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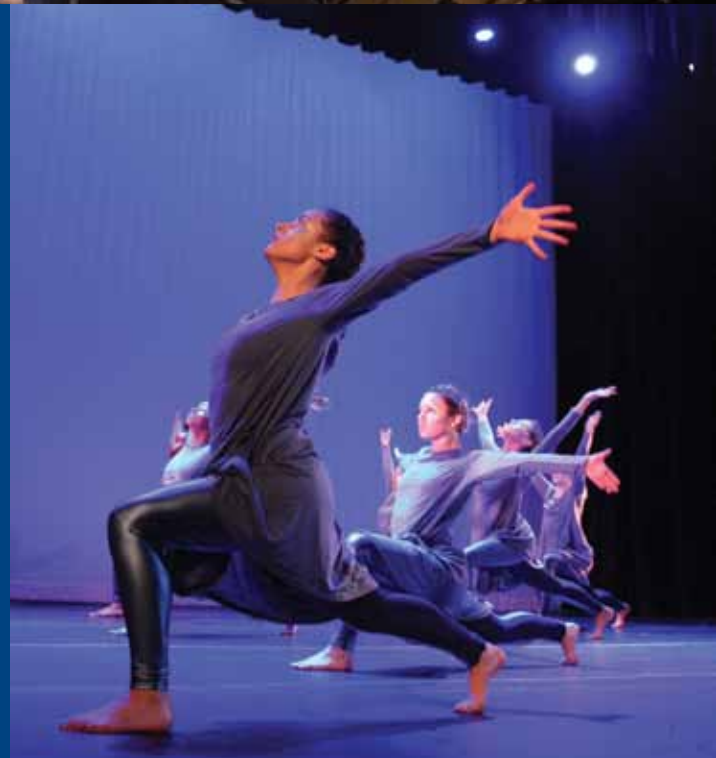
Bluegrass Music News

FALL 2019 FEATURES:

- The What, Why, and How of Young Adult Male Choirs
- Recruiting Beginning String Players
- Where Does NAFME Stand?: A Selection of the Organization's Official Positions
- I Have to Quit Band: Obstacles to Student Retention
- NAFME's Professional Development eKit



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Editorial Board: DuWayne Dale, Nicola Mason, Catherine Wilson, Eric Brown, Sarah Payne

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Contestants in the 2018 KMEA State Marching Band Competition. Photo by David Knapp.



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The Kentucky Music Educators Association is a voluntary, non-profit organization representing all phases of music education in schools, colleges, universities, and teacher-training institutions. KMEA is a federated state association of the National Association for Music Education. KMEA/NAfME membership is open to all persons actively interested in music education.

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From the Editor

DUWAYNE DALE



Welcome back! I hope this issue of the *Bluegrass Music News* finds you well and enjoying a great start to your academic year. I also hope that the vim and vigor with which you begin this year lasts you all the way to May!

Maintaining that energy throughout an entire school year as a music teacher can be a tall order, sometimes. Long days (and some nights) are ubiquitous in our profession and our work on behalf of students and toward the betterment of our music programs can often start to feel like an uphill climb (à la Sisyphus). The energy we have to bring to our work also impacts the attitude that accompanies that work. These elements have important implications for our effectiveness as teachers.

It has been my observation over the years that you “get what you give.” From the energy we bring to classes and rehearsals to the way we choose to engage and interact with colleagues, co-workers, and administrators, it always seems that we get a return on our investment in direct correlation to what we put in. Rehearsals, for example, where I feel I have invested ample time toward being prepared, and invested abundant energy with regard to student engagement and rehearsal pacing always seem to yield far better outcomes than rehearsals where my energy lags. I find my attitude and my perceptions skewed negatively in low-energy situations as well. Even if gains were made in rehearsal, I find myself almost blind to them when my energy levels are low.

Similarly, positive and upbeat interactions with colleagues tend to foster mutually beneficial relationships and improve the working environment. Even in contentious situations with co-workers or administrators, having the energy to engage with a constructive, positive attitude has almost always resulted in a better outcome for me and for my students. So, how then do we maintain that first-day-of-school energy throughout the entire school year?

First, at the risk of sounding a bit cliché, our work is a marathon, not a sprint. Sitting down with our calendar for the year and taking a realistic look at, for example, how many performances, after-school

rehearsals, or other events and activities we’ve planned, and when they occur during the year can reveal much. What goals are we setting for students, do all of our planned “extras” help students attain curricular goals, and are the goals we set S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound)? What will our planned schedule feel like from the student perspective? From the parent perspective? Certainly, their energy levels are an essential consideration as well. Is the year well-paced? Is there sufficient time to achieve the planned aims? What sacrifices/adjustments might need to be made in order to establish a plan for the year that moves your students and program forward while avoiding teacher, student, and parent burnout?

Second, make time for meaningful professional development. Many of us take advantage of KMEA Conference, and unfortunately for many of us, our meaningful PD list ends there. Something as simple as working with your administration to take a day to shadow a respected colleague can go a long way toward keeping your energy levels high and motivating you professionally. Pace such experiences periodically and strategically throughout the year and they can provide a wonderful pick-me-up to keep fuel in the tank.

Physical exercise should never be overlooked for its impact on energy levels. There was a time when I scoffed at anyone making such assertions—until I tried it. Though everyone is different (and I certainly am no fitness expert) most guidelines I’ve read say thirty minutes a day of moderate exercise for five of seven days each week is recommended for healthy adults (see Department of Health and Human Services recommendations). I committed to doing this and to eating better about 16 months ago. The change in available energy I have experienced has been remarkable.

Finally, I believe much of the solution to keeping energy levels high all year has to do with maintaining a healthy perspective about and balance between work and other aspects of life. For much of my early career, there was nothing I would not sacrifice for the job. “Burning the candle at both ends” in this way saw me limping into Christmas break and dreading the inevitable return to work in January then collapsing

Continued on p. 8

Summary of Original Version

Create a new section of KRS Chapter 158 to require schools to offer all students instruction in the visual and performing arts, submit an annual report to the Department of Education, and implement school policies regarding visual and performing arts instruction; require the Department of Education to develop visual and performing arts program standards, guidelines on model programs, and strategies and initiatives for meeting the requirements of the section; require the Department of Education to provide resources, assessment tools, and a reporting checklist to schools; require the Department of Education to report to the Interim Joint Committee on Education by December 1, 2021, on the status of schools meeting the requirements of this section; amend KRS 158.6453 to require the school profile report to be included in the school report card and require the visual and performing arts program data to be included in the school profile report; amend KRS 160.345 and 158.153 to conform; cite the Act as the Arts Education Equity Act.



PRESIDENT'S CALENDAR

August

Attended the KMEA Executive Board meeting, Richmond

August-September

Attended the Fall meetings of Districts 5, 7, 8, and 4

September

Attended the KY Coalition for the Arts meeting, Lexington
Attended the KMEA CNAfME Conference, Lexington
Attended the Southern Division NAFME Conference, Nashville

October

Attend the State Marching Band Championships, Bowling Green

November

Attend the KMEA Executive Committee meeting, Elizabethtown
Attend the Marching Band Committee meeting, Elizabethtown

just past the finish line in May. I had a bit of a revelation when one day while listening to my wife discuss plans for a family activity, she asked if I had any band stuff going on that would conflict with the plan. In my infinite wisdom, I responded to her as I might to a band parent, and told her that she needed to check the link to the online band calendar I sent her via email in August. Needless to say, I have yet to live down that profound misstep (now about a decade ago) and I almost instantly had one of those Homer Simpson, slap the forehead, "D'oh!" experiences. Taking the time to actively focus on and to work on the balance between my personal and professional life has made an incredible difference for me with regard to what energy I have to bring to bear each day at work (and outside of work).

Regardless of the strategy, students deserve our very best every day. For that to happen, we have to avoid overextending, we have to take care of ourselves, and we have to balance all aspects of our lives. You know as well as I that these things can often be easier said than done, and require constant attention and maintenance. It would be severely hypocritical for me to tell you I have always adhered to the advice I'm sharing, but I plan to keep trying until I get it right!

Have a great fall semester!

We know that in most cases, mentorship must be sought, rather than imposed. If there is one thing I wish those new to the profession would grasp onto, it is the reality that there is no greater compliment to a colleague than to ask what they would do when faced with a particular problem. I wish fledgling educators would pick mentors wisely, and seek their counsel often, since it is easier to correct course shortly after veering off than after extensive time going the wrong way.

It's also helpful for all of us to seek guidance from books, periodicals, social media chat groups dedicated to the profession, and videos that others have uploaded to the web. Attending professional conferences, whether state, regional, or national, is usually a great source of inspiration, ideas, and perspective.

I hope your year is going well, as we are at this point only about one fourth of the way through. If it is not, look around to see if there are other ways that other people deal with the kinds of challenges you are facing. Yes, teaching is hard, and sometimes unappreciated by those who ought to understand and value it, but it is so important.

Please let us in the KMEA office know if we can help you in any way.