a black and white world, but if you'd like a rule of thumb, smaller drums = closer intervals, larger drums = wider intervals.

For mallets, you can easily get away with one large, general-purpose beater, one pair of matched medium-sized beaters for rolls, and a pair of smaller, harder mallets (wrapped in thin felt or chamois) for articulating or rhythmic passages. In a pinch, you can even repurpose old timpani sticks for rollers or articulate sticks, if you wrap them a few times with more felt (or find a university student who wants to practice their stick wrapping skills!), you can create a fuzzy pair of rollers. If you use something thinner, like crafting felt, you can make something that works for articulate passages. It's a big, tough drum that can take a lot of abuse, so don't be shy to experiment with different materials, or encourage your students to try things out. It's a ton of fun for students to have a little bit more control over the 'tools of the trade!'

There are a few extra items that are helpful to have on hand. One of the most useful items in my stick bag is a pair of black hand-towels. They make great covers for music stands that are being used as stick trays, or, folded up on a tilted drum, they work well as a mute. (Yes, music scores sometimes require drums to be muted.) It's also great to have an old milk crate or something similar for a drummer to rest their foot on when playing heavily muted parts, when the knee must help dampen the bass drum. Otherwise, they will rest their leg on your drum stand, and, depending on how long you've had it, this isn't always the safest option!

The technical basics of the bass drum are simple: it's a big drum, you get a big stick, and you hit it. The fun part comes after that, because the drum is so big, and there are lots of places you can hit it. Conventionally, the "best" sounds are found about a third of the way in from the edge, (see ★ in Figure 1) but this is only the beginning. The closer to the edge you play, the thinner the sound gets, and the lighter the articulation, so for those ghostly or eerie sound effects, this might be an option (see ☼ in Figure 1). For the more forceful and aggressive "shots," the closer to the center the better (see ☀ in Figure 1).

These are all great options in various situations. As I'm fond of saying, "If it sounds good, you're right!" Take a moment with your bass drum, and hit it in three or four different spots. You'll hear the difference, but you'll also feel the difference in your arm. You'll feel the kick-back, and feel how much of the vibration gets absorbed into your body, depending on where and how hard you hit the drum. Try a variety of volumes in several places! Have some fun with it!

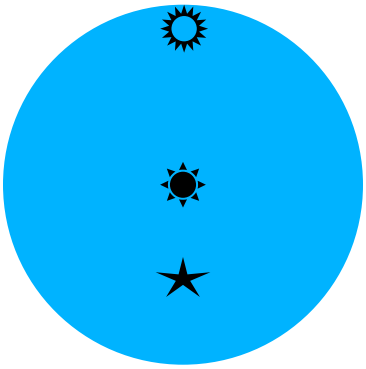


***Figure 1. Different places to strike a bass drum.***

I recently worked with a student, and we experimented with dampening *versus* not dampening. The piece had an expansive eight-bar opening, and then settled into a quasi-march by measure nine. We talked about making a difference in the tone between those two sections, to help the audience feel the difference between those two parts of the form. When he experimented with that, one variable involved the snare drum and cymbal parts. He began asking questions about where to dampen the drum, and thinking critically about the other sounds he was hearing.

After performing it in a few different ways, he said, "I think the bass drum should ring at the beginning because the snare drum has rolls and the cymbals are ringing, and then I should dampen it when the cymbals stop and the snare drum plays a more rhythmic pattern." *(My response was an ear-to-ear grin!)* On the page, he had sixteen straight bars of quarter-notes, but when he opened his ears to the sounds around him, and realized that the variation in tone could make the music feel different, he was more engaged in the rehearsal, and the other students were interested in the difference, too. It was a great moment!

As a regular bass drum player, I have to say that other players, and sometime *(gasp!)* even conductors, may not notice some of the ideas and techniques that I'm using, but that doesn't really matter, because I am still able to feel a creative tie to the ensemble. When the rest of the percussion section, and the rest of the band, can feel comfortable resting in the groove I am creating, they will relax and play more confidently.

If I miss the "shot" (heavy, loud stroke) by being a hair early or late, or miss lining up with the crash-cymbal player or timpani player, it is completely devastating! But if I land it in just the right place in the music, suddenly the sun is shining and everything is right in the world. And then the next moment comes along and away we go again.

Playing the bass drum part can be an emotional roller coaster! It's a little like synchronized diving. You and the crash-cymbal player have to count, prepare, and play at the exact same moment, and even when you think everything has been executed perfectly, one person hits the water slightly before the other. It's still pretty good, and probably not a disastrous problem, but those special moments when you both 'stick the landing' exactly together are pure magic. The bass drum makes my heart feel things, and I know it makes other people's hearts feel things, too. The joy and connection that I feel towards my fellow musicians when I play the bass drum is wonderful.

I think the bass drum lends itself to this kind of communication because of its subtleties. Let's be honest: the written parts aren't usually too hard, which means that, as a player, you have time to listen, and support, and help your fellow musicians. If I can make the snare-drummer feel settled and comfortable with the groove, then they can feel good about the syncopations and ornamentations that they are trying to fit into the beat. If I can provide a solid foundation for the crash-cymbal player, then they can feel a little less isolated when they are doing the scary job of smashing giant metal plates together with finesse and precision. If I can make the low brass feel settled in the impact of their sounds so that they can focus on the tone and tuning, and know that I will take care of the extra "oomph" they need, then they will feel like they don't have to work as hard to project.

I like being the person in the back of the orchestra or band who is providing all of this foundation, but who isn't really noticed. It's an amazing feeling to know that you can be there to support the people in your section, and I think it's a valuable skill for all musicians to learn. Every player, in every role in the ensemble, can make a musical and emotional impact. I hope that after reading this you feel inspired to play the BIG drum and to encourage your percussion students to express their creativity and musicality when they are assigned to play *(groan) "another bass drum part…!"*


## VICTORIA SPARKS

is a percussionist who performs regularly with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, is principal Timpani/Percussion with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, and works with other local arts organizations, including the Brandon Chamber Players, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and the Winnipeg Singers. She holds a Master's degree in Percussion Performance from Butler University in Indianapolis, and Bachelor's degrees in Music and Education from the University of Manitoba. She performs regularly with the duo, Viðarneistí, which has been commissioning new works for its unique instrumentation, with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Manitoba Arts Council. In 2016, she premiered Sid Robinovitch's Concerto for Percussion and Strings with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra. Victoria is the percussion instructor at the University of Manitoba, and the director of the U of M Percussion Ensemble. She is the founder and director of the MBA Prairie Percussion Workshop (est. 2012), an annual education and performance event for percussion students.


World-class faculty, world-class facilities
and world-class students join together at BU.

BrandonU.ca/Music

BRANDON UNIVERSITY | MUSIC

# Paul Suchan's *Swiftriver Passage*

Kelsey Demond

## Unit 1: Composer

Paul Suchan (b. 1983) completed a combined B. Ed./B. Mus. degree at the University of Saskatchewan in 2007, and an M. Mus. in Composition in 2012 at l'Université de Montréal, where he studied with the composer, Alan Belkin. He has taught high-school instrumental and general music in North Battleford (SK), and is currently based in Montreal.

In addition to his work with high-school and community groups, Suchan is the co-founder and co-artistic director of the Sask New Music Festival, an annual three-day festival that features music by composers from Saskatchewan and the prairies. He is active as a conductor and clinician, and has played saxophone and piano with various ensembles, including his own jazz trio, PFM.

Described as "engaging, diverse, and profound," Suchan's music has been performed by the Regina Symphony Orchestra, the National Youth Band of Canada, the McGill Wind Symphony, and the Université de Montréal Big Band, among others. In December 2011, his ninety-minute opera, *The Beast in the Jungle,* was performed in Montreal. In 2014, his work, *Swiftriver Passage,*[1] was awarded first prize in the CBA's Composition Competition (now the Howard Cable Memorial Prize in Composition).

## Unit 2: Composition

*Swiftriver Passage* was commissioned by the North Battleford High School Concert Band and the Living Sky School Division for the centennial celebrations of the city of North Battleford. The work was premiered on 11 June 2013 by the North Battleford Comprehensive High School Band.

According to the program note in the published score, "The title of the piece, *Swiftriver Passage,* expresses three possible meanings: the flowing of water down the Saskatchewan River, the passage of time for the people connected to the river, and a rite of passage as the modern community enters its second century." The composer explains further that "Saskatchewan" derives from the Cree expression, "kisiskaciwan," which translates as "swift flowing river," the inspiration behind the composition.[2] The work conforms to Grade 3 in the six-point system commonly used by the band community to quantify a work's degree of difficulty.

## Unit 3: Historical Perspective

*Swiftriver Passage* is a programmatic work that uses instrumental colour to depict images, instrumental motifs to imitate sounds from nature, and thematic transformation to depict change. "Word painting" and programmatic elements have existed in music since the Renaissance, and were widely used in the Baroque era (e.g., Bach, Vivaldi) and again in the nineteenth century (e.g., Beethoven, Berlioz). As Suchan's *Swiftriver Passage* demonstrates, programmatic elements can still be found in concert music today.

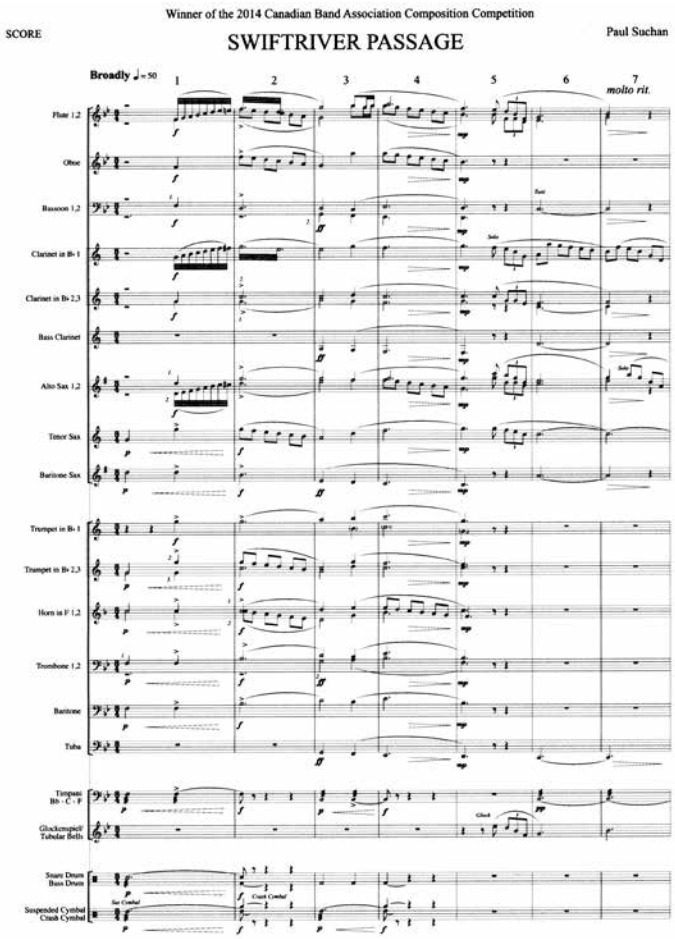



***Figure 1. First page of score to Paul Suchan's* Swiftriver Passage.**

For centuries prior to the arrival of European settlers in what is now the province of Saskatchewan, indigenous peoples lived in the Battleford area. The earliest immigrants, connected with the fur-trading industry, arrived in the late eighteenth century. Permanent settlement was first centered in Battleford, on the south shore of the North Saskatchewan River. When the Canadian Northern Railway established its main line to Edmonton on the north side of the river, North Battleford developed as an independent village in 1906, became a town in 1907, and by 1913 had grown into a city. It experienced another major growth period beginning in the 1940s, and its population reached 10,000 by the 1960s. It has since become a regional economic and social hub.[3]

## Unit 4: Technical Considerations

*Swiftriver Passage* is scored for full concert band, as follows:

Flutes 1, 2
Oboe
B♭ Clarinets 1, 2 (3)
B♭ Bass Clarinet
Bassoons 1, 2
E♭ Alto Saxophones 1, 2
B♭ Tenor Saxophone
E♭ Baritone Saxophone
B♭ Trumpets 1, 2, 3
F Horns 1, 2
Trombones 1, 2
Baritone (Baritone T.C. included)
Tuba (String Bass included)
Timpani
*Glockenspiel*, Tubular Bells
Snare Drum, Bass Drum
Suspended Cymbal, Crash Cymbal

An optional Clarinet 3 part is included for students who are not yet comfortable playing over "the break." The Trumpet 3 part, however, is essential. The *timpani* use three pitches to begin, and require retuning once during the work. There are three percussion parts: *Glockenspiel* and tubular bells (1-2 players), snare and bass drum (1-2 players), and suspended and crash cymbals (1 player). The *Glockenspiel* part doubles many of the main motives and melodies played by the winds. The snare and bass drum parts involve various propulsive sections that require confidence, a steady pulse, and sense of independence. Flute cues are provided in the Trumpet 1 part, thus allowing ensembles without full instrumentation to perform the work.

*Swiftriver Passage* is set in the key of concert B♭ Major, while frequently tonicizing and eventually ending in the subdominant key of E♭ Major. This tonicization is usually accomplished through the use of accidentals, so students will need to be aware of any changed fingerings or notes. Students should be comfortable with scales and arpeggios in these keys, especially flutes, oboes, *Glockenspiel,* clarinets (transposed to C and F Major), and alto saxophone (transposed to G and C Major), which carry most of the main melodic material. Consider using scale and arpeggio exercises during your warm-ups to reinforce these key signatures. Flutes and clarinets will need to be aware of the proper trill fingerings for the 9/8 section beginning at measure 78.

The work begins in 3/4, and progresses through multiple meter changes, including 4/4, 2/4, 6/8, and 9/8. The 9/8 meter appears in the fast, propulsive section at quarter-note equals 180. All students must be comfortable with the rhythmic values of whole, half-, quarter-, dotted quarter-, eighth-, and triplet eighth-notes and rests. Warm-ups and supplementary rehearsal activities could include exercises that feature these note-values.

Members of the flute, clarinet, and alto saxophone sections will need to be comfortable with thirty-second-notes, to play the *glissando*-like introduction of the work; this measure will need to be practiced by individuals and by separate instrumental sections. Since the work features some syncopation involving dotted quarter-notes, and many eighth-note triplets, students will need to mentally subdivide the beat constantly to be able to play these lines accurately; the dotted quarter-notes in the 9/8 driving section present a great opportunity to teach subdivisions in this meter.

Consider re-barring the eighth-note moving lines beginning at measure 94, and switching to 6/8 meter at measure 104. Students will have to pay special attention to the articulations and emphasis placed on these moving melodic lines.

## Unit 5: Stylistic Considerations

One of the most important aspects of this work concerns overall style and expression. It requires students to develop a sense of maturity and independence regarding air support, and awareness of shaping phrases, long melodic lines, and sustained notes. Repeated held notes can make phrasing challenging, so students should be cognizant of the direction of the line as they play their parts.

Make sure the students are keeping these long lines full of energy and with full note-values, to successfully depict the steady flow of the river. Suchan provides specific crescendos and diminuendos within a dynamic spectrum ranging from *pianissimo* to *forte,* thus providing a natural line on which phrasing can be based. Consider discussing the phrasing of the sections with the students, but conductors will need to have an idea of the arrival points and critical areas prior to this conversation.

Make sure that students strive to play with correct articulation. In general, the articulations are very sustained and *legato;* however, there are a few sections where they differ. During the fast propulsive section, the accompaniment requires a *tenuto* articulation that pushes through the meter changes. Moving into measure 87, students are required to play accented notes, which intensify the harmonic shift that takes place there. One exercise to reinforce these articulations would be to have students play a variety of scales, arpeggios, and/or patterns in one of the tonal centers, using *legato, staccato,* and *tenuto* articulations.

The composer calls for special care to be given to the main theme when it is present (measures 10-24, 104-119, and 125-end).[4] The melody is present in the trumpet part in the 6/8 section, measures 104-119, but here the note values are an augmented version of the theme as originally presented. This line needs to soar above all the moving lines going on at the same time.

## Unit 6: Musical Elements

### MELODY

Suchan introduces the main theme in measures 10-24, and varies it when it re-appears in measures 104-119 and 125-end. The melody is presented each time with varied timbres, rhythms, and melodic ornamentation.

### HARMONY

The overall tonal center of the piece is B♭ Major. However, there are hints of an Eb Major tonal center introduced in the middle section (B), which carry through to end in E♭ Major. Because of the B♭ pedal tones, the tonal center at the beginning appears to be B♭ major. Suchan portrays the idea of instability and movement as he shifts harmonies throughout the piece.

Going along with the swift flowing river theme and depicting change in North Battleford, the harmony is always changing and the tonality doesn't end where it starts off. The use of accidentals to express this tonal shift is evident, so close attention must be paid to the written concert A-flats, among other accidentals, to perform the work successfully.

### RHYTHM

The piece begins in 3/4, but moves through 2/4, 3/4, 6/8, and 9/8. The smallest rhythmic value is a thirty-second-note, which is of concern only in the introduction of the piece. After that, the main challenge is to perform rhythms comprised of eighth-note triplets in 3/4 and 4/4, and dotted quarter-notes in 3/4, 6/8, and 9/8. The written meter in the B section is 3/4, but it clearly feels like 6/8. Discuss with the ensemble how you would like to conduct and feel this section.

Another concern may be students struggling to handle the meter changes. Developing a clear system for students to count their way through these parts will enable them to play the challenging rhythms, too. For example, shifting between 9/8 and 3/4 in the transition at measure 87 will require students to mentally subdivide eighth-notes. The rhythms in this section are mostly homophonic, so this will be an important and useful task on which the whole ensemble can concentrate. The meter exercise below may help (see Figure 2). This exercise can be modified in many ways, and could be useful for any of the meter changes that take place throughout the work.

1. Have a section of students clap, tap, or speak the eighth-note pulse.
2. Have the remainder of the students clap, tap, or speak the pulse in 3/4 time.
3. Once this is solid, have the students clap, tap, or speak the pulse in 9/8 time.
4. Once this is solid, have students clap, tap, or speak the pulse at measure 87.
5. Have the groups switch so everyone has the opportunity to perform each part.
6. Once students have mastered the rhythms, have them play the rhythms on their instruments first using a single pitch, and then playing their written parts.

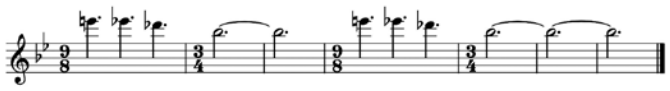


***Figure 2. Meter Exercise: Measures 87-93.***

The main melody that is introduced in the A section is rhythmically augmented in the A♭ section in the trumpet and oboe part. Suchan has scored this section to enable the trumpet and oboe part. Suchan has scored this section to enable the trumpet and oboe to soar over moving lines.

See Figure 3, the B♭ Clarinet 1 and 2 parts at measure 10, where the main melody is initially stated.

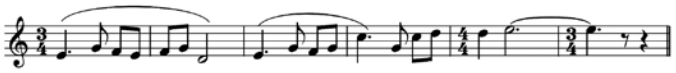


***Figure 3. Main melody, A section, measures 10-15.***

See Figure 4, the Trumpet 1 part at measure 104, where the main melody is altered rhythmically.

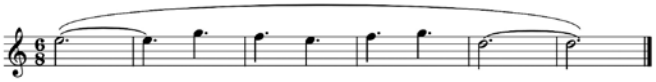


***Figure 4. Augmented main melody: Ab section, measures 104-109.***

Suchan indicates these sections should be given special care and attention. It may be useful to have a discussion with students about rhythmic augmentation, and to make sure that they can hear the similarities and differences between the two phrases. The third time the melody appears is at measure 125, where the flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, and *Glockenspiel* perform phrases similar to the initial theme in the A section.

### TIMBRE

The orchestration of *Swiftriver Passage* is traditional and colourful, using the full spectrum of the concert-band sound. The scoring varies from solo phrases and chamber-like passages to full-band scoring. Performing with proper balance and blend throughout the piece, as the melodies and motives get passed around, should be a focus for the students.

The students who may not have many moving lines should be encouraged to strive for focused tone quality throughout their sustained notes and ostinatos. There is potential for students to lose energy and momentum in their playing if they are not constantly subdividing, shaping, and balancing their parts.

The percussion parts in this work are well written, and especially important in the introductions of phrases. For example, beginning at measure 31, the snare drum plays an eighth-note line that resonates over the whole-notes played by the winds. At measure 52, the snare drum and timpani begin the fast, propulsive section, as the rest of band gradually enters and builds towards a full, rich sound. In measures 66, 73, and 82, the timbre of the *Glockenspiel* adds a beautiful contrast to the melodic eighth-note passages in 9/8. Mallet choices will be important, especially for the *Glockenspiel* player, to complement the wind- band sonority and articulation effectively. Be sure that students understand how their percussion sound affects the texture, timbre, and tone of the piece.

## Unit 7: Form and Structure

*Swiftriver Passage* is in AB(Ab) form, with an introduction, transition sections, and a coda interspersed. The form is programmatic, depicting a river, and there is constant flowing eighth-note motion throughout.

| SECTION | EVENT AND SCORING |
|---|---|
| **Introduction**<br>**BARS**<br>**1-9** | The piece begins with a tonal center of B♭ Major. The meter is 3/4 and the quarter-note = 50. Flute 1, Clarinet 1, & Alto Sax 1 have a thirty-second note run leading into a full band sound. Clarinet 1 has a brief solo, and Alto Sax 1, *Glockenspiel,* and Tenor Sax accompany the soloist. |
| **A**<br>**BARS**<br>**10-30** | The tempo is now *Adagio,* quarter-note = 60. The main motive is introduced. Clarinet 1 continues with the main melodic material. The meter changes to 4/4 in measure 16, and back to 3/4 in m. 18. Dynamics build into m. 20, leading to a slight *ritardando* and back to *A Tempo* at m. 22. The meter changes to 2/4 in m. 25, and to 4/4 in m. 26. Melodic lines are passed around the flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, French horn, tenor sax, euphonium, tuba, and bassoon lines. |
| **Development**<br>**BARS**<br>**31-51** | This section develops the A theme. There is a contrast in the timbre and texture compared to the original statement of the A theme. Rhythmic instability is created through changing meters. The meter switches between 4/4, 2/4, and 3/4, ending in 3/4 at m. 44. The IV chord is tonicized starting around m. 31, Eb Major. A flute solo begins in m. 33, with woodwinds sustaining whole-notes and the *Glockenspiel* playing quarter-note leaps. Flute, oboe and alto sax introduce a new triplet melody in measure 44; the solo flute completes the phrase. |
| **B**<br>**BARS**<br>**52-86** | The meter is 3/4 but feels like 6/8, and the tempo has changed to a driving quarter-note = 180. The tonal center is Bb Major. The timpani and snare drum propel this section. Dotted-quarter rhythms are prominent. 9/8 measures are interspersed throughout this section (in measures 66, 73, and 82). Flute, Clarinet 1, and Trumpet 1 begin trills at m. 78. |
| **Transition**<br>**BARS**<br>**87-93** | The meter alternates between 9/8 and 3/4, with dotted quarter-note rhythms and sixteenth-note pickups in Alto Saxophone 2, Trumpet 2, and Trombone. Suchan uses chromatic passing tones and tritone root movement to produce colour and tension, which resolves on a Bb pedal-tone. The dynamic is *forte,* and articulations are strong and accented. |
| **Transition**<br>**BARS**<br>**94-104** | The meter is 3/4. Flute, clarinet and alto sax introduce an eighth-note moving line. The remainder of the band enters gradually on *fortepiano* whole-notes. This section starts *pianissimo* and builds to m. 104. |
| **Ab**<br>**BARS**<br>**104-119** | The meter has changed to 6/8. This section provides a reflection of the A theme with hints of the B section. Trumpet 1 and Oboe carry the main melody at m. 104. Suchan augments the main melody that is carried in the trumpet and oboe part; make sure this is heard. |
| **Coda**<br>**BARS**<br>**120-145** | This section has a sparse texture. Clarinet 1 begins with a solo, and is joined by the Flute, Clarinet 3, Alto 1, Tenor, and Baritone Saxophones, and Glockenspiel. A *molto ritardando* and *crescendo* build energy to measure 131, where the meter changes to 4/4 for a two measures. Trumpet 1 carries the melody to the end, accompanied by homophonic rhythms in the woodwinds and brass. Flute and *Glockenspiel* play the final melodic motive together, slowing into the final measure, and closing with a *fermata.* The work ends in E♭ Major. |

## Unit 8: Suggested Listening

*Windjammer* by Robert Buckley
*Blue Lake Overture* by John Barnes Chance
*American Riversongs* by Pierre La Plante
*Prairie Songs* by Pierre La Plante
*The Moldau* by Bedrich Smetana
*The Colors and Contrasts of Grief* by Paul Suchan

## Unit 9: Additional References and Resources

Caslor, J. (2011). "Study Guide for Paul Suchan's *A Study of: The Colors and Contrasts of Grief." Canadian Winds/ Vents canadiens,* 9/2 (2011), 72-74.

History of North Battleford. Retrieved February 12, 2018 from https://www.downtownnb.ca/history_of_north_battleford.html.

**Composer's Web site:** www.paulsuchan.com.

### REFERENCES

[1] Adapted from Jason Caslor, "Study Guide for Paul Suchan's *A Study of: The Colors and Contrasts of Grief,*" *Canadian Winds/Vents canadiens,* 9/2, 72-74 (2011).

[2] Taken from the composer's program note in the published score to *Swiftriver Passage*.

[3] History of North Battleford. Retrieved 12 February 2018 from https://www.downtownnb.ca/history_of_north_battleford.html.

[4] Adapted from the composer's program note in the score to *Swiftriver Passage*.

**KELSEY DEMOND**
holds Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Education degrees from Brandon University in Brandon (MB). Graduating in 2018, she received the Dean's Award for Excellence in Education, was inducted into the President's Honour Society, and graduated with great distinction. A past president of the BU Student Music Educators Association, she is now the band director at Vincent Massey High School in Brandon (MB).

As a leader in music education services, Long & McQuade has created a series of tools to assist directors in developing and maintaining strong, musical programs. One of those tools is help with repertoire selection. There are some basics that should be applied to all repertoire choices, regardless of genre. The focus of this article will be on community ensemble focused repertoire.

Community bands are the epitome of what we do. They are lifelong learners, and people who play music out of love for the sheer joy of the music. They have a lot of different formats, levels, and demographics, but most share the common thread of knowing very well the audience that they are playing to. Whether a grade 7 marching band on a field, a group of senior adult beginners, a group of semi professional/professional players, or any type of ensemble between, these bands are purpose and performance driven and have amazing audience subscribers and followers. There is frequently a lightness of spirit in the repertoire that these ensembles choose, and frequently a folder with several different shows worth of material on the stand.

In choosing repertoire for a community ensemble, there are a few considerations that are more heavily weighted. The first consideration for community band is where the repertoire will be performed. Knowing that a performance is at a senior's centre would lead one to look into including some of the popular music of the time, such as big band collections and tributes, in with the other pieces the ensemble is playing. A Remembrance Day performance with or for military personnel would need to include the appropriate anthems, regimentals, and hymns. Field shows are often comprised of music written for wind band and centred around a theme and have added dance and drill, though march cards for parades and pep are also a big part of the experience. An adult band performing at a festival would do well to consider the syllabus list and amount of polish that could be put on the performance for the adjudicator. Naturally, the next step is to be certain that the repertoire matches the band's ability to make music out of the printed page.

Community bands often develop a personality of their own that comes from its members as much as it does from the person on the podium. There is a fine line in keeping that personality without getting caught only playing one style, tempo, or other category of music. Some other categories to consider in selecting new repertoire are to ensure that there are differences from current repertoire in: Key Signature, time signature, style, length of selection, number of movements, mode, compositional devices, era, and tempo. Community ensemble concerts are also an excellent venue for feature pieces. It's really important to perform different forms and styles to avoid limiting the ensemble.

It is also important to consider using a wide variety of publishers and composers. This can be done, even when building an entirely Canadian program. There are some great Canadian publishing houses, including but not limited to: Canadian Music Centre, Eighth Note Publishing, Editions GAM, Clovertone Music, Burnhila Music, and self publishers like Meechan Music, and Music Mentors International. Alfred Music, Hal Leonard, Daehn Publishing, Walrus Publishing and Grand Mesa Music also publish Canadian composers.

Your local music retail at this time of year has recently done clinics on the new music released by publishers this year, choosing to highlight different pieces with different applications. There are also vast archives of great music in the back catalog section of most music stores and publishers. Some of those are great gems that have formed Canadian core repertoire and really deserve time and exposure with ensembles and audiences. For a start at making sure that there is Canadian content in the library, check the CBA Band Repertoire Feature, which now includes a jazz tune every month.

Some Canadian favourites that are a bit more advanced than are featured in the monthly repertoire feature and would program nicely for established, semi professional community ensembles include:

- **Symbiopholie – Jonathan Dagenais**
- **LOL (Laugh Out Loud) – Robert Buckley**
- **Walnut Grove Suite – Stephen Chatman**
- **Fantasy on the Huron Carol – Setting by Robert Buckley**
- **Suite on Canadian Folksongs – Morley Calvert**
- **A Canadian Folk Rhapsody – Donald Coakley**
- **Devil's Duel – Peter Meechan**

To suggest a selection for the CBA Repertoire feature (jazz or concert) please send score and mp3 to Tricia Howe at thowe@long-mcquade.com.


**TRICIA HOWE** is Regional Manager of Education Services for the Prairies with Long & McQuade. She works with new music and back catalogue promotions, individual teachers and ensembles, works with many music education service organizations, and compiles the CBA Canadian Band Repertoire Feature.

# Interview with Kenley Kristofferson

Kenley Kristofferson is an emerging composer, with works for concert band, concert choir, symphony orchestra, and video games already in his portfolio. Growing up as a "band kid" in Gimli, Manitoba, Kenley later completed B.Mus. and B.Ed. degrees at the University of Manitoba, and went on to teach music at Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School in Selkirk, Manitoba. He has just completed the coursework for a Master of Music degree at Brandon University (MB). He has had choral music published by Cypress Music in British Columbia, and concert-band music published by Daehn Publications (Wisconsin), C.L. Barnhouse (Iowa), and Grand Mesa Music (Colorado).

*Figure 1. Kenley Kristofferson.*

Kenley was the 2016 recipient of the Canadian Band Association's Howard Cable Memorial Prize in Composition for his work, *The Meeting Place*. Kenley was interviewed for *Canadian Winds* by Fraser Linklater on May 11, 2018. The following is an edited transcript of their in-person conversation.

***CW: Please tell us about your musical background.***

***KK:*** I grew up in Gimli, Manitoba, a small fishing and tourist town of about 3,000 people, just north of Winnipeg. Like many kids, I took piano lessons but didn't practice much. When I was about 9 or 10, a cousin showed me things on the piano, not so much teaching as a sort of "sandbox way" of learning music, of trying things out. It was fun, and I started using what she taught me –left-hand patterns and basic chord-voicings to help figure out songs I liked.

In adolescence, there were four things that impacted my musical development. The first was video games, which in the 1990s were being played solely by kids, so video-game music was sort of our "special repertoire." The second was that we got our first computer at home, so I would download video-game MIDI files and listen to them, and then use notation software to sort of de-construct the files into musical notation, track by track. I became interested in how things were put together.

The next thing that happened was school band. I was not a very good trumpeter, but I liked band. And I was interested in seeing how my video game and MIDI interests translated into band music, so that led to score study. My band teacher, Mike Cherlet, really opened up music to me, and he would photocopy band scores and let me take them home. I was mostly interested in how everything worked together rather than in my individual part – I wanted to distinguish the forest from the trees. The final thing that happened was I started to learn guitar, and this became the first instrument that I was actually proficient at; for example, my friends and I learned all the Metallica songs.

***CW: When did you begin to think about music as a career?***

***KK:*** By Grade 12, music was all I wanted to do! However, I was not a good brass player (I had switched to euphonium by this time), and I couldn't play classical guitar. I was the student-council president in Grade 12, and I had good letters of reference, and so, by the good graces of the University of Manitoba, I clawed my way into music school. I had done well in high school but university was a different kettle of fish. I was proficient at seeing patterns – French, for example, has grammatical patterns – but when I got to university, that approach to learning no longer worked as well. My lack of traditional music background was also an impediment.

I found that university was a process of failing over and over again until I learned how to work, to focus, to get the job done. I now look back at those undergraduate years as a life opportunity where I learned what was expected of me and how to do it. By the end of the degree program, I was starting to get it, to really succeed. I graduated in 2007. I filled in at Maples Collegiate for one year and, since fall 2008, I've taught music at Lord Selkirk.

***CW: How did you get into composition?***

***KK:*** There was a lot of trying to stay above water in university. I did think of switching from music education into composition in my third year. I showed some of my work to Michael Matthews, the head of composition [at UMN] at the time, who thought that I would be a fit for that program. However, I felt that the composition department was too avant-garde for where I was at that time, so I chose to remain where I was. Also, my euphonium teachers, Stewart Smith and Steve Dyer) had spent a lot of effort fostering my improvement, and I didn't want to let them down. I'm glad they stuck by me! Lessons began to be more rewarding as there was a shift from learning the basics (which I should have had before I arrived at university) to bigger concepts that were more rewarding. In fact, the music becomes its own reward!

Back to your question. I had been interested in video-game music for a long time, and, during my third year of university, I got my first video-game gig. Someone actually paid me to write music for them! At that time, there was a growing independent video-game scene, where only a few people would be making a game rather than a corporation. These small groups formed a local chapter of the Independent Game Developers Association (IGDA), and I started to hang out with some of them.

Eventually, they asked me to send them some of my music. That's how it started. I wrote music for a game for kids with special needs called Darwin's Dragonfly Adventure, and

a slightly "older" game called "Pirates Ahoy!" for a small company called Complex Games. They started working with other publishers, and this led to my writing for Disney's DuckTales, Hasbro's Kre-O Games, and a few other outfits. So, in university, I started to work professionally, but I got my start with video-game music.

***CW: Tell us about your first piece for wind band.***

***KK:*** Other than video games, the first pieces I wrote were for concert choir. My first "real" piece for band began chorally. However, the more I wrote it, the more choir didn't seem to work, and I found myself gravitating towards concert band. I'd watched a BBC documentary television series on the story of science. One particular show had footage of a chimp in a zoo in the 1860s, playing with the zoo keeper, and Charles Darwin commenting that animals are closer to humans than we might think.

Along this line, I had the thought that we're all somehow connected in a beautiful, emotional way. This was the idea behind *Filum Vitae* (Thread of Life). I sent the piece to Trish Howe (then working in Winnipeg) at Long and McQuade (L&M). She encouraged me and suggested that I send it to Daehn Publishing, who took a chance on me. They later also published my *Prairie Wedding*. Larry Daehn has since retired and C.L. Barnhouse has taken over his catalogue, but I got my start in band music through Larry.

***CW: Tell what your experiences with the music publishing world have been like.***

***KK:*** I've generally had really good experiences, and it's certainly nice to have a marketing machine behind you! Publishers have so many connections that individuals don't have. On the other hand, getting music published is very competitive, and I sometimes wonder if some great music doesn't make it to print because it's a little too far outside the box. Some of the most exciting band music I've come across in recent years has been self-published. With notation software, self-publishing is certainly a viable option. The CBA's Howard Cable Memorial Prize competition is a really positive development in Canadian band music. I was fortunate to win the 2016 Prize for *The Meeting Place,* written for Alexis Silver at Sisler High School in Winnipeg.

***CW: Tell us about* Transcendent Light.** [*Transcendent Light* was written in memory of Ken Epp, the late Executive Director of the MBA and the CBA].

***KK:*** That was a really magical experience. I guess I first heard of this through Manitoba Band Association (MBA) mail-outs. There were these various "Remembering Ken" initiatives being organized, and one of them was to commission a new piece of music for band. In the back of my mind, I thought, "Maybe I should throw my hat in that ring." I knew Ken – I have dropped off last-minute MBA Honour Band applications at his doorstep. I went to university with his daughter Karly. So, I feel a small personal connection. Anyway, I sent in some of my work to, I think, John [Balsillie] and Teresa [Lee], and, in the end, I was selected.

I was very nervous because, to a lot of people, this was a really important commission. I spent a lot of time thinking in broad strokes, but hadn't really come up with anything when, in July 2017, I ran into Andrew Klassen at L&M [Klassen was a former student of Ken Epp's who later took over Ken's school-band program]. He asked how the commission was going, and I said: "OK, but I'm not totally sure. I want the first movement to feel bright; it shouldn't be sad, but perhaps not happy either." Andrew responded: "No Kenley, it's about joy. Happiness is what happens around you, but joy is what happens inside you."

That comment really opened things up for me! The concept of the piece was that it would be premiered at TEMPO (the Manitoba Music Education conference), and the band and the audience (who, of course, were all music educators, most of whom had known Ken) would play and sing together. The composition process was always collaborative. To help find words for the choral part, I attended "Remembering Ken" meetings and listened to their stories about him. From these stories, broad ideas emerged: about nature; about how Ken was always cognizant of giving thanks; about his religious character. I would send drafts to the committee members and we would discuss ideas. Throughout, the committee was incredibly supportive and thoughtful.

The words, which are mine, took a really long time since I don't like to adapt anything. That is, I don't want to have to alter words to fit music or *vice versa.* I want both words and music to organically affect one another. That way I think you get the best of both worlds. It was important that the first movement not be sad; reverent, almost spiritual, but never sad. Celebrating, but in a deep, meaningful way. The second movement, "A Walk in the Woods," is solitary, thoughtful, pensive, giving thanks for what there is. The last movement, "In Stillness," broaches a transition: Ken seeing the sun rise; continuing life; reverence; it's just the end of this beginning, never explicitly about death.

This piece was one of the most meaningful artistic things I've ever done. The first rehearsal with the Winnipeg Winds was emotionally charged and really powerful. John Balsillie said: "It was as if Ken was in the room." The most exciting thing about the eventual performance was that the band had never seen the text before. They knew there was a choral component, but no-one had heard or seen the text. We had some people who had learned the choral part and who were planted in the audience, but most of the audience hadn't seen the music before either. There were 500-plus people, the hall was packed to the rafters. It was so incredibly powerful, and I'm so grateful to have been a part of it.

Another thing I should mention about *Transcendent Light* is that there are two different versions: a level 3 and a level 4½ that can be performed separately but can also go together, so that ensembles of varying skill levels can play the piece together. The music is not published yet – I'm contractually obligated to let a year pass to allow all the commissioners a chance to perform it first.

***CW: What about working with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra?***

***KK:*** One balmy summer's day in Gimli, I was pulled into a committee meeting where they were planning the 125th anniversary of the Icelandic Festival. They were talking about commissioning a work, which I thought might be for band or something, but no; they wanted this for the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra!

Well, the WSO is the "Super Bowl" of Winnipeg music. So, now I'm panicking… I had baggage from my undergrad degree about not being a good enough musician. I was so nervous because I felt out-of-my-league. But I talked with the committee, and we came up with the idea of waking up in New Iceland (that is, Gimli) on that first day. And how, when we first move somewhere, we're all still thinking about home. The 1870s were difficult in Iceland, with disease and famine, and a lot of people left for North America. Many of them came to Manitoba, but landing their boats in Gimli was pure happenstance.

Conditions were extremely harsh at first, but enough of the settlers survived to establish a new community. *[Editor's Note: Canada has the largest Icelandic population outside Iceland, and Manitoba has more Icelandic descendants than any other province]*. So, the basis of the piece is the feeling of leaving home sad but hopeful, and arriving in your new place, also sad but hopeful. The piece is called *Morgun,* which is Icelandic for "morning," and the premiere (31 October 2014) was a magical night, because the WSO played it so well.

And what I didn't realize was that this was the beginning of a long relationship with the orchestra! I was hired to arrange a medley from *Annie* for an educational concert with them, as well as a *Star Wars* arrangement for orchestra and concert band; I did their Canada Day 2016 and 2017 show at The Forks; and I've arranged several other shows where the WSO collaborates with local pop and rock musicians.

***CW: Do you have a typical composition routine?***

***KK:*** It's changed over the years. Most recently it's changed a lot since having a baby makes a big difference! But, in the past, I would teach all day and then write from 7 to 10 p.m. That's the time I had. Because I still needed to be an effective teacher and an effective husband! Because I still needed to be present, not just that man across the room. Previously I worked at a computer, but a few years ago, I started writing ideas out by hand, at the piano, and that changed everything. When you're voicing that chord thirty different ways, you start to hear the physics of the chord, and you have to do that at the piano.

During my first sabbatical (fall 2015), I also spent a lot of time score-studying; things like Percy Grainger's piano transcriptions. And sitting down and working out material. I think the fourth movement of my *Icelandic Folk Song Suite* has the most moving parts of anything I've written – there's a lot of ink on those pages! I had to spend time figuring out how everything worked together. However, these days, if Mom and baby are out, then I write; or, if everyone gets to bed, then I write.

***CW: How have technology and social media impacted your composition career?***

***KK:*** A lot! Not so long ago, it was very important to have a Web site. Then, from around 2010, you needed a blog. Nowadays, web sites are less important and social media is more important. Different social media have different communities: Facebook is the people you know; Twitter is a lot of people you don't know; and lastly, Instagram is where a lot of students are – it's a younger demographic! Also, with social media comes a lot of pressure to show that you are productive. Imagine if everyone was as busy in real life as they say they are on Twitter!

Technology is also getting increasingly visual, and now, with Instagram, you can post a picture of yourself working on something. However, music unfolds over time – with a picture, you can just look once and get most of it, but you can't speed up a recording to save time. This can make audio a bit of a challenge in the age of "swiping."

These days, one of my favourite social media platforms is SoundCloud: it's specifically about audio, which is what I'm doing. SoundCloud is also very easy to share on other social media sites, and subverts the need for people to find you. Instead, you can go to them. I find that social media creates pressure to show what you're doing. You tend to think to yourself: "Look how productive these other people are; I'm not that productive!" You become very vulnerable and it distracts from composing…

***CW: I know you've taught composition to high-school students at Lord Selkirk – tell us about that and, more generally, about developing young people's musical creativity.***

***KK:*** This is one of my favourite things to teach. In music education, we focus a lot on performance. It's hard for us to find ways to teach that foster slow, methodical problem solving – and that's composition. I and my teaching colleague, Michael Brandon, spend a lot of time dealing with comprehensive musicianship. A huge part of that is fostering creative growth in composition. Earlier in our careers, we talked about getting composition into the band room, but we've found that it works best when we have a specific class for composition, where kids come in and get to discover how it's all put together. Especially seeing patterns and how chords work together.

One of the early things we look at is a pop tune where there's a key change; although there's a new set of chords, it's still the same pattern. This is a concept similar to key fluency in making music. Most of the students in my composition class are band students; sometimes also choir students or pianists. Traditionally, it starts with writing a melody, then writing additional voices and seeing how harmony emerges from that. Our final project is a 16-bar (though it usually becomes more) piece for band which we can then play in the class, since we have the group there to do it.

At the beginning of the course, there are more things to teach, so I'm a bit of the "sage on the stage." However, by the end of those classes, all they want to do is write – they don't want me to teach. And that's perfect! Everyone has different problems to deal with: *Why does this chord sound so heavy? How can I make the orchestration here sound less "band-y?"* So, by the end, I'm the "guide on the side." Also by the end, most students can see the forest for the trees. And they can explain what they're trying to do and what choices they made, and why.

***CW: How has being a school-band director affected your writing for bands?***

***KK:*** Incredibly – a ton! One of the benefits of being a music teacher is that I get to score-study every day, and I learn so much just by seeing what other people are doing. I get to hear sonorities; hear how things work together. Also, I've experienced a lot of pieces that don't rehearse very well, if that makes sense. So, as a composer who's also a band director, I'm more aware of thoughtfully composing a piece so that it rehearses, so it will work. Finally, I'm also thinking about what would be fun for kids – for example, I included a tuba solo in the Icelandic Folk Song Suite so those underutilized players would get a little bit of the spotlight.

***CW: You are a music teacher and a composer with a young family. That's busy! How do you balance family and career?***

***KK:*** My first thought is: "Terribly!" As I get older, I think the balance is not 50/50… It doesn't mean keeping both sides equal. There are times when one thing gets put to the forefront, and another to the back, but also making sure that gets inverted once in a while! This past year, when I was working on my Master's degree, my wife was a champion at home. She took care of so many things to make our lives easier. And by "our" I think I mean "mine!" But when our son had his first cold, I'll tell you, my school reading just didn't get done that week.

***CW: Any other topics relating to composing, bands, and/or music education that you'd like to discuss? Any concluding comments you'd like to make?***

***KK:*** I think it's really important for music educators to commission new works. This is not just me trying to make a buck. There's something really special when kids feel ownership of a piece of music, and that they helped bring it into existence. I think of *The Meeting Place* with Alexis Silver. She learned so much about her kids through what they wanted to do with the commission. There's an entire learning component when commissioning something – *What do you want our piece to be about?* Alexis thought it would be fast and fun; instead, it's about family. She said: "I didn't know that's what they valued most," and it changed her perspective. We also need to support new Canadian composers, and especially composers who are women or minorities.

## Music by Kenley Kristofferson

### CONCERT BAND

- *Four Elements* (2018) – for Concert Band and Indigenous Drummers and Singers. Commissioned by Seven Oaks School Division for the opening of the Seven Oaks Performing Arts Centre in October 2018.
- *This is Where I'm From* (2018) – self-published, premiered by the Brandon Divisional Wind Ensemble, Brandon School Division Mass Choir, and the Eckhardt-Gramatté Conservatory Suzuki Strings and Guitars.
- *Colossus* (2018) – self-published, premiere by the Concordia University-St. Paul Concert Band in 2019.
- *Concerto for Euphonium* (2017) – self-published, premiere by the Brandon University Symphonic Band in 2019.
- *Icelandic Folk Song Suite* (2015) – self-published, premiered and recorded by the Winnipeg Wind Ensemble in May 2015.
- *The Meeting Place* (2015) – self-published, commissioned by the Sisler High School Senior Concert Band.
- *The Matters of Kindness* (2014) –published in 2018 by Grand Mesa Music, commissioned by the Olds High School Senior Concert Band.
- *Prairie Wedding* (2013) – published by Daehn Publications, recorded by the Cleveland Symphonic Winds.
- *Filum Vitae* (2012) – published by Daehn Publications, recorded by the Cleveland Symphonic Winds.

### CONCERT CHOIR

- *In a Riverside Place* (2018) – upcoming publication by Cypress Choral Music, commissioned by the Selkirk Community Choir.
- *Cosmos* (2012) – unpublished, recorded by Antiphony.
- *We Are Stars* (2011) – published by Cypress Choral Music, recorded by members of the Vancouver Chamber Choir and musica intima.

### CONCERT BAND & CONCERT CHOIR

- *Transcendent Light* (2017) – self-published, premiered by the Winnipeg Wind Ensemble and the Manitoba Music Educators' Association at TEMPO 2017. Commissioned by the Manitoba Band Association and consortium in memory of Ken Epp.
- *Ghosts of Vimy* (2010) – unpublished, recorded by the Regimental Band of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles and the Ecco Chamber Choir.

### SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

- *Morgun* (2014) – unpublished, premiered by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

### SOLO & CHAMBER WORK

- *Prairie Trombone Suite* (2016) – for Trombone Choir (Octet).
- *O Magnum Lux* (2016) – self-published, for Solo Trombone and Piano. Commissioned by Aaron Wilson at Brandon University.

**Kenley Kristofferson can be reached at:**

http://www.kenleykristofferson.com
kenley@kenleykristofferson.com @kenley_k on Twitter

# WHERE PASSION MEETS EXCELLENCE

Internationally renowned faculty.
Generous scholarship support.
State-of-the-art facilities.

We offer the best in creativity and collaboration.

FIND OUT MORE AND APPLY AT
**UMANITOBA.CA/MUSIC**

Desautels
FACULTY of MUSIC

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

# Seasoning and Adjusting Single Reeds

Chuck Currie

I am frequently surprised to hear fine players saying that only twenty percent of the reeds in each a box are performance-quality. Many musicians bemoan how terrible reeds are today compared to those manufactured some years ago. Frankly, I feel there are more great reeds manufactured now than ever before! It could be that reed players get fussier about their musical results as they gain experience, but have never perfected reed-seasoning and -adjust-ing skills.

You should get at least eighty percent high-quality performance reeds out of each box. Making it happen takes up to ten percent of your practice time, but the investment in time is well worth it, and it makes achieving musicality so much easier! Within their first year of playing, all my students become adept at adjusting reeds. There is some art to it, but it is mostly science. Their music directors are frequently astonished to see these youngsters calmly making reed adjustments during rehearsals, a sign that all too few students are being taught to maximize the potential of their equipment and their ability to achieve nuanced musicality with ease.

## Equipment

1. **Glass plate, 3/8th-inch thick, 3¾ inches wide x 7 inches long.** The best place to get it is at a glass repair shop; auto glass is just fine. They will usually give it to you if you are nice to them and tell them you will give them your auto-glass and/or home-glass business. Make sure they polish the edges so you can't cut yourself! If you want something really flat awwnd really heavy, buy the Granite Surface Plate, Item 88N85.01 from Lee Valley Hardware (www.leevalley.com/en/wood/page.aspx?p=32526&).
2. **Reedgeek**. Available at good retail music shops or directly from www.reedgeek.com, for flattening the reed table and all adjustments to the surface of the reed. This relatively new product is revolutionary and indispensable. There a re also fine tutorials on its use available at the Reedgeek web site.
3. **Sandpaper.** 600 grit from any hardware store. The very best is 1500, 3200, and 6000 *Micromesh,* available by mail order from www.internationalviolin.com/Shop/micro-mesh-sandpaper-steel-wool/micro-mesh-sheets-pads.
4. **Reed Trimmer for each size of reed.** The Cordier trimmer is the best-known standard clipper, but you need to try them out to ensure they cut cleanly, and they need to be replaced every few years. Vandoren makes superb trimmers, designed to exactly duplicate their own tip cutting for specific models of their alto saxophone and soprano clarinet reeds

## Reed Care and Seasoning

As a general rule, purchase reeds that are slightly stiff, and adjust them from there, rather than clipping weaker reeds, which can affect the balance. In my opinion, all adjusting works better on "thick blank" reeds with conical profiles. There is just more "meat" to work with. Extremely thick blank reeds bought a little on the hard side comes very close to actually making your own reeds. It requires a little more work than adjusting standard blank reeds, but produces fantastic results. In my experience, the most conical reed made of premium seasoned cane that has the thickest blank at the heel, heart, and tip is the Vandoren V21.

Soak new reeds a few minutes in water the first time you play them. I don't recommend wetting reeds in the mouth. Saliva exists to break down organic material…which is exactly what cane is! For this, I use the same product that most double-reed players do…a cup that clips to my music stand, available from Forrest Double Reed Supply or Amazon. They are available with either pressure clips or magnetic attachments (see Figure 1).

***Figure 1. Two types of reed-holding water cups that attach to music stands: one with a pressure clip, the other with a magnet.***

Play new reeds for five minutes, not above a *mezzo forte*…a terrific time to work on your long tones! Dry out the table, and then check it for warping by placing your Reedgeek on the back at an angle, and moving it slowly up and down the length of the table, looking between the Reedgeek and the reed table at a bright light (see Figure 2).

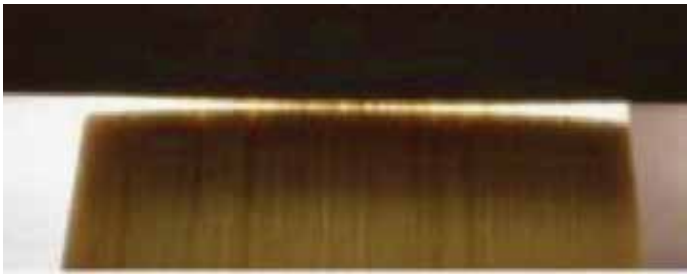


***Figure 2. Light shining between the Reedgeek and both sides of the back of a reed, indicating convex warpage.***

The backs of many reeds are convex or concave, which impedes their ability to seal properly against the mouthpiece table. The larger the size of reed, the more of them come warped…from about twenty-five percent of soprano clarinet reeds to over fifty percent of bass clarinet, tenor sax, and baritone sax reeds.

To fix the warpage, scrape the back of the reed with a Reedgeek, as in Figure 3.

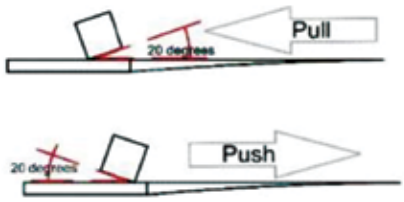



***Figure 3. How to scrape the back of a warped reed with a Reedgeek to fix convex or concave warpage.***

You can be quite aggressive! Note how much "reed dust" has accumulated near the bottom of the reed in the photo in Figure 4.

***Figure 4. Scraping the back of a reed with a Reedgeek.***

Next, the initial sanding. I place the sandpaper on a block of granite that is flat to within one micron. A 3/8-inch thick 3¾-inch x 7-inch glass plate works just fine, and I have one of those in my gig bag, along with sandpaper, reed clippers, and a Reedgeek. I also pack a Ridenour sanding block, a Vandoren Reedstick, a fine Japanese reed knife, plexiglass reed supports for scraping, and every size of reed clipper.

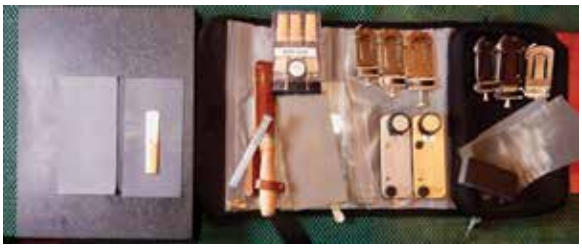


***Figure 5. On the left, two pieces of sandpaper on a granite block, one showing evidence that the back of the reed on it has been polished; on the right, equipment from my gig bag, including reed clippers, a reed case, a reed knife, plexiglass, sandpaper, and more.***

Now place the reed table down directly on the granite or glass, and press much of the water out with your thumb or index finger, pushing from the stock up to the tip (see Figure 6). Sand the face of the reed extremely lightly, too, just for the comfort of very smooth cane on the bottom lip, but not enough to change the acoustics.

***Figure 6. In the left-hand photo, pressing water out of the reed with the thumb, moving from stock to tip. On the right, sanding the table of the reed with micromesh sandpaper.***

Then sand the table of the reed over 3200 Micromesh, followed by 6000 Micromesh sandpaper. This is an abrasive developed for polishing commercial aircraft windows – they go up to 12,000, which is too fine for reed work but excellent for polishing mouthpieces after re-facing. 600 grit commercial wet/dry sandpaper from a hardware store works well, but I'm a fanatic. If you finish with 6000 Micromesh, the table of your reed will be as smooth as glass.

***Figure 7. Polishing the back of a reed with sandpaper.***

Most results come from the first sanding and thumb pressing/rubbing, but each time the reed is soaked, just a little more fibre comes up in the table, so repeat this process (except for the "front" sanding) the next two times you season the reed. It is now about 80% seasoned, and just needs to be played a few more days to be performance-ready. It takes about a week in all for the reed to acquire a polished, ringing sound.

This gives an incredibly smooth reed table that seats well on the mouthpiece and seals the reed to the rails and tip of the mouthpiece when vibrating, improving articulation and tone. I estimate about ten percent better response and smoothness. Pressing out excess moisture with your thumb on granite or glass prolongs the life of the reed, as well as adding more "polish" to the sound.

Moisten the reeds for playing by soaking in water, not saliva: 1-2 minutes for clarinet, and up to about 3-4 minutes for a baritone sax reed. Once the seasoning is complete, you can leave the reeds in water for quite some time with no fear of them becoming "water-logged."

Ideally, reeds should be kept at "playing humidity." I used to drill very small holes in the sides of my wooden reed cases and store them in high-end cigar humidors at 70 percent humidity, but now I use Vandoren Hygro reed cases (see Figure 8). They hold reeds in great condition with a sponge that provides humidity when moistened, and are the *only* reed case that leaves the table of the reed quite open to humidified air and *never develops mold,* because there are holes that allow air movement.

***Figure 8. Vandoren Hygro reed case, assembled and disassembled.***

Some players place a *Humidipak* or a *Humistat Humidifier* (see Figure 9) in a ziplock bag, with the reeds held on glass with rubber bands or in commercial reed holders. That works just fine (as long as the commercial reed holders have holes drilled in the sides for air flow), but I find the Vandoren Hygro reed cases more convenient, since I have 12 sets of reeds on the go (jazz and classical set-ups for SATB saxophones, plus A/Bb/C, D/Eb, alto, and bass clarinets) – 12 reed cases with an inventory in rotation of 72 performance-ready reeds. That's too many ziplock bags!

***Figure 9. A Humistat Humidifier.***

When the reeds are 2-3 weeks old, they are at their absolute best, if played approximately an hour per day. Since I "double" so much on different clarinets and saxophones, most of my reeds do not get more play than that. At about 3-4 weeks, the table gets a little rough and "pulpy," and may require one more sanding. If the table feels rough at any point, I just give them about 3 passes over 6000 grit Micromesh.

At about 4-5 weeks, the reeds are still comfy and expressive, but can start to sound "flabby." At this point, a great reed can sometimes be "brought back" by clipping the tip by about ¼ mm. This doesn't always work but is worth a try, and the reed can be improved a bit in response after this by scraping it extremely lightly from 1 mm. below the tip up to the beginning of the heart with the Reedgeek. However, this is the beginning of the end for the reed, and from this point they are no longer suitable for performance, only practice. Another week or so and, for all intents and purposes, they are finished.

## Reed Adjusting

Most of this is done over the first three days of seasoning. Then the reed is ready for its final polishing and adjusting when it goes into performance rotation.

**1. Warped Table:** See Figures 3 and 4 above. We have to repeat this procedure every few days during the seasoning process, and check again weekly while the reed is in playing rotation. Reeds keep changing with usage and weather, so we are not done with this process after the initial seasoning. Checking for reed balance (see No. 2 below) should also continue from time to time, usually very slightly, during a reed's performance life.

**2. Side-to-Side Balance:** This is the single most common issue with reeds…75% of reeds need balancing, and if you are not already doing this, it will change your life. To test for balance issues, place the reed on the mouthpiece, and the mouthpiece on the instrument. Take a little less mouthpiece than normal into your embouchure and turn the mouthpiece clockwise about 30 degrees, so that your embouchure controls only the right side of the reed, with the left side free to vibrate. This will dampen the right side of the reed so you can test the left side.

Blow a good, solid *sfz ff* open C# (sax) or G (clarinet) *without* tonguing, followed by a long *diminuendo al niente.* Do the same thing on the other side, rotating the mouthpiece so that the right side is free. The initial resistance and the progressive lack of response as you *diminuendo* will inform you which side is "stuffier." If one side (L or R) seems stuffy compared to the other, some cane should be removed from that side. Scrape around the heart and up to the center of the tip of the stuffier side (see Figure 10).

***Figure 10. In the photo on the left above, the shaded area indicates where to scrape if the right side of a reed is more resistant. The photo on the right indicates how to angle the Reedgeek for this procedure.***

**Note:** *We are avoiding the center or "heart" of the reed, as well as the last millimeter at the tip. Leave these areas alone to ensure full resonance and clear articulation. See Figure 11*

**3. Middle-Register Response Areas:** Usually these areas are reasonably well-adjusted by the time we have fixed any side-to-side balance issues. However, if a reed feels too resistant in all registers, these areas need to be scraped (see Figure 11) along with the others discussed below.

***Figure 11. In the photo on the left above, the shaded areas indicate where <u>not</u> to scrape – the "heart" of the reed, and the very tip. The shaded area in the center photo indicates where to scrape if the reed feels resistant in all registers. The photo on the right indicates how to angle the Reedgeek for this operation.***

**4. Low-End Response:** Tongue repeated staccato notes on the bottom four notes of the instrument to test how responsive they are. If they are dull, stuffy, or just do not resonate well, scrape the bottom ⅛ to ½-inch of the reed just above the bark (see Figure 12).


***Figure 12. The shaded area in the photo on the left indicates where to scrape to improve response in the lowest notes. The photo on the right shows how to use the Reedgeek for this operation.***

The less responsive the notes are as you move up through the *chalumeau* register, the higher you need to scrape, but only up to the center. Scraping all the way from the bark up to the center point of the reed improves response and resonance over the entire instrument (see Figure 13). Note: *we are still avoiding the heart of the reed.*

***Figure 13. The shaded area in this photo indicates where to scrape to improve response in the chalumeau register, above the lowest notes.***

**5. High-End Response and Ease of Register-Change:** Tongue *pp* repetitively on the A above the treble staff and higher, to check articulation response for clarinets. At the same time, check response to register changes by slurring up and down from C below the staff to G above the staff, and up to *altissimo* high E on clarinet. These are all the same fingerings except for the thumb vent key and the first finger half-hole venting for the high E, so it is easy to test the response through the registers this way.

On saxophone, slur between D just below the treble staff, 4th-line D, and D above the staff with the palm key to test register changes. These two tests tell you if you need to work on the tip of the reed in the center from 1 mm. below the very tip down to 3 mm. below the tip (see Figure 14). To adjust for ease of articulation and register changes, you can scrape this area with the side of the Reedgeek.

***Figure 14. The shaded area in the photo on the left indicates where to scrape to improve response in the high range and when changing registers. The right-hand photo shows how to use the Reedgeek for this procedure.***

However, the "bullnose" of the Reedgeek is the sharpest and most precise part of the tool, so it can be ideal for this purpose, to "fine-tune" the removal of cane near the reed tip (see Figure 15).

***Figure 15. The bullnose of the Reedgeek, and positioning it to remove cane near the reed tip.***

That is all there is to it! If you are willing to commit to this, within a few weeks you will triple or quadruple the percentage of performance reeds you get, at the expense of about ten percent of your practice time. Even better, your standard of what a performance reed can do for your tone and articulation will increase exponentially! At first, you will ruin the odd reed, but that's how you learn, and they won't have been performance reeds anyway.

Good luck!

**CHUCK CURRIE**
performs on clarinet and saxophone with the Pacific Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Vancouver Saxophone Ensemble, the Vancouver Island Symphony, and many chamber groups. His performance at the opening concert of the Vancouver 2007 Clarinetfest was reviewed as "absolutely amazing."

He teaches at his own Sax Noir Studio, and has conducted clinics throughout British Columbia. Students have auditioned successfully for national and international scholarships and ensembles. He is a Canadian Champion of Music Education, a spokesperson for the Coalition for Music Education. He is a Backun, Conn-Selmer, Blashaus, and Légère Artist.

# Follow your passion

## at the School of Creative and Performing Arts

**BA** in Music
**BMus** in Performance, Composition, or Integrated Studies
Concurrent BMus/Bachelor of Education degree

**MA** in Musicology
**MMus** in Performance, Composition, Conducting, Music Education, or Sonic Arts

**PhD** in Composition, Music Education, Musicology, or Sonic Arts

**Apply now for fall 2019**

**scpa.ucalgary.ca**

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

# Aural Skills for Making Music: Incorporating Ear Training into Rehearsal Settings

Aaron Wilson

A music director's greatest adversary is time: an overabundance of rehearsal time is never the complaint of any qualified music teacher. We savour every minute of every rehearsal knowing that the next concert, music festival, or Remembrance Day ceremony is quickly approaching. With such a restraint on time, all too often the practice of basic musicianship skills is set aside in favour of learning repertoire.

Though we all have to operate in this mode occasionally, dedicating more time to aural skills throughout the majority of the year will benefit your students greatly. Not only does consistent effort in this area help develop a more thorough understanding of music, but it helps students achieve more in a shorter time span, while making fewer repeated mistakes. Consequently, less time is spent fixing basic tuning, rhythm, and note mistakes, leaving more time for the director to focus on style, interpretation, and ensemble skills. Last, consistent effort in aural skills helps to develop a musician's audiation proficiencies, or the ability to imagine the music when reading sheet music, playing by ear, or improvising.

This article discusses the ways in which aural-skills development can improve intonation, sight reading, rhythm, and fundamental performance skills on every instrument. In addition, several sample exercises are included. These exercises are meant to be developed and altered to suit the needs of any music director. Finally, we will discuss how to incorporate aural-skills practice into your warm-up routine, rehearsal time, and playing tests.

## Audiation Practice

According to the Gordon Institute for Music Learning, audiation is "when we hear and comprehend music that is no longer playing or may never have been present."[1] Musicians use audiation skills in three ways: to recall previous aural experiences, to translate music notation into internal aural *stimuli,* or to imagine entirely new music.[2] A musician with strong audiation skills will naturally learn music more quickly, observe motivic and melodic patterns more easily, and perform with greater confidence.

For students, these skills need to be nurtured, ideally from a young age; however, it is never too late to improve this set of skills. Simply stated, strong audiation skills will remove one or more variables from the difficult process of learning a new musical instrument. All the exercises found later in this article will strengthen your students' audiation skills.

## Singing – It's not Just for Singers

Singing is the best skill you can teach any musician. The quicker musicians can translate what is written on the page to what needs to come out of their instruments, the easier it will be for them to learn the music. This is why every collegiate music student learns how to sight-sing. Similarly, knowing the desired melodic sound of scales, arpeggios, and frequently used melodic patterns will increase accuracy and confidence when playing the instrument. The strengthening of aural skills through singing will give your students a target rather than just hoping the right note comes out of the horn.

The first step in developing a singing culture in your music classroom is to teach and enforce proper singing technique. Band and orchestra directors will face many challenges when working on this skill with new students but, luckily, the most basic element for singing with a strong supported sound is the same as playing a string, wind, or percussion instrument – great posture. The shoulders should be back so the sternum can remain in an upright position. The neck must be relaxed so the head can remain in line with the body. Students will need to be reminded of good posture constantly, likely more so around mid-terms, before long weekends and holidays, and when the weather outside is dreary. Never let up on good posture; it will pay its dividends in better performance while singing and while playing the instrument. Consider establishing a hand signal that will remind your students to check their posture, and, on particularly low-energy days, ask your students to stand.

With good posture established, the student is ready to sing. Most students will be tentative about singing at first, and will likely produce a small and pinched-off warble or a lazy unsupported tone. One way to teach better singing tone is to ask your students to imitate the Darth Vader's famous quote from *The Empire Strikes Back,* "I am your father." This lowers and relaxes the tongue while simultaneously opening the throat. If you ask your students to sing with same "Darth Vader" set-up, they'll likely be closer to a more characteristic singing tone. Even those with higher voices who cannot do a stellar impersonation of Darth Vader will still benefit considerably from this technique. They will have fun with this as well, which will lessen the stress of singing.

Another fun approach is to ask them to sing "ee, ee, ee," with a really nasally sound, followed by "ah, ah, ah," similar to the Count's laugh from *Sesame Street,* and lastly, "oh, oh, oh," modeling that after Santa Clause or the Jolly Green Giant. Your students will notice the "oh" approach yields the fullest sound. Ask them to sing something simple, like the first five

notes of a major scale, with that "oh" sound, and you'll notice a difference in quality. If they are still having trouble, ask them to place a hand on their necks while singing, to feel the vibration of their larynx. They will feel a difference when the sound sags, because the larynx will vibrate less. This is because the air flow is not vibrating it fully. Get them to keep the larynx vibrating through the duration of every note and phrase, as this concept translates easily to buzzing on a mouthpiece, vibrating a reed, or pulling a bow across a string. For more ideas about coaxing a great singing sound out of your band, ask your school's choir director.

Establish a singing culture as early as possible in your band program. As students mature, they often become more hesitant to try anything that puts them in a vulnerable position *vis-à-vis* their peers. If you operate in a system that has not required students to sing, it will be an uphill battle. However, the more insistent you are about singing correctly with good posture, the more quickly you'll start to see those good habits establish themselves in your students' playing. If singing is seen as an everyday activity, you'll encounter fewer problems.

The importance of singing cannot be overstated. Utilizing a system for singing such as movable Do *solfège,* movable Do *solfège* with a La-based minor, fixed Do *solfège,* letter names, or scale degree numbers, is equally advantageous. Each system has strengths and weaknesses, and it is up to directors to decide what is best for their students. My personal recommendation is movable Do *solfège,* meaning that the tonic of the piece/melody is Do. In E$^{\flat}$ Major, for example, E$^{\flat}$ is Do, F is Re, G is Mi, etc. In the minor mode, the tonic pitch will also be sung as Do, instead of La. This system helps students learn relationships of notes within the key and promotes greater accuracy in pitch. The weakness of this system is that the learning curve students will initially face is steeper. Regardless of what system you choose, continued singing practice in any level of band/orchestra/choir will strengthen your students' intonation and reading skills, while simultaneously removing barriers to the development of technique.

Additionally, consider using Kodaly hand signs to help your students learn *solfège* more quickly and thoroughly. The physical aspect of these signals, while helpful to all learners, is especially useful for kinesthetic learners. Furthermore, when combined with some of the activities found later in this article, Kodaly hand signs can help strengthen audiation skills. Your students will gradually begin to hear the scale in relation to the tonic after continued practice performing with these hand signs while singing. The signs also will allow you to disseminate musical information quickly with a few simple hand gestures.

The chart in Figure 1 illustrates the Kodaly hand signs for the major mode. Different signs exist for the minor mode and for all-chromatic *solfège,* but it is up to you how much time you want to invest in learning and teaching those signs.

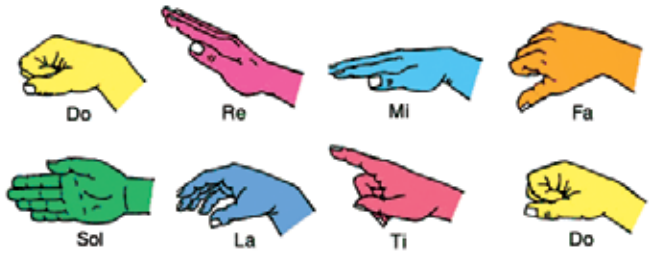



***Figure 1: Image courtesy of a blog post entitled, Solfège Hand Signs, by Greg Simon.***[3]

## Aural Skills Activities

Aural skills practice can be incorporated into the classroom in many different ways. The following is an explanation of several activities you can try with large ensembles, chamber groups, or even individual students. Most are designed to be altered to fit your needs.

### SPEAK 'N' SAY

The easiest and best exercise to use for introducing rudimentary aural and audiation skills is Speak 'n' Say. This is a call-and-response activity done in many classrooms, but not always with singing. The director will play or sing a simple melodic fragment, and the students will repeat that fragment back on their instruments. Usually this involves the first few notes of the most rudimentary scales. On its own, this activity is a fantastic way to hone your students' ears and generate familiarity with their instruments. When combined with singing, however, students can focus on figuring out the melodic pattern before attempting it on their instruments, increasing the likelihood of success and inspiring confidence.

Consider singing the fragments on a neutral syllable like "la," and asking your students to sing it back in *solfège.* They can then translate that into note names or fingerings (if applicable) to help reinforce the connection between the scale or melody and their instrument. Encourage them to do fingerings while they sing. You might also try incorporating a drone pitch to help with intonation. Anything that will help marry the concept of singing to playing will help your students improve more quickly.

A fun variation of this exercise is to model it after the classic toy from the late 1970s, Simon. With this variation, you begin by playing or singing one note, asking your students to then repeat that note back to you in *solfège.* Next repeat your first note and add one note to the pattern. Continue for as long as your students can repeat the pattern back successfully. You can also select a student to devise the pattern and lead the class. This is a fun way to develop audiation skills.

Although these kinds of exercises are ideal for beginning music programs, they can easily be modified for any level. As your students progress, keep adding notes to the scale, transpose patterns to different keys, and/or increase the length and complexity of the

melodic fragments. With only slight modification, this exercise can be used to work on rhythm as well. Call-and-response activities will help your students with improvisation, intonation, and sight-reading, amongst other musical skills.

### SINGING MELODIES

One of the most beneficial exercises for aural skills is singing and playing simple melodies. When done regularly, students will not only gain a greater understanding of intonation within the context of a key, but with proper demonstration from their music director, they will also learn good phrasing. This exercise will give your students more confidence while playing their instruments because they will be able to better anticipate how melodies are constructed. This is particularly useful for younger students who are still struggling with the mechanics of their instruments.

Beginning students can sing melodies out of their method books. These melodies are typically taken from folk tunes and classical literature, so your students will likely be familiar with many of them. Older students can learn melodies from sight singing books or from the literature being prepared in class. Imagine if your entire group could sing and play the themes to every piece of music on your next concert; they would have a better understanding of melody, and they would know to listen for the important themes.

### TUNING AROUND THE ROOM

Ask your ensemble to play a given pitch (e.g., F) for four beats, one player at a time. Repeat this, moving from section to section, from the strongest to the weakest players, allow no lag time between players. This activity strengthens the concept of hearing the pitch before performing it on an instrument, while simultaneously encouraging the development of tone by giving the weaker players a model to emulate. Possible variations include:

1. Ask your ensemble to play a given pitch for eight beats, instead of four. Each subsequent player enters after four beats, overlapping the previous player for the first four beats and the next player for the last four beats.
2. Have your students play two notes over eight beats. For example, each player plays an F for four beats followed by a Bb for four beats. Subsequent students enter every four beats, at the interval of a Perfect Fifth to the previous player's note. This can be done with any interval.
3. Each player plays an F for four beats, followed by a Bb for four beats, and finally a D for four beats. Subsequent students enter every four beats, maintaining a $B^{b}$ Major triad with the previous two players. This can be done with any sonority.
4. Try this exercise with short excerpts of rhythm to work on entering in time and matching style and articulation.

### SUPER SUBDIVISION PRACTICE

Rhythm can be improved with off-the-horn activities as well. The Super Subdivision exercise, for example, demonstrates and teaches the importance of subdividing beats. Set your metronome to 40 beats per minute and ask your students to clap along to the beat. Most likely, you and your students will notice how out of sync the clapping is with the metronome. Next have them chant $8^{ths}$ or $16^{ths}$ above their clapping – this will yield an immediate improvement. Last, ask your students to audiate the $8^{th}$ or $16^{th}$ notes and keep clapping with the metronome. If repeated over a few class sessions, your students' rhythm will improve greatly. The reason for the slow tempo is to force participants to subdivide.

**After your students have mastered this exercise, consider the following variations.**

1. Set the metronome to different *tempi.*
2. Get them to clap with the beat, and then turn the metronome volume down. After a few seconds, turn the volume back up to check their accuracy.
3. Try singing or playing this exercise with single repeated pitches, scales, and/or arpeggios, or simple melodies.
4. Apply this approach to rhythmically challenging passages in your band literature.

Variation two is an especially good exercise to assign for a playing exam.

### RHYTHMIC CELLS

When encountering new types of rhythms, it is often beneficial to learn these rhythms out of context before attempting them in a piece of music. Write 3-7 different rhythmic cells (one beat durations) on the board. Be sure to include at least one or two known rhythms so as not to overwhelm your students. Turn on the metronome and/or ask your students to clap or stomp to the beat. Next, point to a rhythmic cell and have your students repeat that pattern until you point to a new cell. Gradually increase the pace at which you move from cell to cell.

Some students react well to assigning words to each rhythmic cell. For example, with the rhythms in Figure 2, you could use these words: Bat, Baseball, Peanut Butter, Jelly Time, and Jelly. These words not only match the number of syllables needed for each cell, but also emphasize the right notes. Demonstrate how these rhythms should be performed, and don't be afraid to use an excessive amount of energy. Students will tend to be timid when first attempting this exercise.

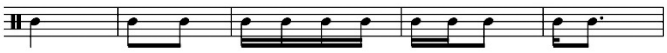


***Figure 2. Sample rhythmic cells.***

Once students have mastered this activity, introduce longer passages that use the same rhythms in different contexts and tempos. Write out short patterns that present the rhythms in ways similar to the literature. These kinds of rhythmic activities are incredibly important for low brass players, baritone sax players, and any other instrument that does not often play complex rhythms in band or orchestra settings. Not only will it help them understand how their parts fit in with the more complex parts, but it will prepare them for higher-level literature that becomes much more demanding at Grades 4 and 5.

## Applying Aural Skills Practice to a Busy Classroom

Aural skills practice is necessary for every music student, but how do we implement these exercises into the classroom when time is a factor? The answer is found in three different places: the warm-up, during the rehearsal, and in playing exams.

### AS A WARM-UP

All of these activities fit well within a warm-up setting. Doing so will engage both your students' minds and their ears, allowing for them to be more receptive to listening beyond their own part for the remainder of the rehearsal. With a little creativity and prior score study, you can modify many of these activities to help your students learn the literature more quickly. Teach your students to sing and play the themes of any piece of music, enabling them to be more aware of their role at any given point during the piece. Additionally, you can teach them how you'd like the melody to be played before they even pick up their horns. You can use rhythmic cells to help strengthen their playing of difficult figures in the literature. The Kodaly hand signs can be used in conjunction with the Speak 'n' Say activity to teach difficult intervals found in the piece. The only limits are time and your imagination.

### IN REHEARSAL

Incorporating singing into your rehearsals will help you solve intonation, articulation, and style issues with greater ease. You can ask the entire class, a small section, or even individuals to sing in rehearsal. Every time you work with a small section of students, don't let your other students just sit there; ask sections to practice their parts using audiation skills. Students can audiate their music and do their fingerings at the same time. They can strengthen the rhythm while quietly tapping it out or "tah-ing" it under their breath. Brass players can improve their accuracy by quietly playing their parts using only the air stream, similar to what Arnold Jacobs describes in the book, *Song and Wind*.[4] Asking students to do this will take about five seconds, but may save a substantial amount of rehearsal time.

### PLAYING EXAMS

Many music directors incorporate some manner of recorded or live assessment into their programs. Most often, scales, arpeggios, or difficult passages are assigned for these examinations, but consider including an aural-skills component. Ask your students to sing the main themes or difficult rhythms of your most recently distributed piece of band music. If practicing a scale or arpeggio, ask your students to sing the sing it before playing it. Assign the Super Subdivision Exercise for a playing test. You can also ask students to sing intervals, play/sing over a drone, or anything that challenges and strengthens their ability to hear and produce music.

## Conclusion

The development of a young musician's ability to "hear" music before it is played is a cornerstone of fostering good technique on any musical instrument. Without consistent reinforcement of these skills, your students' musical development will become stunted or even completely static. Keep pushing your students to become better overall musicians through repetition of fundamental skills, and your rehearsals will proceed more smoothly and your ensembles will achieve more.

[1] "Audiation." GIML - *The Gordon Institute for Music Learning,* 26 June 2018, www.giml.org/mlt/audiation/.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "Solfège Hand Signs." *Music Theory Tutor,* 22 July 2018, www.musictheorytutor.org.

[4] Brian Frederickson, *Arnold Jacobs: Song and Wind,* ed. by John Taylor (Gurnee, IL: Windsong Press, 1996).

**AARON WILSON**

is the Assistant Professor of Low Brass at Brandon University, and has taught aural skills courses at the collegiate level for seven years. As a trombonist, he has traveled around the world to perform, including most recently to Berlin for the Savvy Contemporary Gallery's symposium, "Hostipitality *[sic]* Invocations," and to Iowa City to perform at the 2018 International Trombone Festival.

He has performed with professional ensembles, including the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Brandon Chamber Players, Market Street Brass, Durham Symphony, and he appeared on the Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra's 2014 album, *Suite Messiah.* In Fall 2018, Wilson released his first solo album, entitled *The Prairie Trombonist.*

He is an active scholar on brass pedagogy, with clinics presented at the National Canadian Music Educators Association Conference, the Tempo Music Conference in Winnipeg, and many others. Wilson received his Master's and doctoral degrees at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where he studied under Randy Kohlenberg.

# Self-Care for Instrumental Music Teachers (II): In the Best Possible Way, I Don't Care.

Alexis Silver

In 2015, board members of the Manitoba Band Association agreed to support an initiative to organize self-care events for instrumental-music teachers. Regional reports were showing that some members were concerned about burn-out, and we wondered what the MBA might be able to do to help. I had been reading about self-care, and the simplicity of the definition appealed to me: small, purposeful actions one takes to care for oneself. Could this be the answer? Could planned self-care events in our association help?

We were going to find out. There have been several group activities to date: a Nordic spa day, two curling bonspiels, a go-cart and batting cages adventure, a yoga and tea afternoon, and an escape-room "quest" (we escaped in record time, by the way). The events have been nourishing, fun, silly, and a lovely way to connect.

And yet…

Has self-care become yet another thing that we are expected to be good at? I will tell you that I felt unnecessary internal pressure to plan the events, and it made me feel like a fraud. 'Self-care Alexis' wasn't really practicing what she preached. It wasn't just the MBA events. I was pushing myself to plan more things for my students and program, do more things for my family and friends, and do all of these things 'better.' I was burning out, but I wasn't willing to admit it. If I could just sneak in a few more self-care exercises and events, I'd be *just fine.* Then, something happened to shake me out of my go-go-go: my Dad died suddenly.

In the wake of this awful thing, the silver linings shone through. Through the sadness and vulnerability, I felt more connected, anchored to my friends and family. Through the silence, I was better able to decipher what was truly important in my life, and that transferred into my teaching. What is important? What isn't? How much time do we have? How can we connect better? It became clearer. Self-care was still part of the answer, but not in the *'Go! Go! Go! Do it! Do it! Do it!'* way I was attempting.

Brené Brown suggests, "True belonging happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world. Our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance."[1]

Amy Jen Su, the managing partner of Paravis Partners LLC, outlines a gentle take on self-care practices in her on-line article, "6 Ways to Weave Self-Care into Your Workday."[2] With her permission, I have adapted her text for the purposes of this article.

## 1) Define Self-Care More Broadly

The heart of self-care is the relationship and connection between ourselves and others. It means that we are attuned to, and understand, what we need to be our most authentic selves. (As a music teacher, I understand this to mean a focus on relationships.) Are we attuned to the 'stuff' that truly matters, not the stuff with which we sometimes fill our time? I have obsessed, and sometimes still do, about the font in a printed program, the accent colour in a uniform, the title or theme of a concert, the wording of a staff-meeting agenda. As I am re-training my brain, in the best possible way I don't care about the font, the colour, the title, the wording. I care about the students, their learning, the music. I care about the audience and the community, and I care about my sanity.

I cared about those things before, too, but now I don't care as much about the other stuff. And it is helping. I had to take what is referred to as 'purposeful action' to help myself *not* focus on the other stuff. It feels strange when the practice begins, I admit. It feels 'self-help-y:' "I will let the program go to print now, and not continue to mess with it. I will now drink my coffee and do a crossword puzzle." But, as a musician, I know the value of practicing.

## 2) Take out the Word "Should"

The intent of self-care is not to add more to an already full plate, or to create a reason to beat ourselves up. (It can feel annoying or accusatory when someone suggests that we need to take better care of ourselves. Who the heck are we to decide that? It hurts when people use what I perceive as shaming language when I talk about my own self-care: "It must be nice to have all that time to spend on yourself."

I have the same amount of time as anyone else. My self-care 'regime' is actually pretty lame, but it helps me. Twenty minutes alone from time to time helps me more than I can say. I love the line, "Why are we 'should-ing' all over ourselves?" If self-care doesn't make sense to you, don't do it. I drank the self-care Kool Aid, but you do you).

## 3) Try to Operationalize Self-Care at Work

Here are some ways to take purposeful action, if that is something you would like to do:

- **Give yourself a break.** We can be our own worst critics. When perfectionism kicks in, check it. According to Amy Edmondson, "Research has shown that we optimize performance and learning in groups when both accountability and psychological safety are present. By trying to keep our internal critic quiet, we create the right conditions to accelerate through periods of self-doubt more quickly."[3]

  This doesn't mean we aren't striving for next steps, we just aren't beating ourselves up in the process. A counsellor once gave me some seriously harsh but important criticism: she told me I was setting a bad example. Young people were watching me be cruel to myself. Did I want them to learn how to do that to themselves? *(Ouch!)*

- **Take a victory lap.** Celebrate what you have done well… your students and program, yes, but you, too. What have *you* done well? Celebrate it.
- **Value your own time and resources.** I want to say yes to every 'gig' I am asked to do. It's an honour, and it's fun, and I love it. But, I am not a very kind person to my own children, my husband, and myself when I am over-tasked. My family is my safe spot, so I tend to give them my worst when I am busy, while everyone else gets my best. We need to consider the impact on our priorities before offering the automatic yes to the other things. *And yet*…if I *want* to say yes to something, then I will do it. My family will understand. That was very easy to write. It is hard to do. (If you have a good checks-and-balances system for this, please e-mail me.)
- **Surround yourself with good people.** Healthy and supportive relationships are a key part of self-care. Set boundaries with 'the drainers.' Lean on those who understand, knowing they will lean on you, too. (The MBA is an amazing association for this kind of thing.)
- **Recharge and reboot** (whatever this means for you). If you'd like to attend our next curling bonspiel or escape room, we'd love to have you on our team.)
- **Figure out how you might be a little gentler on yourself at work.** I have started programming lighter repertoire in the periods following festivals and concerts. We 'play down a level,' if you will, for a few weeks after. It is heavenly. All the skills we honed in the intense period preceding come shining through in these rehearsals, and prep time is lessened. (I know it's cheating a little, but, in the best possible way, *I don't care!*)

## 4) Notice When You've Slipped out of Self-Care Mode

In times of stress (e.g., concert and festival seasons, reporting periods, etc.), self-care can get especially off-balance. Be aware, with self-compassion, of when you've lost touch with your authentic self in some of these ways:

- **Self-neglect:** Do you feel like you are running toward a cliff, or are trapped on a hamster wheel?
- **Self-management:** Maintaining a professional *persona* is an important skill but, in some cases, we take it too far. (I was the Head of my Department for several years. I worked so hard at being so mediocre. I realize now that much of the required skill-set was simply not in my wheelhouse. I am not a numbers person. I am not an eloquent speaker. I do not behave well in meetings. But, I did not *need* to be Department Head. Now, my department rotates the headship every two years.)
- **Self-sabotage:** Sometimes, we don't achieve our goals because we have gotten in our own way. (I used to procrastinate with the evaluation portion of reporting. I love assessment, but I hate evaluation. I would hold off assigning 'the number' to assessment pieces. Now, in the best possible way, I don't care, because it's not about me. It's about student learning. I got over it. How? I 'borrowed' a pile of rubrics from a bunch of awesome friends and colleagues, and, together with my own students, worked them into something that made total sense for all involved.)
- **Self-preservation:** It can be easy to succumb to a scarcity mind-set. When we're overly focused on a lack of resources, we can lose touch with what's best for ourselves and our students. (This is a hard one, because advocacy is so important in the arts, but pro-active advocacy can be a successful method. Again, this is not to suggest we add more concerts to our already full plates, *but* if one of the planned concerts can be a small ensemble playing at an administrative tea or something – *whoot!*)

In their book, *Own the Room,* Amy Jen Su and Muriel Maignan Wilkins remind us:

> As our lives get busier, self-care can become an important part of being authentic and having a positive impact without sacrificing health and relationships. By incorporating self-care in our day-to-day work lives, and coming back to it in times of stress, we can all become our most constructive, effective, and authentic selves. When we are not in the driver's seat, anxiety, control, disdain of vulnerability, or fear is running the show. If we can notice, without judgment, when we've slipped into one of these places, and then gently reach for a self-care action, perhaps we can come back to ourselves more fully.[4]

As I age, and as my work life ebbs and flows, I have noticed it is the ability to let go of things that truly don't matter that really helps me. I suppose it is self-acceptance. I care so deeply, and also, I don't care. You know?

[1] Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2015).

[2] Amy Jen Su, published on-line by Harvard Business Review Publishing at https://hbr.org/2017/06/6-ways-to-weave-self-care-into-your-workday (2017).

[3] Amy Edmondson, "Building a Psychologically Safe Workplace," a TED talk available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhoLuui9gX8.

[4] Amy Jen Su and Muriel Maignan Wilkins, *Own the Room: Discover Your Signature Voice to Master Your Leadership Presence* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2013).

**ALEXIS SILVER**

holds Bachelor degrees in Music and Education from the University of Manitoba. She teaches instrumental music and drama at Sisler High School in Winnipeg. She has guest conducted throughout Manitoba; has enjoyed playing, adjudicating, acting, and directing for the Manitoba Band Association, the International Music Camp, the Little Opera Company, the Winnipeg Wind Ensemble, Wahanowin Theatre, Leithelle Productions, the Winnipeg Fringe Festival, Murder on the Menu, MTYP, and the Women of Note. She has served as a Regional Representative, Advocacy Chair, and Vice-President of the Manitoba Band Association. Alexis believes in the healing power of music, and is an advocate for Arts Education. She may be contacted by e-mail to **asilver@wsd1.org**.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

*With a world-renowned faculty and comprehensive programs, we are committed to developing the boundless potential of our students. Start your journey here.*

# BOUNDLESS POSSIBILITIES

**PROGRAMS** (*Bachelor to Doctoral levels*)

**Composition**
**Comprehensive**
**Music Education**
**History & Theory**
**Performance** (jazz/classical/opera)
**Music and Health**
**Music Technology and Digital Media**

**RESIDENT & VISITING ENSEMBLES**

**Cecilia String Quartet**
**Gryphon Trio**
**New Orford String Quartet**
**Nexus Percussion**
**Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra**
**Theatre of Early Music**

**ALUMNI**

James Campbell *Clarinet Professor, Indiana University*
Vanessa Fralick *Associate Principal Trombone, Toronto Symphony*
Carla Goldberg *Horn, Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra*
David Haskins *Horn, Vancouver Symphony*
Sigal Hechtlinger *Bass Clarinet, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra*
Sarah Jeffrey *Principal Oboe, Toronto Symphony Orchestra*
Russ Little *Trombone, Count Basie Orchestra*
Fergus McWilliam *Horn, Berlin Philharmonic*
Julianne Scott *Principal Clarinet, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra*
Gregory Williams *Associate Principal Clarinet, Minnesota Orchestra*
Robert Woolfrey *Clarinet, Cleveland Orchestra*

**@UofTMusic**

Contact us at **undergrad.music@utoronto.ca**

**VISIT WWW.MUSIC.UTORONTO.CA**

# Spending on Instrument Repairs

## How Much?

With the cost of replacement instruments coming down, care must be taken not to spend too much on repairing old instruments.

Traditional wisdom was: don't spend more than one-third of the replacement value of an instrument, and then only if it will be returned to new playing condition. This would require complete repadding on woodwind instruments, for example – something which is rarely justified these days. Granted, many of the new "replacement" instruments may have life expectancies of only about ten years, compared to the proven life of some of the better-built student instruments that have achieved more than thirty-year lifetimes. So, be sure you are comparing apples to apples.

Many of the "better-built" student instruments are still in their manufacturers' catalogues, but the price may shock you when compared to the bulk of the "replacement" instruments now on offer. When comparing, remember that brand names mean very little, and that actual model numbers are a better key to direct comparisons. While one-third of replacement value is still a good rule, that number is significantly lower for most current student models due to their low replacement cost.

## What Should be Fixed?

With newer instruments, everything should be repaired as needed, even the cosmetics. Nothing garners a student's disrespect quicker than an instrument that has obviously not been taken care of.

As instruments age, records should be kept to ensure that the average annual cost of repair is not exceeding the cost of depreciation for a replacement instrument – approximately 10% of replacement cost. At that point, it is far more cost-effective to replace the instrument with a new one.

Appearance is as important as function, perhaps more important to beginners! First impressions are important. Cases should be kept clean, inside and out, and repaired or replaced, as needed.

## When and Why?

Generally speaking, there is no economy in continuing to use an instrument that needs repair. Instruments that are not 100% functional are frustrating to the player, and at risk for further damage or consequential breakdown. Every instrument in need of repair should be immediately taken out of service, and either repaired or replaced with a spare.

If you have enough spares, there may be some economy in delaying large repair jobs for your repair shop's off-season winter months.

## With Whom?

In many areas, there are few repair shops to choose from. Should you work with what you've got? Should you ship repairs to a larger centre with more shops to choose from? A bit of both? Your priorities will suggest the answer to these questions.

There's an old saying in the repair industry in general that goes something like this: "You can have *good* work, you can have *fast* work, or you can have *cheap* work; pick *two!*" (In reality you may be lucky to get ONE!) Many directors use two or more shops with different priorities at each: for example, using a fast turn-around local shop for minor repairs, and large central shop for major work. That can work, but bear in mind that shops that do good work don't like cleaning up other peoples' mistakes. Loyalty to one shop may also have other benefits, such as front-of-the-line priority, loaner instruments, the occasional freebie, etc. Being a major customer to one shop usually beats being an occasional customer to a number of shops.

You can improve the results you get from any repair shop with good communications. Use notes in the case to communicate directly with the repair technician. Outline the issues you have noticed, and add general instructions like, "Repair as needed," "Check and advise," "Please call with estimate," "Call if over $xxx," etc. Don't forget to leave a direct phone number or e-mail address.

## Overall Repair and Replacement Budget

The 10% Rule that we have advocated for decades is still valid, with even more of the budget going to replacement rather than repair. Most of the current replacement instruments should last about ten years and then be replaced, as they are more nearly a "disposable class."

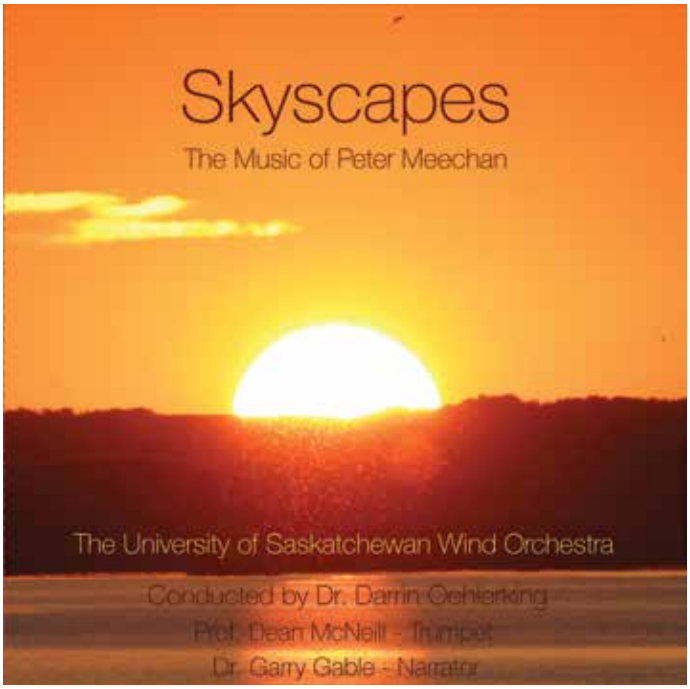
To review: The 10% Rule says that to maintain the integrity of a school's instrument inventory, you need an annual budget for repair and replacement equal to 10% of your inventory's replacement value.

**DENNIS ADCOCK**
is the owner of The Bandstand Ltd., a full-service band and orchestra store in Edmonton, started in 1975. In addition, he has been the director of an adult community band for more than thirty years. We welcome your comments or suggestions for articles drawing on his forty years of experience in the band-instrument industry.

Email: **dennis.adcock@bandstand.ca**
**facebook.bandstand.ca • twitter.bandstand.ca**
Web site: **www.bandstand.ca**

# "Skyscapes: The Music of Peter Meechan" [CD], University of Saskatchewan Wind Orchestra, Darrin Oehlerking, Director

## Reviewed by Cheryl Ferguson




"Skyscapes – The Music of Pete Meechan" was recorded by the University of Saskatchewan Wind Orchestra under the direction of Darrin Oehlerking in 2016. The first track on the CD is *I.S.S. Flyover,* a work commissioned by Oehlerking and the U of S Wind Orchestra. The piece is grounded in Pete Meechan's love of outer space, and his excitement over the International Space Station's being visible from Manchester, UK. It employs the percussion section wildly, with intense *ostinato* patterns that provide the rhythmic engine that allows the wind players to soar over the top. The energy of the percussion section, the commitment to *sostenuto,* and development of the line by the musicians make for a sense of life moving quickly on Earth while the space station soars tranquilly above, transcending the anxious energy below.

The second track is *Letters For Home,* a striking work encapsulating the wide range of emotion a soldier may experience in his or her journey. This piece specifically references the role of the Acrington Pals, a militia group from East Lancashire (UK) during the First World War. Providing a frame of reference for the listener, Meechan includes letters to be read prior to the performance of the three movements. Instead of using those letters for the recording, Oehlerking collaborated with his son's Grade Four teacher, resulting in the students' composing three emotion-laden poems to accompany the work.

Three students from the class (including Oehlerking's own son, Chas) read the poems on the recording, their young and innocent voices lending the recording a poignant, heart-wrenching perspective on war. The work and the students performing it take the listener masterfully through the journey of the soldier's emotions, from the warm (yet somber) chords in the first movement ("the bittersweet lovesong"), to the militaristic percussion and repetitive lines of the winds depicting a soldier's life in "the trench" of the second movement, and finally to the third movement ("in memory"). It is there that lost lives are recognized – through rich chords, dramatically building phrases climaxing in an alarming triangle roll, and a final haunting hum from the ensemble, signaling the soldiers' passing into eternal rest.

Next is *March: Insieme,* written by Meecham for the fiftieth anniversary of the Swiss charity of that name (which means "together" in Italian) that supports those with mental challenges. The march drives forward and includes many unison lines and repetitive rhythmic motives, culminating in a hopeful last chord.

"Lament" (movement 5 from a nine-movement work based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*) is one of the highlights of the CD. The lush and languishing chords provided by the ensemble combined with the artistic trumpet solo work and the striking dramatic reading of narrator Garry Gable (U of S voice professor) provide the listener with a truly memorable experience. The ensemble and the narrator seem to work as one, integrating literature and music with emotion, sincerity, and passion.

The trumpet feature, *Apex,* is another highlight of this project. It was originally commissioned to accompany a stage show that included a magician – quite fitting, given the magical aspects of this performance. It opens with a gorgeous lyrical section masterfully played by Dean McNeill, the U of S trumpet professor, whose character shines through each carefully crafted note. After the opening, the piece explodes with a joyful percussive transition towards the second half of the work, in which Meechan takes the listener on a journey towards the mystical. After soaring wind and solo lines and energetic percussion and flourishes in the trumpet part, the listener is finally brought back to earth.

*Forgotten Children* was written by Meechan in response to the devastation and the tragic loss of lives caused by civil war in Syria, especially the loss of innocent children. The piece is a chilling reminder that actions have consequences, and, as Oehlerking writes in the liner notes, "tearing down walls to help our fellow human beings is better than building them to protect ourselves." Meechan's use of electronic accompaniment with the live concert band provides a unique overall effect, delivering an other-worldly quality to the sound. The insistent baritone sax line and the unison wind lines above the accompaniment urge the listener to pay attention and remember those who have been lost. It ends with a slowing "heartbeat" that finally (and tragically) comes to a complete stop.

*Zenith,* written for younger ensembles, is a unique work for developing musicians. It is replete with involved percussion lines, rich chords for the wind players, and interesting vocal motives. Equally powerful is the story behind the piece. It was written for the Prairie Spirit West Band program, a collection of students from smaller communities close to Saskatoon. The program was to be terminated due to budget cuts, and this piece was played at what was to have been the final concert for the ensemble. However the community convinced the school division to maintain the program. The story of music programs being cut is all too common today, and this piece now happily represents how a community can come together to support that which is of vital importance to the development of our young people.

A beautiful lyrical work, *Autumn Falling,* is Meechan's musical painting of his own city of Manchester. Oehlerking opted to make it a chamber work on this recording, with one player per part, resulting in a lovely representation of the beautiful and intriguing chords written by Meechan.

The title track from the CD, *Skyscapes,* is a three-movement work written for younger ensembles with electronic accompaniment. The piece evokes the composer's love for photography, and provides a unique experience for young musicians.

The last track on the CD, *Song of Hope,* is dedicated to the composer's friend, Ryan Anthony (Principal Trumpet of the Dallas Symphony). At the time, Anthony was dealing with an aggressive cancer and asked that the piece be written as an "uplifting testament;" the U of S ensemble fulfills that intention beautifully.

This collaboration between Oehlerking, the students at the University of Saskatchewan, and Meechan was indeed a success. Though this was Oehlerking's first recording project of this kind, it was crafted with professionalism, care, and humanity. Meechan was delighted to be a part of the project, and was honoured that Oehlerking and his students put so much time into his music:

> It's always amazing, and very, very humbling, when you see and hear students learning your music and putting their heart and soul into it - and this project was a great example of that. I'd walk down the corridors of the Education Building at the U of S and hear my music being practiced. That level of commitment for a performance always astounds me, but for a recording it has to be even more detailed, and dedicated to achieve the very best results, whether that be the conductor, the ensemble, or the soloist (in this case, the brilliant Dean McNeill on trumpet). *(excerpt from CD liner notes)*

Taking time to explore and enjoy this CD, and getting to know the people behind it, is worth every moment.

# AE-10G AEROPHONE

DIGITAL WIND INSTRUMENT WITH TRADITIONAL SAX FINGERING AND FLEXIBLE ONBOARD SOUNDS

Roland | roland.com/ca/products/aerophone_ae-10

# AE-05 AEROPHONE GO

DIGITAL WIND INSTRUMENT WITH BLUETOOTH® CAPABILITY TO PLAY ALONG WITH YOUR FAVOURITE SONGS

Roland | roland.com/ca/products/aerophone_go

# R-07

HIGH-RESOLUTION AUDIO RECORDER

Roland | roland.com/ca/products/r-07

# Russell D. Stachiw, 1938-2018

Timothy Maloney

***Figure 1. Russell Stachiw.***

Beginning in 1959, Russ Stachiw spent 36 years as a music educator in Toronto. For most of that time, he taught instrumental music and directed concert and stage bands at Neil McNeil High School in the city's east end. For the last seven years of his career, he was the Supervisor of Music for elementary and secondary schools in the Toronto Catholic District School Board. He retired in 1995.

In retirement, he served on the boards of several arts organizations, including the Coalition for Music Education in Canada, which he chaired for several years; the Canadian Music Centre's Ontario Regional Council; and the Canadian Band Association and its Ontario affiliate.

An accomplished accordionist and bassist who led his own instrumental combo in the 1950s and early '60s, Stachiw was a graduate of St. Michael's College School in Toronto, where he was mentored by the band director, John Guerriere. He went on to earn a specialist certificate in instrumental and vocal music education from the Ontario Ministry of Education, and began teaching the same fall I entered Grade 9 at Neil McNeil. I played in his first band.

During his twenty-nine years at the school, Stachiw's bands travelled widely, touring parts of Canada, the eastern USA and Hawaii, Bermuda and the Caribbean, Europe, Hong Kong, and China. They performed at two world fairs, Expo '67 in Montreal and Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan. In 1975, the Neil McNeil band went to southern France, Monaco, and Italy; highlights of that trip included playing for Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau at the Canadian Embassy in Rome, and attending a public audience with Pope Paul VI. In 1977, they performed in England, Wales, and Ireland, home of the Holy Ghost Fathers (now known as the Spiritan Order of priests) who founded Neil McNeil High School in 1958.

Stachiw's former students work in a broad range of professions and trades. Some had careers as musical performers, including David Bourque, the former bass clarinetist of the Toronto Symphony; Stephen Mosher, the principal bassoonist of the National Ballet Orchestra; Lawrence Gowan, the lead vocalist and keyboardist of the band, Styx; and Andrew Cash, a singer-songwriter who served as a Member of Parliament 2011-2015.

A few pursued careers in higher education and arts administration, including Bernard Andrews, a professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa; Paul Hawkshaw, an emeritus professor and former deputy dean of the School of Music at Yale University; myself, and others.

The late actor, John Candy, learned to play clarinet under Stachiw's tutelage at Neil McNeil. Fans will remember John playing clarinet in the 1990 film, *Home Alone,* in which he portrayed the character, Gus Polinksi, the "Polka King of the Midwest." Earlier, as a member of the SCTV comedy troupe, Candy created and frequently played the character of Yosh Schmenge, another polka-band clarinetist.

At a gathering at Stachiw's home after a memorial service for John Candy in 1994, Russ described a chance encounter between himself and John at Toronto International Airport a few years earlier: hearing a booming voice suddenly call out his name, Russ turned to see Candy barreling towards him through a crowd of people. While passers-by gaped, John enveloped him in a bear-hug. Russ joked that such a warm greeting in public from the great John Candy must make him a VIP. More to the point, that bear-hug is an apt symbol of the deep affection all his former students felt towards him.

Russ Stachiw died of a rare blood disorder on June 10 of this year. He was 80. He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Jean (*née* Lindholm), three sons, and their families. He will be fondly remembered by his many students for his personal warmth and cheerfulness, his equanimity and positive outlook, his infectious smile and lively sense of humour, the unending respect he showed each of us, and the genuine interest he maintained in our accomplishments, long after we had graduated.

Thank you for all of it, Russ, and *requiesce in pace.*

# CMU School of Music

**cmu.ca/music**

**| Be part of the difference**

## Now Offering:
## Concert Band

**School of Music degree programs:**

**Bachelor of Music | Bachelor of Arts (Music) | Bachelor of Music Therapy**

CMU | CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

# Conducting and Selecting Repertoire for the 2018 National Youth Band

Wendy McCallum

***Figure 1. The musicians and staff of the 2018 National Youth Band of Canada, with conductor, Wendy McCallum, on the far right. Photo courtesy of Anthony Cooperwood and Rosemount High School, Montreal. Used with permission.***

As a member of the Canadian Band Association's (CBA) board of directors for a decade, I gained familiarity with National Youth Band (NYB) schedules, guest-conductor selection, and budgets. But when I was selected to conduct the 2018 NYB, I was motivated to deepen my understanding of the musical, cultural, and social values the CBA ascribes to its NYB initiative.

One of the most important tasks I faced in preparing for the experience was selecting suitable repertoire. Before finalizing the repertoire list, I took time to reflect on the potential significance of each work. This reflection triggered deep memories and led me to think back on my journey as a Canadian musician.

## Personal Reflection

In 1994, the Molson Brewery launched an advertising campaign that proudly proclaimed, "I am CANADIAN." Well, I am Canadian. Born on a farm in the Parkland region of Manitoba, I was surrounded by music at home, in church, and in my community. My Dad sang as sweetly as any Marty Robbins recording, and we listened to music on the radio (CKDM, Yorkton) and television (e.g., the weekly "Tommy Hunter Show.")

During community events we danced and sang. Wedding celebrations were my favourite, as we learned to negotiate the waltz, fox-trot, polka, schottische, seven-step, and butterfly to live, old-time dance orchestras. Of course, all children participated in rich school-based music and movement activities using folksongs played on vinyl 33⅓ discs.

I remember playing triangle in Lena Samchuk's rhythm band, and participating in choir and square-dance with my classroom teacher and hero, Noni Struthers. My piano lessons with Myrna Gabona and Judy Duckett introduced me to the classical repertoire of the Western Board of Music *syllabi.* Participating in the concert and jazz bands at the Benito and Swan Valley Regional Secondary Schools was a life-changing experience. What a musical smorgasbord! Music was alive around me and in my life.

My interest in Canadian music burgeoned after high school, when I played in the Brandon University concert band and jazz ensemble, and listened to recordings. Canada's musical history is studded with the names of performers and ensembles who have shaped the country's musical landscape. I marvelled at the colours of the Hannaford Street Silver Band, the irresistible groove of Rob McConnell's Boss Brass, and the polished playing of the RCMP Band.

Canadian artists continue to generate magnificent recordings reflecting a wide range of musical influences. Today, from coast to coast, we also have access to recordings and live performances by accomplished college/university wind bands and community groups, such as the Pacific Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Edmonton Winds, Winnipeg Winds, Toronto Youth Wind Orchestra, and Nova Scotia Youth Wind Ensemble, to name a few. And, of course, military bands, performing regularly across the country, feature some of the country's finest wind and percussion players.

## New Music

My teachers and mentors have demonstrated that commissioning and premiering new music is a significant responsibility for conductor-educators. I remember my high-school band directors in Swan River (MB), Tony Klein and Willie Connell, commissioning the *Little Concert Suite* by Alfred Reed. When I was an undergraduate at Brandon U, brass players diligently rehearsed the then-new *Hannaford Overture* by the Canadian composer, Scott Irvine, under our conductor, Glenn Price.

At the University of North Dakota, where I earned a Master's degree, Gordon Brock and James Popejoy modeled how to study scores and work with living composers to prepare premiere performances. And while I was a doctoral student and Teaching Fellow at the University of North Texas (UNT), I witnessed Eugene Corporon reading, rehearsing, performing, and recording new works for wind band with the UNT Wind Symphony, for the recordings in the *Teaching Music Through Performance* series by GIA Publications.

At UNT, I also had the opportunity to conduct music by talented composition students. I have learned that studying and performing music *in the now* gives musicians the opportunity to participate in the evolution and design of a musical work and to help clarify the composer's craft and artistry.

## Canadian Music

The idea of "Canadian music" is as complicated and rich as the make-up of our population. How does the identity of a Canadian composer evolve? Diverse environments lead to diverse influences, preferences, and values; and Canadian compositions, including those for wind instruments, reflect that diversity.

In an article entitled, "Describing Canadian Music," published in the *Canadian Music Educator* journal, Patricia Shand proposed seven insightful categories she had gleaned from descriptions solicited from Canadian music educators: Canadian compositions contain "variety and diversity, regional variety, reference to and the influence of Canadian folk music, reference to Canadian landscape and geography, and challenging contemporary stylistic features that are innovative and significant."[1]

Do Canadian ensembles have a duty to perform music written by and for Canadians? I believe they do, and that process begins for each of us "at home," in ensembles at every level. As the director of an instrumental ensemble in Canada, I am always searching for repertoire that will stimulate the musicians I conduct, and create opportunities for them to grow technically and musically.

I believe that a commitment to performing Canadian music and nurturing young Canadian composers is fundamental to my identity as a Canadian musician. At Brandon University (BU), where I now teach, the Symphonic Band reads and performs the music of young composers from the BU School of Music and from across Canada. During the 2017-2018 academic year, the Symphonic Band performed wind music by the BU composition professor, Patrick Carrabré, and his students, including Jocelyn Morlock, Kenley Kristofferson, Chris Byman, and Luis Ramirez.

## Choosing NYB Repertoire

In preparation for selecting repertoire for the 2018 NYB, I contemplated programming from a curricular perspective. The rehearsal and performance process should be well sequenced to engage each learner. What knowledge, skills, and understanding might students learn from their NYB experience? Reflecting on the description of the NYB found on the CBA's web site was worthwhile, as it highlights positive outcomes for participants:

> The National Youth Band of Canada (NYB) is the most comprehensive music-education youth project offered by the Canadian Band Association. In 1978, 1991, and annually since 1994, the NYB of Canada has provided opportunities for the country's outstanding 16-22 year old musicians to gather for an enriching and inspiring musical and cultural experience. It is an outstanding opportunity to perform under the leadership of a renowned Canadian conductor and a Yamaha Canada Music Ltd.-featured soloist. The NYB experience also provides each of these young musicians the chance to network with some of the finest instrumentalists from across Canada.

That description stresses the importance of relationships among the musicians, and between the musicians, soloist, and conductor. What role might the music play in cultivating student development? How could the selected repertoire broaden students' understanding of their country and its cultures? What technical and musical skills would incoming students possess, and how much growth would be possible during our brief time together?

During the repertoire selection process, I reflected on my personal experiences with wind-band literature, and with the educators and performers who brought my love of music to life. I constructed an inventory of experiences, relationships, and spaces that define who I am and how I view Canadian music and the wind band in Canada. I revisited some of my favourite works and searched for music by emerging Canadian composers. Finally, I considered what compositional styles and tools could be paired for the engagement and growth of the NYB's musicians.

Consideration of repertoire led me to multiple sources, and I followed the threads of CD covers, web sites, print materials, and the advice of knowledgeable colleagues. I listened, studied, read, and considered. For an investigation into band literature, particularly Canadian band music, I recommend the resources listed in Figure 2.

### WEB SITES

- The Canadian Band Association's web site (www.canadianband.org)
- The CBA's online "Canadian Repertoire Feature" (http://www.canadianband.org/repertoire-feature/)
- The CBA's list of past recipients of the Howard Cable Memorial Prize in Composition (http://www.canadianband.org/composition-competition)
- The Canadian Music Center's streaming service, CentreStreams (www.musiccentre.ca/centrestreams/swf?mode=play_by&opt=genre&id=mix)
- MusicFest Canada's Canadian Concert Band Repertoire List (https://musicfest.ca/canadian-concert-band-repertoire/)

### BOOKS

- *Teaching Music through Performance in Band* (Volumes 1-11), ed. by Richard Myles (GIA Publications)
- *Canadian Band Music: A Qualitative Guide to Canadian Composers and Their Works for Band* by Michael Burch-Pesses (Meredith Music)

### PERIODICAL ARTICLES

- Past issues of *Canadian Winds* contain in-depth Study Guides and other articles about significant wind literature by Canadian composers.

***Figure 2. Recommended resources for information about Canadian wind-band repertoire.***

## NYB 2018 Chronicle

This year's NYB met in Montreal May 6-13 and rehearsed in the "old building" at McGill University. The Schulich School of Music graciously hosted an opening reception and provided rehearsal facilities, equipment, and clinicians. The host committee of the Quebec Band Association (Teresa Lescaudron, Elizabeth Huyer, Carol Kay, Elizabeth Lefebvre, and Aran Waldbrook), and the NYB management team (Barb Stetter and Jim Forde) met every logistical and musical need that presented itself during the week.

Members of this year's NYB came from nine provinces. In addition to rehearsing, they also explored Montreal, attended a concert by the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal in Symphony Hall, toured the Schulich School of Music, and visited Notre Dame Basilica. We presented five concerts, each of which featured a different grouping of the selected repertoire, taking into account concert length, program variety, and the intended audiences.

On Thursday morning, May 11, the NYB musicians travelled to Rosemere High School, hosted by Elizabeth Lefebvre. The afternoon concert that day was enthusiastically received at Rosemount High School, hosted by Debbie Best. On Friday morning, NYB musicians played in the theatre at the École FACE School, hosted by Carol Kay, Marie Eve Arseneau, and Catherine Bouchard. The Friday afternoon concert took place in the new Saputo Auditorium at Lower Canada College, where the ensemble was welcomed by NYB alumnus, Scott Cheyne.

For the Friday evening public concert, given at Christ Church Cathedral, the NYB shared the stage with the band of the 438 Tactical Helicopter Squadron, Captain Angelo Muñoz Parada, Director. The 438 ensemble serves the greater Montreal area military and civilian communities, and is the only band in the Royal Canadian Air Force's Air Reserve. These 27 professional musicians performed an international program, with Alfred Reed's *Hounds of Spring,* Percy Grainger's *Colonial Song,* William Walton's *Prelude and Fugue 'The Spitfire,'* and Jan van der Roost's *Puszta.* It was inspiring for the audience and the NYB's young musicians to hear the exquisite individual musicianship and wind-ensemble blend.

The repertoire I selected for NYB 2018 is listed in Figure 3.

### REPERTOIRE PLAYED BY NYB 2018

| | |
|---|---|
| "O Canada"* | H. Cable** |
| *Transcendent Light** | Kenley Kristofferson |
| I "'Tis Joy!" | |
| II "We Walked in the Woods" | |
| III "In Stillness" | |
| *One Life Beautiful* | Julie Giroux |
| *Magnolia Star* | Steve Danyew |
| *Flow** | Roydon Tse |
| *Vive la Canadienne** | Traditional/arr. D. Coakley |
| *The Fisher Who Died in His Bed** | John Herberman |
| I "Jim Jones -The Fisher" | |
| II "Lament" | |
| III "Celebration" | |
| IV "Remembrance" | |
| *Hannaford Overture** | Scott Irvine |
| *Round Dance** | John Weinzweig/arr. H. Cable |
| *100 Years of Fanfares** | Elizabeth Raum |
| *Burn* | Peter Meechan |
| Simon Aldrich, solo clarinet | |

** Canadian Compositions*

***Howard Cable's arrangement of "O Canada" has been played every year since 1994 by the NYB.*

***Figure 3. Repertoire played by NYB 2018***

## Notes on the Music

In 2015, Canada lost a champion of wind music and music education, the CBA's then executive director, Ken Epp. Ken changed the way I think about being in the world; I am indebted to him for the direct and indirect lessons he taught me. The impact of his leadership has continued to reverberate in the months and years since his celebration of life.

I wanted to introduce the 2018 NYB participants to music inspired by a fine Canadian musician who demonstrated the power of positive thinking and selfless actions. The "Remembering Ken Project" in Manitoba led to the commissioning of a work for band, with optional choral parts, by the young Manitoba

# CONDUCTING AND SELECTING REPERTOIRE FOR THE 2018 NATIONAL YOUTH BAND

composer, Kenley Kristofferson, entitled *Transcendent Light*. The CBA contributed funds to the consortium of individuals and bands that underwrote the commission.

Two works by American composers were paired with Kristofferson's composition. An avid model-railroader, Ken Epp was also passionate about riding Canada's passenger trains. Steve Danyew's jazz-inspired *Magnolia Star* was "on board" for our program: the "Magnolia Star" was an Illinois Central train that ran from New Orleans to Chicago in the mid-twentieth century.

The second American work was *One Life Beautiful,* a six-minute, impressionistic work by Julie Giroux, who writes: "The title itself is a double-entendre, which in one sense is referring to the person this work is dedicated to as in "one life" that was beautifully lived. The other sense is a direct observation concluding that having only one life is what makes life so sacred, tragic, and so very precious." Playing this work was central to the development of ensemble tone during our rehearsals, as well as underlining the purpose of our week together.

Premiered in 2016 by the University of Toronto Wind Symphony, *Flow* was composed by Roydon Tse, the 2018 winner of the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Emerging Artist Award. In this work, Tse envisions the wind band as a pseudo-organ, sustaining sounds that merge with, and diverge from, each other. It complemented and contrasted with other repertoire the NYB played this year.

Spirited in character, *Vive la Canadienne* is a French-Canadian folksong. This arrangement by the Canadian composer, Donald Coakley, was commissioned by the Northdale Concert Band, and premiered on Canada Day, July 1, at Expo '86 in Vancouver. Playing it in Montreal this year was a gesture of respect and thanks to our Quebec hosts and audiences.

John Herberman's *The Fisher Who Died in His Bed* is a setting of a folk ballad about an east-coast fisherman, Jim Jones. Each movement reveals different aspects of his intriguing character.

Hannaford Overture, by the tubist, Scott Irvine, was composed for the Hannaford Street Silver Band, and was premiered in 1986 by that band under the direction of a former NYB conductor, Wayne Jeffrey. It was recorded by the HSSB conducted by Stephen Chenette, and Irvine transcribed it for concert band in 1990.

John Weinzweig, one of Canada's original modernist composers and the teacher of a number of the country's best-known composers of the next generation, wrote his charming, canonic *Round Dance,* an orchestral work based on a five-note motive, for John Adaskin's radio series, "Opportunity Knocks," in 1950. It has since been arranged for concert band by Howard Cable, and for brass band by Scott Irvine, and both these versions have received many subsequent performances.

Elizabeth Raum's *100 Years of Fanfares* was composed to commemorate the centenary of Saskatchewan, with events from the first hundred years represented as "echoes" of fanfares. With Marvin Eckroth as conductor, the NYB premiered this work on 12 May 2005 in Saskatoon (SK).

*Burn,* for solo clarinet and wind band, was composed by Peter Meechan, an English composer now living in western Canada. It was premiered by the Sheffield University Wind Orchestra, Tony Houghton, conductor, with the British clarinettist, Linda Merrick. The title refers to the hot climate of North Africa and the Middle East, from where, in 2011, news of the "Arab Spring" radiated around the world.

Currently the principal clarinetist of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain and a faculty member in McGill's Schulich School of Music, this year's invited soloist, Simon Aldrich, worked diligently with the NYB ensemble, and targeted specific details in rehearsals on Tuesday and Wednesday. During Wednesday's rehearsal, he also responded to students' questions about music, musicianship, and life as a professional musician. These significant interactions helped build rapport and understanding between soloist and ensemble that informed our performances together.

## Conclusion

The printed program distributed at Friday night's gala concert included a message from the Mayor of Montréal, Valérie Plante, who wrote:

> I wish to highlight the importance of music in the development of our youth, as it teaches them self-expression and enables them to find their place in the world. The participants we are hosting will be a source of inspiration for young Montrealers who will, I am sure, be encouraged to emulate them. I am most grateful for their wonderful performance and their positive influence.

These words were echoed in the reflections of NYB 2018 members, two of which are included here:

> *I play music for self-expression, global exploration, self-transcendence, but most importantly, connection. With NYB, I've had the opportunity to meet talented, dedicated, and hard-working musicians from coast to coast. It has…changed my perspective on the country and world we inhabit. With this experience come new friends, cultural exploration, and a change of mind.* (Selena Cai, Markham, ON, Euphonium)

> *NYB has been a fantastic experience for me! Playing with Simon Aldridge was amazing, and the connections I made here will be with me for a very long time. It has made me hungry to be part of more workshops and master-classes with students from around the world. Here's to One Life Beautiful and all the opportunities that come with it.* (Elizabeth Smith, Edmonton, AB, Clarinet)

As the rehearsal process unfolded, we were able to attend to more layers in the music, to consider more facets of the ensemble sound, and to react in the moment during performance. NYB members asked questions, checked note accuracy, and made suggestions about how to improve our interpretations. Our programs were stylistically diverse, relevant to the musicians and our audiences, and included works by men and women of several generations, from different parts of Canada, and from abroad. I was honoured to conduct the 2018 NYB.

I hope the next time you hear a piece of Canadian music, you will remember the words of "Joe's" rant, written for Molson Brewery in 2000. Although the collection is out of print, the rant can be found in John Robert Colombo's *Penguin Treasury of Popular Canadian Poems and Songs* (Penguin Canada, 2002):

> Hey, I'm not a lumberjack, or a fur trader...
> I don't live in an igloo or eat blubber, or own a dogsled...[2]

What did I learn from my NYB experience? I am a Canadian musician, part of a long line of music-makers past and present. I have a personal connection to music and music-making, but, as an educator and conductor, I also have the opportunity to influence and improve the quality of life in our country. Music is indeed alive in Canada.

### ENDNOTES

[1] Shand, Patricia, "Describing Canadian Music," *Canadian Music Educator* 44:4 (Summer 2003), 7.

[2] https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/molson-i-am-canadian-once-more-and-proud-of-it/article25457989/ (Accessed August 27, 2018).

**WENDY MCCALLUM**
is the Instrumental Music Education Specialist and director of the Symphonic Band at Brandon University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in music education and conducting. McCallum, active as a conductor and clinician, investigates areas related to teaching and learning, conducting, and instrumental literature as curriculum in the music classroom.

# Take your place at centre stage

The University of British Columbia School of Music offers exciting undergraduate and graduate performance programs in orchestral instruments, piano, voice, and opera.

# Band Together (I): The Intersection of Qualitative Interviews and Published Research about Culture in the Instrumental-Music Classroom

Kenley Kristofferson

I wonder what is so special about the band room. There is just something about it. I know this because I never left it. After joining the band in Grade 7, I continued with it straight through high school, was a music-education major in university, and then became an instrumental-music teacher myself. Is it something about wind music? If so, how can we explain the singers in the choir room or the students who eat lunch in the theatre every day?

While the class content is important and definitely resonates with me, there is something about the way I feel in the band room, and have felt ever since high school, and it's something I want my current students to experience. I am not describing pedagogy or curriculum delivery; instead, I am exploring the assembly of an affective construct that supports students and promotes their well-being, success, and identity in the process. There are many names for this proverbial umbrella, but I know it is as *classroom culture,* and I want to understand how different music educators build and maintain it in their classrooms.

As the major project for a Master's-level course I recently took on Research in Music Education, I interviewed six instrumental-music educators with musical and educational backgrounds from varied communities about what they do *intentionally* to foster the growth of a positive classroom culture:

- Michael Brandon teaches at a large, rural high school (with me, in fact);
- Alexis Silver teaches at a large, urban high school with a large immigrant population;
- Marissa Hirsch teaches at a small, rural middle school;
- Rob Chrol teaches at a small, rural high school; and,
- Matt Abraham and Shannon Little co-teach in a large, urban high school with a diverse ethnic population.

## The interviews explored the following questions:

1) What do you understand by the term "culture" as it relates to the band room?
2) What would students experience in an ideal day in the band-room culture?
3) Is the culture of the band room, whether positive or negative, something you think about on a regular basis?
   a) What are some student indicators that the culture is positive?
   b) What are some student indicators that the culture is negative?
4) Can you describe a time where the culture was represented in your actions?
5) Can you describe a time where the students' actions or behaviours reflected that the culture was healthy? Can you describe a time where the students' actions or behaviours reflected that the culture was unhealthy?
6) Can you describe a time where the culture was represented in the students' actions?
7) What are some less-regular or long-term activities that help maintain a positive program culture (e.g., trips, camps, etc.)?
8) What role do you, as the teacher and conductor, have in setting the culture of the room?
9) Does music itself play a role in manifesting a positive culture in the band room?
10) What role does the room's physical setting play in enhancing the room's culture (e.g., set-up, layout, furniture, signage, etc.)?
11) Does your personal wellness play a role in maintaining a positive band-room culture? Can you describe a time where your personal struggles affected the tone you were trying to set in the room?
12) What values do you want to impart to your students when they graduate that are specifically related to your room's culture?
13) Are there any books that you believe to be "essential reading" for establishing and maintaining a positive classroom culture?
14) Is there anything you would like to discuss that you believe is critical to discussing band-room culture?

Though this two-part article explores their answers in more depth with specific themes collected from published data, smaller themes, listed below, consistently emerged in their responses:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Accountability** | **Integrity** | **Reflection** |
| **Collaboration** | **Kindness** | **Relationships** |
| **Community** | **Leadership** | **Resilience** |
| **Focus on process** | **Mentorship/stewardship** | **Respect** |
| **Growth** | **Musicianship** | **Risk-taking** |
| **Inclusion** | **Quality** | **Safety** |

While many of these themes are self-explanatory, there exists a symbiotic relationship between *risk-taking* and *safety* wherein it is unhealthy to have one without the other in a music room: "When students feel safe, they are likely to ask questions and engage in class in dynamic and meaningful ways, both musically and non-musically" (Carter, 2011). Additionally, "Teaching in the schools should stimulate each pupil toward self-development and personal growth" (Thorgersen, 2015).

*Resilience* also factors into this relationship, which implies struggle and the management of failure, but does not necessarily imply a lack of safety: "Safe space does not necessarily refer to an environment without discomfort, struggle, or pain. Being safe is not the same as being comfortable. To learn and grow, students often must confront issues that make them uncomfortable, and force them to struggle with who they are and what they believe" (Boostrom, 1998; Holman & Freed, 1987; Van Soest, 1996). The development of classroom culture must be handled with tremendous forethought, consideration, and the daily practice of intentional strategies to create and maintain it, but how can we illustrate what *it* even is?

## Culture Defined

Matt describes culture as "whatever's normal – actions, behaviours, thoughts, whatever you normalize in the band room." This is important because it means that there can be different kinds of cultures in different band rooms. These can vary according to the age group of the students, the personalities in the room (teacher and students), the geography of the school, the socio-economic positions of the students, the multi-culturality of a group, and many other factors.

Michael frames it as "the way of being, doing, and thinking in [his] space." This is a very pragmatic and concise approach: being, doing, and thinking in the physical space. He elaborates: "We make a decision about culture. Can I talk about we? Kenley and I teach together, so we decide together what we want the culture to be, what the ideal or desirable culture *could* be, and that's our shared concept. And then backwards, we think about, 'What does that look like? What does that feel like? What are we doing in the imagined culture? What are the kids doing?' And then we build it, we manage it, we practice it, we teach the ways of being, doing, and thinking to the best of our abilities."

A different but equally important approach by Marissa bases the culture on values: "Culture to me is…everything we are. These are our shared attitudes. These are our values, and when I say "our," I mean teachers (and administrators), but…the students." Rob's vision is similar: "The culture of the band room is really what we believe – what *we,* in the space, believe and what we value in the space…what it is that you feel in the room, and knowing…the purpose of the thoughts and actions that happen."

Alexis uses community as a focal point for her description of a good culture: "I really think of the word 'community,' and by that I mean that we are a community. We are a band family, and through that all of the culture in the band room disseminates. I'm talking about the interpersonal relationships between the students, the relationships the students have with me…with the music, the room, with learning (their own learning), and…all of those relationships are healthy. Then it's a good culture."

Shannon Little takes a more meta-environmental approach to what the others are saying: "When I started thinking about it, I thought about what culture *provides,* thinking about safety. Providing a safe space, providing a learning environment where they feel they can take risks and feel supported, they have mutual respect."

Each participant's description of "culture" is important because it helps define the daily classroom experience in their own individual rooms, but also because a firm label for that experience is elusive in the published research to date: "Some educational scholars describe this as a *social climate* of the classroom and note its critical role in fostering student learning. Others characterize such conditions of learning as *cognitive ambivalence* or [the] delicate *ecology of the classroom* that the teacher must keep in balance" (Silvey, 2014).

Though several articles have been published about important aspects of a positive classroom culture, such as safety, validating the students, or fostering student empathy, among others, there has been a noticeable lack of research that explores the over-arching structure of all of those pieces and how they fit together. To put it differently, there are many articles about spokes, but very few about the wheel. So, while each interviewee's interpretation of the label is different (and should be, for reasons explained further in the paper), several congruent themes emerged across the interviews.

### 1) Culture is designed and modelled by the teacher

*Michael: "The entire program is delivered by the teacher – all of it. Programs are personality [-driven], so it's going to look like you. It's going to represent what you think [is] important, but you're responsible!"*

*Rob: "It's my job to create the structure of the experience, to build the ecosystem in way that's healthy, not hurtful."*

Every participant felt that the teacher is primarily responsible for establishing and maintaining their program's culture. Each teacher also understands that there is no single correct environment, and that it needs to reflect the values of the educator. Michael suggests, "Culture is personality-driven, and that means a program's culture is directly affected by what is important to the teacher…It gives you the freedom to build whatever you want, but it's going to reflect you, and trusting that you believe what is right for you and your program *culturally* is right." He further elaborates that "it has to be done in an authentic way…It can't be phony or overdone, or [the students] won't believe us…If it doesn't feel like it's part of my personality, they won't believe us."

On the window coming into Rob's room, he has signage that reads: "Mindset: You have the power to set your mind," and he discussed valuing students' growth in his interview. In an article entitled, "Creating Compositional Community in Your Classroom,"

David Stringer investigates how teacher-modelling directly affects growth mind-set in students: "Modelling a growth mind-set to students will likely help foster an environment in which it is safe for them to explore their own ideas, develop their own skills and expressive capacities, succeed and fail, and feel supported in doing so" (2016). Whether it is manners, organization, empathy, or musical excellence, the teachers demonstrate the attitudes and behaviours they expect from the students.

### 2) While every teacher brings their own unique personality to their classroom, validating students while being a caring and empathetic educator will result in a healthier band-room culture.

*Rob: I try, though I am human (and getting better at remembering that)…to model it and express my thoughts in the way I speak and in my physical presence. I strive to [embody] leadership so that it supports my learners.*

While each culture will be unique, based on what each educator believes and values, certain affective behaviours will unilaterally foster a culture of more well-adjusted adolescents. Validating the emotions and experiences of students is a strategy that most of the interviewed educators believed in. Michael talks about greeting students at the door: "I'm standing by the door… greeting kids as much as I can. I'm calling them by name…I'm smiling with them. I'm noticing them…and being willing to hear them and listen to them, sharing approval of who they are…You will tell me who you are and I will accept you, no matter what." It is less about the greeting and more about seeing the child.

Rob uses the word 'validating' explicitly: "I feel so strongly about that idea of validating the person. What I mean by that is, 'You are valid. You matter.'" Published research supports this approach: "Adolescent learners require teachers who are 'flexible and quick-thinking,' who combine the interpersonal skills of a counselor with the loving concern of a parent" (Phillips, 2004); and further, "Everyone working in the school and the pupils should encourage respect for the intrinsic value of each person (Thorgersen, 2015).

### 3) Culture is relationship-based and collaborative between teacher and students.

*Alexis: "Music is the vehicle, learning is the goal, and people are the reason."*

*Matt: "I think you can tell a lot about the culture, both positive and less positive, in the way students respond and engage with themselves and each other."*

Each interviewee stipulated that personal interaction was a foundational aspect of establishing and maintaining a positive culture, whether it was between teacher and students, teacher and other staff, or among the students themselves. A journal article by Ruth Gurgel discusses five strategies to help educators build strong teacher-student relationships: "(1) Ensuring that students experience continual musical achievement; (2) taking responsibility for initiating positive relationships; (3) becoming culturally competent by viewing personal experiences and understandings as culturally situated instead of just 'the norm;' (4) caring for students with humility and caution, by working to understand students' culturally-situated understandings and values; (5) constructing an environment where students are seen as equal contributors to learning with teachers" (2015).

Gurgel's second and fifth points resonate particularly with Michael and Rob. Regarding the responsibility to engage students – "Accepting [it] means that the teacher purposefully chooses to pursue relationships with students" (2016) – Michael ponders not only how he engages with the students, but how the students engage with him: "I want them to experience me in a positive way and… I need to be mindful of the fact that when the kids come in the room, they're interacting with me and, at a very basic level, culture can be…defined as: 'What are you even like to be around?'…and if [I'm] not very nice to be around, that's the culture."

The way Michael describes it shows the gravity of the responsibility Gurgel emphasizes. The expansion of her fifth point – "Her study focused more on giving students 'the power to do' rather than maintaining 'power over them'" (2016) – connects with a salient comment from Rob: "The way you conceive of your relationship with your learners really can shape a lot of the culture…Your role is huge, but it doesn't have to be overwhelming…It's my job to create the structure of the experience…but then, once the structures are in place, I see my role as more of a facilitator so that *they* can take stewardship of it."

Each interviewee described student accountability as an indicator of a positive culture, but leaving room for the students to have leadership roles is the educator's responsibility when deciding how the culture of their room will manifest itself.

### 4) The culture is executed in the daily experience of the space (either in rehearsal or between classes).

*Marissa: "I always greet them at the door. It doesn't matter how I'm feeling. I am at that door and I smile and look them in the eyes [and say], 'Good morning!'"*

*Michael: "I want them to walk into rehearsal and say, 'Thank God I have a rehearsal."*

Most of the interviewees emphasized that while band trips and camps are what affect many students and are what they often remember, the primary vehicle for delivering culture is in the daily rehearsal experience in the band room. When answering the third-to-last question of the interview protocols ("What values do you want to impart to your students when they graduate that are specifically related to your room's culture?"), most of the teachers mentioned the value of process *and* product, always placing the daily rehearsal process on a par with the performance. Some put it even higher.

Published research demonstrates that a combination of the daily classroom rituals in combination with student/teacher interaction is an effective means to deliver both content and

culture in the room: "The 'space' they create for their students is constituted by the daily experiences shared by the teacher and students, and a relational openness that serves as the context for learning" (Silvey, 2014).

### 5) A positive culture is student-centered and works for the benefit of students.

*Alexis: "Now! Now I finally get it! Oh, this is about kids?"*

If anything is added or removed from a culture, it is paramount for educators to ask themselves, "Does this affect my students? If so, how? If not, why not?" If a strategy is student-centered, it will validate students' identity and improve their well-being while in the music-making space.

One strategy that both Michael and Marissa discussed at length was the importance of greeting students at the door, and specifically using their names. Greeting students at the door makes them feel welcomed into the music space, and using their names reinforces that the teacher sees each one as an individual. Students feel validated when their individuality is recognized, as well as when they feel as though they belong to the group: "Managing the classroom space is often required to best suit the social, attention, or physical needs of students" (Darrow & Adamek, 2018).

Furthermore, the activity of music itself fosters relationship-building in many forms, but its requirement of empathy is particularly effective:

> Musical interaction with others through music-making may also influence student empathy toward each other. In fact, interaction through music ensembles creates friendly, welcoming environments in which they can develop social and emotional communication, experience other people's emotions, and learn how to provide supportive emotional responses (Southerland, 2018).

As Shannon states in her description of culture, the importance of "caring about…and valuing the people, and then, in turn, to listen and [be] listened to; it's like to love and be loved, like the basic human needs."

In his interview, Michael reinforced the importance of taking time to really listen to students: "You can't *always* listen to them (you have to teach!), but you can *sometimes* listen to them. And those moments show, 'It is important to spend thirty seconds with this kid because they're telling you some story about something important to them, and you don't *really* care because you know they got picked up from school and they missed the bus and [their] mom was mad, [etc.],' but the fact that you even bothered to listen…that behaviour from us is strategic, and it shows them that we care." That can be one way to get the student interested in the subject area, with published research showing "if intrinsic motivation is coupled with a [teacher] who shows an interest in letting the child grow on his or her own, then amazing things can happen" (Holstein, 2011).

Marissa describes going to "hundreds of Ukrainian dance shows, skating shows, football games, and hockey games," then adds: "It's important to me to show them I care about them, not just as musicians, but as human beings." She describes a time where she turned the question of which Grade 8 boy would play the new tuba into a school-wide obstacle-course competition: "Tubalympics! It was September and we got a brand new smokin' tuba. Absolutely awesome…and, of course, it was going to my Grade 8 boys. I knew that I had the (literally) coolest four Grade 8 tuba players in the whole school… and I know most of the school looked up to them, so I said: 'Okay, we're going to do something big.' We set up an obstacle course (eating pie without the hands kind of thing)…in the gym one day at lunch [-time], and invited the whole school [to] attend. Every single kid in that school was at that silly obstacle-course relay race to see who would win the new tuba to play for the year."

As educators, we have a tremendous opportunity to create a space where children can flourish, and the conversations I had with these six music educators are the beginning. In Part II of this article, to be published in the next issue of *Canadian Winds* (Spring 2019), themes about evidence of both positive and negative culture will be examined, as well as the contributions of musical excellence, community outreach, and the design and set-up of a band room's physical space. Two particular elements that stand out in Part II are the importance of teacher self-reflection and personal wellness, which enabled some amazing conversations for my research.

The complete conversations are available in podcast form at www.bandtogetherpodcast.com, and are incredible resources for hearing some amazing teachers talk about how they develop culture in their band rooms. Each educator was asked the same fourteen questions and, because every music program is personality-driven and unique to its own geography and demography, their answers display a diverse range of tools, skills, and stories.

I deeply believe that the best resource we, as educators, have for best engaging students is *talking to one another,* and these interviews express an important dialogue which we all need to have. Whether it is a school-music program or a community of teachers, we are at our best when we are paddling in the same direction. Great things can happen when we band together.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blair, Deborah V. (2009). "Learner Agency: To Understand and Be Understood." *British Journal of Music Education,* 26/2, 173-187. 15pp.

Bolden, Benjamin (2007). *Teaching Composition in the Classroom: What Teachers Know* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Toronto). Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.berlioz.brandonu.ca/docview/304755281?pq-origsite=primo

Boostrom, R. (1997, March). "Unsafe Spaces: Reflections on a Specimen of Educational Jargon." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED407686.pdf

Carter, Bruce Allan (2011). "A Safe Education for All." *Music Educators Journal,* 97/4, 29-32. 4pp.

Darrow, Alice-Ann and Mary Adamek (2018). "Instructional Strategies for the Inclusive Music Classroom." *General Music Today,* 31 (2018), 1-5. 5pp.

Gurgel, Ruth (2015). "Building Strong Teacher-Student Relationships in Pluralistic Music Classrooms." *Music Educators Journal,* 101/4, 77-84. 8pp.

Holley, Lynn C. and Sue Steiner (2005). "Safe Space: Student Perspectives on Classroom Environment." *Journal of Social Work Education,* 41/1, 49-64. 15pp.

Holman, S., and R. Freed (1987). "Learning Social Work Practice: A Taxonomy." *The Clinical Supervisor,* 5/1, 3-21. 19pp.

Holstein, Jesse (2012). "Setting the Classroom Standard: Curiosity, Safety, and Connection." *Strings,* 27/1, 49. 1p.

Saunders, J. A. (2010). "Identity in Music: Adolescents and the Music Classroom." *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education,* 9/2, 70-78. 9pp.

Silvey, Philip E. (2014). "Reducing Apprehensions of Adolescent Singers in Choral Classrooms." *Music Educators Journal,* 100/3), 53-59. 7pp.

Southerland, William (2018). "The Rainbow Connection: How Music Classrooms Create Safe Spaces for Sexual-Minority Young People." *Music Educators Journal,* 104/3, 40-45. 6pp.

Stringham, David A. (2016). "Creating Compositional Community in Your Classroom." *Music Educators Journal,* 102/3, 46-52. 7pp.

Thorgersen, Cecilia Ferm. (2015) "The Music Classroom as a Local Place and a Public Space." *Swedish Journal of Music Research,* 97/2), 61-73. 13pp.

Van Soest, D. (1996). "Impact of Social Work Education on Student Attitudes and Behavior Concerning Oppression." *Journal of Social Work Education,* 32,191-202. 12pp.

**KENLEY KRISTOFFERSON**

is a composer and educator from Winnipeg (MB). He teaches music theory, composition, music history, jazz band, and concert band at Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive High School in Selkirk (MB). He is currently completing a Master's degree in Composition at Brandon University, studying under T. Patrick Carrabré. His compositions have been performed and recorded by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Winnipeg Wind Ensemble, the Cleveland Symphonic Winds, the Vancouver Chamber Choir, and other ensembles. His composition, *The Meeting Place,* won the Canadian Band Association's Composition Competition in 2016. For more information about Kenley and his compositions, visit his Web site at https://kenleykristofferson.com/

# SUBMISSION GUIDELINES / DIRECTIVES DE RÉDACTION

## Submissions

*Canadian Winds* encourages the submission of manuscripts on all phases of music education in schools and communities, about practical instructional techniques and professional philosophy, and about current issues in teaching and learning.

*Canadian Winds* articles are refereed by practicing professionals who judge manuscripts on their importance, originality, timeliness, scope, accuracy, and style. Articles submitted for publication should be characterised by:

- **Clarity and precision**: articles should be in a straightforward, conversational style. Format should adhere closely to Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007 [or later]).
- **Brevity**: articles should normally be no longer than 1800-3500 words (7-14 double-spaced pages).
- **Usefulness**: articles should address the needs of a broad cross-section of more than 2,000 instrumental-music educators and community musicians who read the journal.

## Format of submissions

- The author's name should not appear on the manuscript, but should be included on the accompanying cover letter.
- The article should be submitted to the editor via e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word.
- A brief biographical sketch of the author should accompany submissions, with a digital photograph.
- Photographs or graphics are welcome with any submission. They must be high-contrast black and white or grayscale, scanned at no less than 300 dpi, and saved as JPEGs, TIFFs, or high resolution PDFs. Please refer these specifications to your local copy shop if having scans made commercially. They may be embedded in the Word document or attached to an e-mail as separate graphic files. If not embedded in the article, they should be named and referenced clearly in the article. Digital graphic files should be labeled with the author's name and numbered sequentially: e.g., Jones1, Jones2, etc. Supply captions in a separate Word file; captions should relate to file names. Music examples, figures, and other illustrations should be double-checked for accuracy. Documentation should be included where permissions are required to use photo or graphic materials.

## Auteurs recherchés

Afin de refléter le plus adequatement possible la diversité culturelle canadienne, la revue *Vents canadiens/Canadian Winds* est à la recherche d'auteurs de langue française désireux de voir publiés des articles de tous genres touchant le milieu des harmonies et ensembles à vent scolaires, communautaires ou professionels, le répertoire, les musiciens et leurs instruments, ainsi que celui de l'éducation musicale sous tous ses aspects.

Les articles de *Vents canadiens* sont examinés par des professionels actifs qui évaluent les manuscrits selon leur importance, leur originalité, leur actualité, leur envergure, leur exactitude et leur style. Les articles soumis pour publication devraient être 1) plutôt concis, c'est-à-dire compter en moyenne de 1800 à 3500 mots (de 7 à 14 pages à double interligne), 2) écrits avec clarté et précision, dans un style direct et narratif, et 3) conçus en fonction des intérêts et besoins de plus de deux mille musiciens éducateurs et communautaires qui lisent la revue.

Pour envoyer vos manuscripts ou pour toute information en langue française au sujet de la revue *Vents canadiens*, vous êtes prié(e)s de vous adresser en français à Timothy Maloney, à stimothymaloney@gmail.com et réponse vous sera rendue dans les plus bref délais.

## Soumissions

*Vents canadiens* encourage la soumission d'articles inédits sur toutes les phases de l'enseignement musical dans les écoles et les communautés, sur la philosophie professionnelle et les techniques éducatives pratiques, et sur les questions courantes en enseignement et en apprentissage.

Un comité de praticiens professionnels évaluera les manuscrits soumis à *Vents canadians* selon leur importance, leur originalité, leur pertinence, leur envergure, leur justesse et leur style. Les articles soumis pour publication devront présenter les caractérisques suivantes :

- **Clarté et précision** : les articles devront être écrits dans un style simple et direct, et présentés dans un format conforme à celui défini par Kate L. Turabian dans *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007 [ou ultérieur]).
- **Concision** : les articles devront normalement avoir entre 1 800 et 3 500 mots (de sept à 14 pages, à double interligne).
- **Utilité** : les articles devront répondre aux besoins de lecteurs représentant une vaste coupe transversale de plus de 2 000 éducateurs en musique instrumentale et musiciens communautaires.

## Format de la soumission

- Le nom de l'auteur devrait figurer sur la lettre accompagnant le manuscrit, mais non sur le manuscrit lui-même.
- L'article devrait être soumis au directeur de la publication comme pièce jointe à un courriel en Microsoft Word.
- Une courte notice biographique de l'auteur devrait accompagner toute soumission, ainsi qu'une photo numérisée.
- Les photographies et documents graphiques accompagnant vos soumissions sont toujours bienvenus. Ils devraient être en noir et blanc ou échelle de gris à haute résolution, numérisés à non moins de 300 ppp, et conservés en format JPEG, TIFF ou PDF haute définition seulement. Vous êtes donc prié(e)s, le cas échéant, de communiquer ces données à votre centre de copie d'affaires. Ils devraient également être, soit incorporés à votre document Word original, soit joints à votre courriel en documents graphiques séparés. S'ils ne sont pas incorporés à un document Word, ils devraient être clairement identifiés en référence dans votre article, étiquetés au nom de l'auteur et numérotés consécutivement: Tremblay1, Tremblay2, etc., par exemple. Vous êtes priés de nous fournir tout titre ou explication à vos documents graphiques, se référant clairement au nom de chacun de ces documents, séparément, dans un autre document Word. N'oubliez pas de vérifier l'exactitude de vos exemples musicaux, dessins et autres illustrations. Toute permission requise à la publication d'une photo ou d'un dossier graphique doit également être dûment documentée.

**Submit articles for consideration to /**
**Veuillez soumettre les articles en vue de publication à :**
Dr. S. Timothy Maloney,
E-mail: stimothymaloney@gmail.com

## In our next issue / Dans le prochain numéro...
## Vol. 17, No. 2, Spring / printemps 2019

- STUDY GUIDE for Bill Thomas's *Blue Lake and Rocky Shore*
- IN PROFILE: Westwinds Music Society Band
- Canadian Band Directors in the US (II)
- More Auxiliary Percussion
- Culture in the Instrumental-Music Classroom (II)
- STUDY GUIDE for Robert Buckley's *Windjammer: Voyage Aboard a Tall Ship*
- SPOTLIGHT ON BRASS: French Horn Basics

YAMAHA

# LOOK AFTER YOUR INSTRUMENT AND IT WILL LOOK AFTER YOU

A well-maintained instrument is the foundation of a good sound.

Your students will feel the difference, whether they're playing a trumpet that's been lubricated properly, or a clarinet that's just been cleaned from the inside out. A young musician that looks after their horn will have a horn that looks after them.

Yamaha offers a full line of professional quality maintenance and cleaning products at a price that won't stretch your school's budget.


Genuine Yamaha accessories are designed to allow your students to sound, look, and play their very best.

ca.yamaha.com

# St. John's Music

*We believe in music!*

www.stjohnsmusic.com