

MAINE MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

THE MAINE MOTIF

**2021–2022
Information**

**Voice and
Choice in
Twenty21**

**Breadcrumbs
for the Band
Director**



MAINE MUSIC
EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

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the Maine Music
Educator's Association.



**Maine Music Educators
Association (MMEA)**

235+ members including
working music educators,
retired teachers,
and collegiate students
Formally founded in 1917,
MMEA is the oldest recognized
state music educator association
in the USA.

Mission Statement:
*To promote and advance Music
Education by providing a voice
and venue for advocacy and
advancement of Music Educa-
tion in Maine.*



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MMEA Executive Director Office Hours:

Beth LaBrie will be providing Office Hours each week when she will be readily available by phone or email:

Email: execdirector@mainemea.org Phone: 207-754-5426

Monday 8:00-10:00 a.m. & Wednesday 11:00-1:00 p.m.

Evening appointments during the week are also available. Every effort will be made to reply to communications within 24 hours of weekly business hours (Monday-Friday).

MMEA Calendar

2021-2022 MMEA Calendar

Updated on September 8, 2021

Month	Event
August 2021	
9	MMEA Board Retreat @ Messalonskee Middle School - Monday, August 9 (8:30AM-4PM)
September 2021	
6	Jazz All-State Portal on Submittable open for TEACHER SUBMISSIONS ONLY (no recordings at this time) - Monday, Sept. 6
6	BOC All-State Portal on Submittable open for TEACHER SUBMISSIONS ONLY (no recordings at this time) - Monday, Sept. 6
9	MMEA Town Hall via Zoom - Thursday, Sept. 9 (All-Member @ 5PM, Jazz/General Music @ 5:30PM and BOC @ 6PM)
25	General Music Workshop with Maine Orff Chapter via Zoom - Saturday, Sept. 25
30	<u>MMEA Institutional Fees due</u> - Thursday, Sept. 30 (\$50 late fee)
October 2021	
13	MMEA Board Meeting - Oct. 13 @ 6:30pm via Zoom - Wednesday, Oct. 13
14	Jazz All-State RECORDED auditions due to Submittable - Thursday, Oct. 14 by 5 PM
15	Jazz All-State judges meet at UMA to evaluate recorded auditions. (Host needs to be confirmed)
16	13th Annual Northern New England Collegiate Symposium @ University of Southern Maine - Saturday, Oct. 16
23	Eastern Division Meeting - Saturday, Oct. 23 via Zoom @ 9am-3pm
31	Jazz All-State Ensemble Lists Posted - Sunday, Oct. 31
November 2021	
3	BOC All-State Auditions: ALL RECORDED AUDITIONS DUE ON SUBMITTABLE - Wednesday, Nov. 3 by 5 PM
5-6	BOC All-State judges meet at Lawrence to evaluate recorded auditions. (Host needs to be confirmed- may only need one day)
19	Jazz All-State registration forms and payment due - Friday, Nov. 19
	Jazz All-State music and learning tracks sent out - TBA
30	MMEA Board Nominations Due - Monday, Nov. 30
December 2021	
15	BOC All-State ensemble lists posted - Wednesday, Dec. 15
January 2022	
13-15	Jazz All-State Festival @ Bangor HS - Thursday, Jan. 13 - Saturday, Jan. 15
18	MMEA Board Meeting via Zoom - Tuesday, Jan. 18 @ 6:30pm
22-24	NAfME Virtual All-National Honors Ensembles - Saturday, January 22-Monday, January 24
28	BOC All-State registration forms and payment due - Friday, Jan. 28
February 2022	
28	District Jazz Qualifiers completed by the end of February
March 2022	
8	MMEA Board Meeting via Zoom - Tuesday, March 8 @ 6:30pm
	BOC All-State music and learning tracks sent out - TBA
18-19	State High School Jazz Festival - Friday, March 18 & Saturday, March 19 @ Hampden Academy
26	State Middle School Jazz Festival @ Host TBD - Saturday, March 26 @ Westbrook
April 2022	
1-2	State Vocal Jazz Festival - Friday April 1 & Saturday April 2 @ Stearns HS
8-9	State Solo & Ensemble Virtual Festival - Friday April 8 & Saturday April 9
May 2022	
18	MMEA Board Dinner/Meeting @ UMaine - Wednesday, May 18, 6:00pm
19-21	MMEA BOC All-State @ UMaine - Thursday, May 19 - Saturday, May 21
19-20	MMEA Conference @ UMaine - Thursday, May 19 & Friday, May 20
20	MMEA Jazz Meeting - Friday, May 20 @ TBD
20	MMEA All-Member Meeting - Friday, May 20 @ TBD
June 2022	
14	MMEA Board Meeting via Zoom - Tuesday, June 14 @ 6:30pm via Zoom

From the President

I am writing this on the eve of the 2021-2022 school year. By the time you read this we will likely have had a few weeks of school, and hopefully all of those new schedules, protocols and initiatives have settled into a manageable routine.

This was not a usual summer, but it was good. We did lots of summer things--visiting friends, getting near water, spending too much time with family. The summer things were interspersed with lots of home projects, reading and work. Why was it not usual? Nothing is "usual" anymore. There was just so much. It took me a really long time to gear down. I will spare you the details of my past year, as I have heard your scenarios and I know the almost impossible situations many of you faced with much more grace than me. However, I found it difficult to stop working, to stop thinking of "the next thing" and "what if" scenarios. Did all of the work and worry put me in that golden place of being fully prepared for the start of school? Of course not! I don't think I have ever felt more UNprepared than I do for this year. I said to my band director husband, "I feel like a first year teacher who already knows what she shouldn't". Do I have all the answers for how this school year will unfold? Not at all. There are so many "what ifs" and "next things" to come. I do have faith, though.

I have faith in the experience I have worked hard to gain during my career. Last year taught me that I can problem solve to a much higher degree than I ever thought. I have huge faith in my colleagues. You, the outstanding music educators of Maine, have shown time and again that you are some of the most intelligent, resourceful and hard-working professionals out there. I have seen and learned so much from you, and I am continually overwhelmed by your relentless efforts on behalf of your students and your MMEA. And I have faith in the students. I had the chance to see a few at a casual open house prior to school opening. Their eyes said it all--they were curious to meet "the band teacher" and see my new room (oh yes, I had to move my room this summer after 24 years. But, it's bigger!). The students were tentative as they asked about playing in class together. I explained how we would do things and showed them our bell covers and masks. Their first reactions were, "Cool!"

I realized then that this is what I had been missing--the immediate feedback we get from our students that directs our attention to the next step. The enthusiasm and energy had returned to my classroom in just a few minutes thanks to those students. I have great faith.

I send you my sincere thanks for all you have done and all you will continue to do as we all strive to provide the students of Maine with the best music education possible.

Sandy Barry
MMEA President



Voice and Choice in Twenty21

Student ownership in a commissioned work

The 20/21 school year was one educators will not forget for years to come. In the Waterville School System, there was a hybrid model employed. Students attended school in cohorts A/B or C; A and B alternated days and C students attended class completely virtually. In March of 2020, our music department cancelled the scheduled trip to a festival and visit to Six Flags. It became clear that the reschedule was not going to happen in 2021.

We, as a department, wanted to create a learning opportunity for all students in this nontraditional format. The decision was made to commission pieces for each ensemble. I reached out to a classmate from college, who I knew did some writing for the UMass Marching Band. Robert Hammerton agreed to take on this task of composing.

In an effort to give students ownership of this process, I solicited their input. Google

Classroom was utilized to access student voice and choice through Google Forms. In addition to the hybrid model, Waterville Senior High School moved to teaching four classes each quarter rather than the traditional eight. Therefore I only saw the High School band Quarter 2 and 4 during the 20/21 school year. At the very end of quarter two, in early January, there was much unrest in our country. Though I am a teacher of music, it is more important to me that I

am a teacher of life. To that end, on January 7, 2021 during period 1 band class, I had my students reflect on the events of January 6.

Reflections January 7

Through this process, it became clear that students needed an opportunity to share thoughts and emotions that they were experiencing due to the pandemic and due to the discourse in our country surrounding the 2020 election and the Black Lives Matter movement. To prepare for our meeting about the commissioning, I asked students to think about what to ask the composer. Meeting the Composer Questions. On January 14 and 15, 2021, band members spoke with Robert Hammerton via Zoom about the recording project. Rob shared his approach and was able to answer some of the students' questions.

What music do you turn to for inspiration? What story would you like this piece to tell?

In order to get the students thinking about what qualities a piece should contain, I asked probing questions to spur their thought process: what music do you turn to for inspiration? What story would you like this piece to tell? Students were also asked about what section(s) of our ensemble should be featured, and about what qualities of

program music we have performed in the past that would be pertinent.

Stage 2 Composition

The student responses were thoughtful and insightful. Students shared the losses of the year and what sounds evoked meaning for them: sirens, the sound of emails arriving in their inbox, silence as they experienced lockdown, the highs and the lows. As their teacher, it was heart-warming for me to recognize that literally every section of the band was recognized as strong and competent by another section of the band. Responses from students were compiled, and we met with Robert Hammerton again via Zoom; he took some of the students' thoughts and employed musical devices to create motifs and phrases that he shared with all. We had reached the end of quarter two and I had to say goodbye to the high school band; and Rob moved forward with the composition.

"Twenty21" was based upon two existing melodies and several other melodic motifs. The first of these melodies was the African-American spiritual tune "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen", inspired partly by the band members' interest in a jazz or blues sound, and partly because spirituals were created in the context of great struggle and as laments or songs of hope for African slaves in North America, and also often as a means of guiding slaves

to safety. The second existing melody was that of the official state song of Maine, written by Roger Vinton Snow in 1931.

The short melodic motifs also utilized were generated by a curious process: converting the alphabet letters A through Z into the numbers one through twenty-six, then further converting those numbers into corresponding diatonic or chromatic pitches. In this way, motifs were generated which represented the letters and numbers in relevant terms such as the date 3-13-20 (the date of school lockdown), COVID, SARS-COV-2, BLM, STEAL (as in "stop the..."), and VACCINE.

A "delayed return" variant on sonata rondo form (A-B-codetta exposition; A-C development; B-A-codetta recapitulation) turned out to be the compositional structure best suited to moving back and forth between "Nobody Knows the Trouble" and the other motivic ideas.

In addition, on the printed score, rather than using generic "musical stage directions" such as *allegro*, *espressivo*, and the like, the composer included short phrases drawn from "The Hill We Climb", the poem written for and recited at the 2021 Presidential Inauguration by Amanda Gorman. While these phrases did not figure in the aural performance, they were useful in shaping the band's musical interpretation.

In early April, at the start of

quarter four, students returned to experience, through video, Twenty21. The students were asked to reflect once again, Introduction to Twenty21. The students were grateful and anxious at the same time: grateful for the beautiful composition, anxious that they would be unable to meet the performance level to their own satisfaction. The piece also evoked strong emotion for some of the students, we spoke of the physical reaction to the sound of sirens and the remembrance of the murder of George Floyd.

Due to the Covid restrictions, it became apparent a live performance was not in the plan. The challenge of recording the three cohorts and combining the recordings was daunting

as well as the video. I reached out for assistance and guidance from the Mid-Maine Technical Center Mass Media program. Dave Boardman, the program director, enlisted his students to come in to record the audio and visual or rehearsals, and then edit the two together. The process was enlightening and educational for all involved. Students came to appreciate the skills of their classmates and the Mass Media Program gained some enrollment of music students.

Our finished product was shared with parents and students at a senior recognition night. Was it perfect? Were students in concert dress? Was all of the posture correct? Were all rhythms correct? The answer to all of

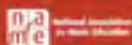
these questions is no. What did we learn? As an educator it was clear the importance of voice and choice for students. Twenty21 was written for the Waterville Senior High School Band; it will always be their piece, a reflection of their collective experience of the Twenty21 school year. Lessons that will last a lifetime. My goal as an educator is to create lifelong consumers of and advocates for music education. It is my belief that the students of the 20/21 Waterville Senior High School Band will carry this experience in their hearts and minds for many years to come.

Susan Barre, Band Director
Waterville Senior High School



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Breadcrumbs for the Band Director

Highlighting
the Path back
to Post-COVID
Normalcy

The well-trained Director of the Anytown School Band had much to celebrate. Years of carefully crafted work – assisted by, yes, some early trial-and-error failures – had yielded a consistently outstanding program, adored by its students, and revered by the entire school community. Anytown's music was simply terrific, vibrantly delivered by

prideful performers who were accomplished, dedicated and, especially, happy to have the social artistic outlet. And after such strategic planning and execution, the Band Director knew exactly which ingredients comprised the recipe, and in what amounts. There was little mystery about what to do with recruitment, retention, expectations, music

selection, student motivation, and a host of other important components of Anytown's steadfast music education. The well-planned architecture was a roadmap lined with large-print signs, all highlighting the shortest route to excellence.

And not unlike in so many previous years, the second



week of March 2020 brought a stream of stressful problems and issues requiring decisive action.

"It's our first scrimmage, and Coach says if I'm not there for it, I'll have to sit the bench at the next game. Sorry, but I'll miss the Concert," says the Principal Trumpet player who, of course, is assigned a solo that no one else is prepared to play.

"Our budget failed. We're losing a teacher, so we'll have to delay the introduction of Beginning Band for two years," says the Administrator.

"The master schedule changed; now our only section of AP Calculus will be offered during your class. A dozen of your best seniors need to choose between Calc and Band," says the overworked Guidance Counselor.

And, "My family is moving, so I'm going to Otherplace High School starting next month," says the best French Horn player the school has ever seen, "but my two cousins are moving here to Anytown. They play Flute and Drums."

These alarms, though serious, are not new. With comprehensive training from a great college program, and supported by the wisdom of experience, the Anytown Band Director will sculpt a strategic response to each problem.

But just days later, an unprecedented tsunami known as "COVID-19" rolled over the land, swiftly bringing its school closings, social distancing, technology problems, and so many other exceptional vexations. The road to excellence was inundated, as were the favorite shortcuts, known detours, and almost all recognizable landmarks. The traditionally-trained Band Director could no longer navigate this new landscape, and the destination – "excellence for our Anytown Band" – seemed entirely unreachable.

Experienced band directors will recognize this storyline as an allegory for their professional losses. It reveals an uncomfortable helplessness these directors might be feeling while recalculating their journey back toward "normalcy." There has been no single standardized plan for COVID-impeded Band instruction; most schools' and universities' responses are steered by their unique needs, students, facilities, and by a local interpretation of health guidelines. Some schools have had remarkably positive results. In others, however, music education as we know it has all but ceased to exist, at least for a period.

It's an undeniable fact that the COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted almost all school music programs, large-ensemble rehearsals and performances, and our students' individual development itself. But we can also predict some additional,

less-obvious repercussions. New teachers, and younger pre-service college music education majors, may not yet be fully aware of what has already been taken from them. Formative experiences and professional development opportunities – the vital lifeblood for a music teacher's successful evolution – have been simply unavailable.

The experiences available to Pre-professionals have been vastly altered:

- Student Teaching has typically afforded the initial opportunities for development of practical teaching strategies. During the pandemic, most pre-service teachers aren't "conducting" a live band, and their pedagogical practice is limited to faces on a screen or, at best, small groups, and very limited time.
- Observation/participation opportunities and Lab School experiences throughout college have evaporated: schools have been forced to restrict visitors, and many model programs have been paused.
- There has been much less opportunity for college students to "collect" rehearsal strategies, communication skills, and tricks-of-the-trade through daily observations of great conductors.
- Many college Methods Courses are encountering reduced time for conversation, and minimized in-person demonstration

of pedagogical strategies.

And even for the experienced teachers, there have been weighty losses:

- There is dreadfully little opportunity to practice our teaching and rehearsal strategies, let alone revise and improve them.
- Observations of great guest-conductors at hon- or band festivals – so important to professional growth – disappeared when those festivals were pre-empted.
- In-house mentoring might even become limited, as some of the most experienced educators may elect an unplanned retirement.

These observations introduce a shared set of vital questions:

- What is a good plan for restoring our Band programs when we return to in-person instruction as music education emerges from the pandemic?
- Which of our traditional “go-to” strategies will still be effective? And whereas a new course of action may be required, which replacements will yield the best results?
- What are the most efficient ways to restore the profound loss of performance skills resulting from students’ inactivity? Or, in the big-picture view, how will we restore excellence as quickly as possible?
- And what can we do to bring lost students back to our programs, while also

reinvigorating those who stuck with us?

Surely those aren’t the only questions, but I’ve selected this short list to highlight our collective needs. We must find a new pathway to lead programs out of an incomprehensible epoch, and back toward the Anytown model that worked so well under traditional circumstances. But the original “recipe,” made of its reliable, time-tested ingredients, may not be enough.



So what am I suggesting? Here is just a brief list of recommendations, but only to spark creativity in your thinking:

- Identify any landmarks that are so important that they’ve remained visible throughout the pandemic. You’ll recognize them (certain concerts, parades, competitions, skill-level tiers/ranks, incentives, annual events, et al) because you’ve been asked about them frequently, and you’ve overheard excitement in students’ conversations. Those landmarks are the biggest breadcrumbs that highlight the general direction for your community, even if other parts of your pathway have been de-

stroyed.

- Create an environment that attracts the students with optimism and positivity. Positivity works. Find your unique band-room culture that welcomes students, that entices them to return, and that motivates them in every aspect.
- Investigate any deep-seeded program components that can provide residual results to support your imme-

diated work. We’re looking for activities offering influential aftereffects, and those that will promote improvements while shielding our programs from further backsliding. For example, we might discover more success through reliance on (well-chosen) internal Leadership activities: excellence to influence further excellence. A wisely designed Mentoring plan will serve that purpose, as will increasing your students’ exposure to role models, like visits from itinerant teachers, or performances by guest artists.

- Invest in the types of strategies and activities that, while providing the

desired results, are also exciting. I'm suggesting that our pedagogical choices will be more effective by engaging students. Note that this undertaking suggests a research and discovery mission unlike you've pursued ever before:

- Ask colleagues about their favorite, most effective pedagogies.
- Seek outstanding books based on functional, practical, results-oriented strategies, targeted at the wide variety of musical concepts you teach.
- Make substantial investments right now in webinars, online blogs and bulletin boards, professional development sessions of all kinds, and

great conversations with trusted colleagues and mentors.

And take risks with your pedagogy: the students returning after COVID have been changed; even if you felt you knew them well, they'll return to your rehearsals with different needs. More than ever before, therefore, trial and error will serve a great role in your own discovery about what works, and what doesn't (at least for now).

The most effective band directors I've ever observed seem to demonstrate a masterful fluency with communication, feedback, modeling, and motivation. Everything they do and say has meaning. And, they are equally effective with the "top" high-

ly-accomplished virtuosos and with younger, skill-challenged student musicians. Oh, and they have a magical way of making students (collectively and individually) feel good about the experience. While these are lofty goals, band directors can improve by considering their own professional development as a continuous endeavor. When working to assemble an ever-growing collection of practical teaching strategies, tips, and activities, the effective Band Director can indeed resuscitate the Anytown School Band, and move it toward post-pandemic success.

Robin Linaberry

This article was previously published on Routledge.com, in April 2021



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Maine Motif | Dec 2020

To Retire Or Not To Retire: That Is The Question

Has the pandemic and remote learning made you seriously think about your options? Regardless of your reasons, whether it be a desire for a different career path, you have reached the minimum age where you can seriously consider retiring and live the good life, or you just need to step away for a while, you need to have a plan so that you end up in a good place. Whatever you decide to do, keep in mind that you are not the only one to consider. How will this affect your spouse/partner, children, or parents if you are involved in their care? While the decision may seem to be all about you, it isn't.

1. Sit down with your significant other and be honest about why you feel a need for a change, whatever that may look like. It is important that they be on board with your decision.

2. Are you financially able to withstand weeks or months without a paycheck until the next job comes along, assuming you have not already found one. If retiring, are you able to live on the considerable loss of income that is a part of moving from a paycheck to a pension?

3. Before making any hard and fast decision, list your debts – the total may shock you – and determine if a pension will be enough to make payments every month. Practice living on half, or less, of your current salaries. Can you afford to give up the salary that a job brings? You may need to rethink your priorities and adjust accordingly.

If you have been paying into Maine State Retirement go to Mainepers.gov for more information including a list of pre-retirement seminars for the coming year.

The more information you have, the easier it will be to make an informed decision. Good luck!

Sam Moore-Young





13th Annual Northern New England Collegiate Symposium on Music Education

October 16th, 2021

Trauma-Informed Teaching, Social Justice, and Wellness in Music Education

Co-Sponsored by the USM Collegiate Chapter of the National Association for Music Education and the Maine Music Educators Association

This event is FREE.

Pre-register by Friday, October 15 at:

<https://university-of-southern-maine-school-of-music.ticketleap.com/usm-music-ed-symposium-fall-21/>

All sessions available via Zoom. A link and passcode will be provided in your registration confirmation.

8:30 Welcome

8:45

Session I - "Trauma-informed teaching: Where to begin?"

Presenter: Dr. Caroline Shanti, USM School of Social Work

In our current world circumstances, the percentage of the population who have experienced or are experiencing trauma is ever-increasing. Trauma impacts brain development and function in some predictable ways, whether that trauma was individual (i.e., an experience of violence) or collective (i.e., a global pandemic). In this introductory session, we will discuss trauma and its impacts, how trauma may manifest in the lives of students and in the classroom, and how to create supportive classroom environments using trauma-informed practices.

10:15 Break

10:30

Session II - "Socially Just Engagements: Learning to Dialogue with the Other"

Presenter: Dr. Cathy Benedict, Associate Professor of Music, Western University, Ontario

Social justice is not something outside of us, something we can give or provide to others; there is no one way to teach "social justice". In this session we will interrogate pedagogical engagements that have traditionally been viewed as ways to structure democracy, grapple with the ways and to what end hyper-individualism has permeated our educative spaces and trouble the current favorite discourse of empowerment. We will then practice a mod-

el of dialogue for enacting socially just engagements with young students through adulthood.

12:00 Lunch Break

1:30-2:20

Session IIIA - "Self-Compassion in Difficult Times: Seeking Kindness Over Criticism"

Presenter: Dr. Lisa Martin, Associate Professor of Music Education, Bowling Green State University

Dr. Martin will share her research on musician wellness and mindfulness in this informative 45-minute session.

Session IIIB - "Wellness for Music Educators"

Presenter: Dr. Christina Kuebel, Assistant Professor of Music Education, University of Central Arkansas

In this 45-minute session Dr. Kuebel will examine holistic wellness strategies that can help music educators adjust to psychological and physiological stressors.

2:30-3:20

Session IV - "Mindfulness for Music Educators"

Presenter: Dr. Frank Diaz, Assistant Professor of Music, Indiana University, Bloomington

In this 45-minute session, Dr. Diaz will share insights regarding psycho- and physiological implications of mindfulness. Dr. Diaz is an active scholar and teacher in the field of contemplative science. At Indiana University, he founded and directs the Institute for Mindfulness-Based Wellness and Pedagogy, which offers clinics and workshops to artists, educators, and fellow scholars.

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