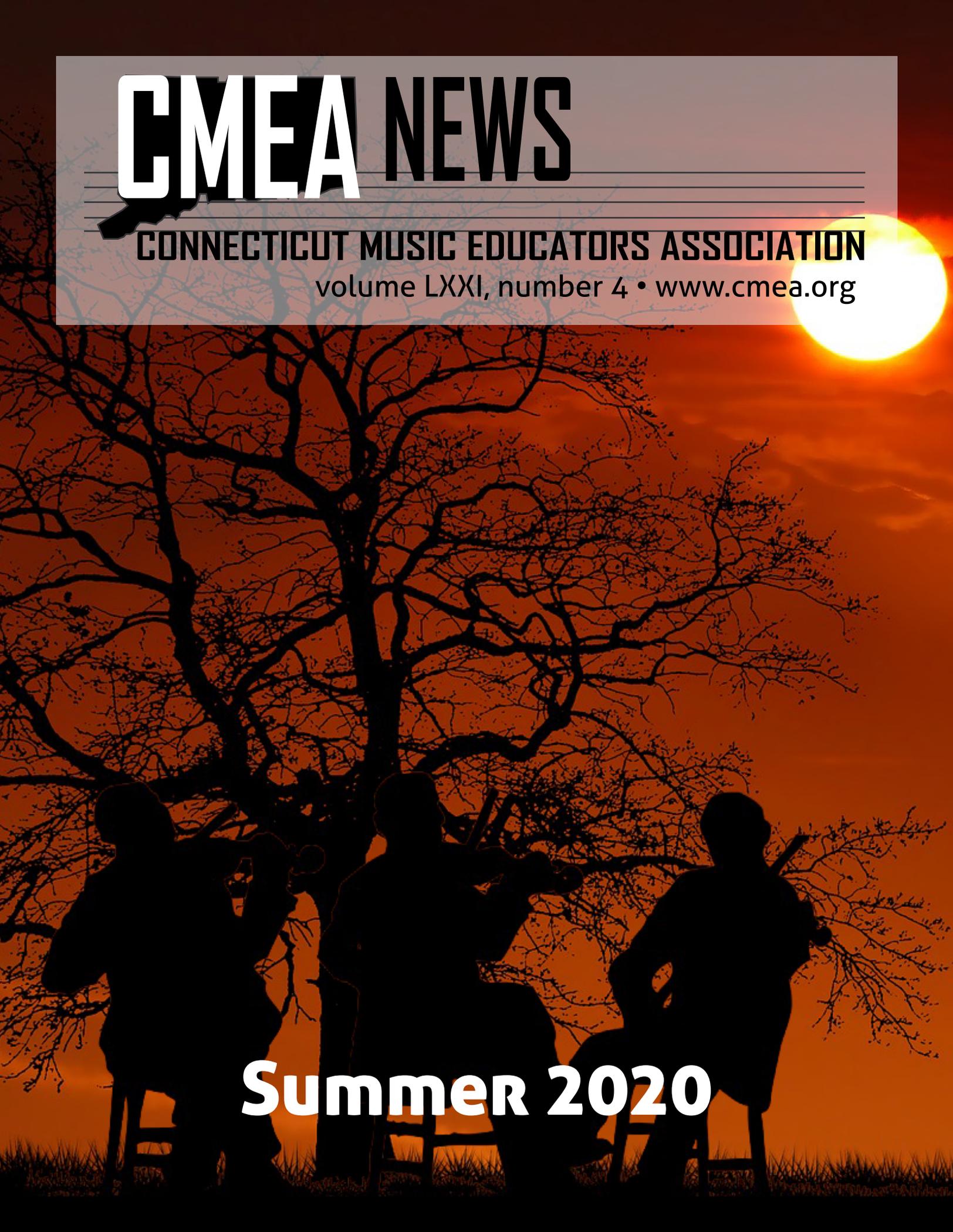


CMEA NEWS



CONNECTICUT MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

volume LXXI, number 4 • www.cmea.org

Summer 2020

A young woman with curly hair and sunglasses is playing a violin. She is wearing a blue and white patterned tank top. The background is a solid yellow color.

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CMEA is a 501C3 non-profit organization and is a federated state affiliate of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). Membership is open to all music teachers and those involved in other music education related work.

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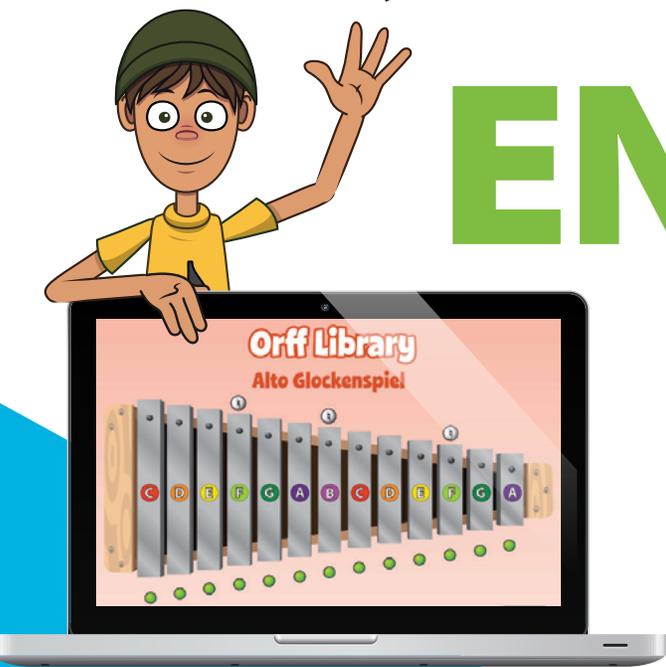


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CMEA NEWS

Volume LXXI, Number 4

CONNECTICUT MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Amy J. Bovin, Ph.D.

Good Morning CMEA,

Though every year brings us new challenges to face and obstacles to overcome, this year has been unlike any other. These last few months were something that none of us could have ever imagined when we began our journeys to become music educators.

I applaud you all for your hard work in finding new and different ways to provide quality lessons to our music students across the state despite the difficulties we faced. Your creativity in your lesson planning brought highly innovative methods in teaching the lessons we have taught for decades which in turn provided new and exciting activities and assignments for your students. The curriculum we know and are familiar with will never be the same again.

With this year coming to a close, our attention turns to next year. Though we have no definite idea of what school and music classes will look like in the Fall, we know that it will be different. While some school districts are using this opportunity to expand their music and art departments, it goes without saying that many of us are worried about the future of our positions and our colleagues positions. We are all searching for answers. We all want solutions. We all want direction. We want some sense of grounding to put our minds at ease.

Now is the time to come together and fight for music and art education in Connecticut schools. However, this fight needs to be different than it has been. Music advocacy has always revolved around why music should remain a part of the curriculum. We argue for the support of music

education though benefits and study findings. We have all done an excellent job in showing school districts and administration the “why” of music education.

It is now time to take that one step further. Our focus needs to be on the “how”. How will music education be able to remain in the schools this Fall? How can teachers continue to teach? What will music class look like in your specific district and/or school? What type of lesson plans can be created to continue to provide the highest quality music education to our students? What resources will be needed? What type of support do we require? These are the questions that we need to ask ourselves and these are the questions that need to frame any advocacy for music education moving forward.

For that reason, the music and arts organizations of our state, under the lead of Dee Hansen and Brian Cyr, created the linked document [“COVID-19 and Beyond: Guidelines for Arts Education in CT K-12 Schools”](#). We thank them and all who worked tirelessly over the last few weeks in creating this document which was accepted and will be distributed by the Connecticut State Department of Education and the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education.

As taken from Dee’s email to the members of Connecticut Association of Arts Administrators this morning “Each of the five pages will speak to different members of your community: an overview of major considerations; a rationale and key imperatives; a bullet list of recommendations for Scheduling and Social Distancing, Materials and Supplies, Technology, and Professional



Development; and Guidelines for Access and Equity.” I welcome and urge you all to distribute this document to your school boards, administration, community, booster clubs, and/or anyone else you deem appropriate. I also suggest that as you are wrapping up this school year, you share the answers with personnel to the above questions as to “how” music education can remaining in your district and/or schools this Fall. We know the “why”, push the “how”.

These last few months have been difficult for all, but I hope it gives you a sense of validation that we have all been going through this together. Let’s continue to fight for music education and support each other through these difficult times. Together we can help to ensure that music education will remain a part of the curricula across the State of Connecticut.

Thank you for all that you do for our students and for music education.

Hang in there everyone. We will get through this. Together.

FROM THE EDITOR

Nick Loafman

Friends and colleagues,

Take a deep breath! We have completed what may be the most trying and difficult school year any of us have faced. I hope you are taking advantage of summer time to get away from the screens, engage in some outside play, take a walk in a beautiful area of nature, or dine alfresco at a favorite spot, all while adhering to distancing guidelines of course! Although life is very different these days, CMEA is still here for you, working away.

First up in this issue, we feature many of our retiring music educators across the state. Although we can never replace the special concerts, celebrations, or other events where we honor our retirees, we wanted to publish some sentiments and give our thanks to all your work. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Retiree Honors project! We will also introduce our new Student Affairs Commission Chair, John Abucewicz - thank you John for serving in this critical role, and welcome! I would also like to congratulate Chris Coulter and Douglas Maher, two of our Connecticut-local article authors from this year. Their respective *CMEA News* articles, on teaching the music of Louis Armstrong, and successfully integrating guitar players into jazz ensembles, were picked up for publication at the national level by both *Teaching Music* magazine and the National Federation of State High School Associations website. Congratulations to Chris and Douglas for sharing your knowledge far beyond our state!

The challenges of the past months have been numerous and varied. Many of us have lost loved ones or have been personally impacted in serious ways. I myself grew despondent at times, questioning the value of what we are

doing in the midst of losing that which we love most - making music live with students. We face a new school year with great uncertainty, and being powerless to control the unknown is one of the greatest stressors.

Although we don't know what next year is going to look like, I know that as skilled, innovative, and passionate educators, we will succeed in giving students the best musical experiences we can. We have all learned new ways to do things and new skills (hello video editing!), and we must continue to do so. It is clear how much our students have missed being musical with their peers and with us, so as next year unfolds, we must dig deep to do our best teaching and give our students all we can, even if it looks completely unlike anything we are used to.

As April and May ticked by, I went back and forth with the approach to take with this issue. Over the last three months, there have been so many great ideas and helpful tips circulating online about how to teach music in quarantine and potentially next year. I thought of making this issue about "your best remote learning lesson plans", "how to get the best audio on video chat" or, of course, "how to make a virtual ensemble video". However, I quickly began to feel information overload from all the Youtube tutorials, webinars, panel discussions, and the like. We have all been up to our eyeballs in that sort of content for hours a day, every single day.

After recalling the footage of quarantined Italian citizens singing to each other from their balconies, I knew this issue had to be about the power of music in times of great struggle and challenge. Even as humans endure the most brutal hardships, music exerts its



will to survive, and serves as a force to bring people together.

This issue contains four sets of stories about music, grounded in four different contexts. These articles center on the events of 9/11, the Holocaust, institutional slavery in America, and the Great Depression. Even in the face of unspeakable evil or hardship, music remains a beacon for the human spirit. In times of trial, music gives people identity, unity, hope, and comfort. I think you will find these articles emotionally powerful, informative and educational, and above all, serve to remind us of the *necessity* of music to all our lives.

It has been a pleasure to serve you, the members of CMEA, for the past two years. Regrettably, I must write that this is my final issue as Editor. My wife and I have taken an opportunity to move closer to family, and we are relocating to Colorado Springs in just a few short days. While this is the best move for us, I will miss you all so much! I have had a great time working with so many outstanding educators at festivals and events. Keep up with all that you do, and know that even on the hardest days, our work is so valuable.

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GREETINGS FROM THE NEW STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMISSION CHAIR

John Abucewicz

Hello amazing music teachers of Connecticut! My name is John Abucewicz and I am proud to be serving CMEA as the new SAC chair. I have decided it was time to let Dave Winer be a little more “retired” this coming year.

For those of you whom I don't know, I am the instrumental music director at Bristol Central High School in Bristol. I am currently finishing my 16th year in Bristol, and my 26th overall teaching music in Connecticut. I am excited to work for CMEA in a new capacity. In the past, I have served as ensemble chair for regional festivals, and most recently finished a 5 year run as festival chair for the Northern Region High School festival.

This letter comes to you at a time of great uncertainty. We don't know what the near future holds for us in terms of our teaching. If you had the experience I had this spring, it was a roller coaster. When schools closed on March 13th, it didn't feel like we were ready for what was coming. I know some districts already have 1-to-1 technology, but we were not one of them. We teachers had a lot of learning to do.

At the time of this letter, I feel like I am in a better place personally and professionally. I have connected with more students over the past few weeks, although not in ways any of us are used to. Whether it was a Remind message, an email, or a phone call, I loved hearing from my students. At the same time, it broke my heart that I would not be able to make music with my graduating seniors before they left.

Enough doom and gloom...I'm sure we are all feeling the effects of what this has done to us but we need to look

at ANY silver linings we can find. For me, I've been able to discover some great resources for teaching (that I hope I can continue to use in the future), I've collaborated more with colleagues on “what's next”, and I've been able to spend some real time with my college-age son and my music-teacher wife (even though my son would have MUCH rather been with his friends at school!).

CMEA has been meeting virtually and discussing plans for “what if”. However, nothing can be set until we are told what we can and can't do. We are hoping for as much normalcy as possible when the fall comes, but we won't know until we know.

In all this craziness, we need to see the forest for the trees. This will pass,



we will get to be together again, and we will come through stronger than we were before.

Be well, stay safe, and I hope to see many of you very soon.



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FROM THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHAIR

Melanie Champion, Chair

Dear Colleagues,

As I write this we are nearing the end of a very unusual school year with unique demands on us as educators. While facing personal challenges during the pandemic, as a profession we have risen to the occasion and overcome MANY obstacles seemingly all at once. You have probably watched several webinars or how-to videos about all the new technologies/apps/platforms you were tasked with learning to employ on the fly. You also may have been responsible for your own children while juggling teaching, learning to sew a face mask, hunting for grocery deliveries, participating in birthday or teacher parades, worrying about those students that don't participate in lessons anymore, laughing at yourself trying to make instructional videos alone at home, and many other struggles. At the same time, perhaps you were able to find some positives in our new lifestyles, such as going for walks with your family, time spent playing a group game on a video chat, discovering that some students THRIVE in distance learning, learning to bake sourdough bread, or trying other new recipes and hobbies. To be sure, the past few months have been full of highs and lows without much balance between the two extremes.

I have spent time contemplating the future of music education and have many questions and concerns, but not many answers at this time. Right now, we still don't know what the next school year will bring, and it is difficult to face the unknown and be unable to plan for what/where/how/when we will be teaching. This pandemic has caused us all to take stock of what is truly important, and will certainly have a lasting effect on the ways students learn music. The

traditional performance ensemble focus may have to shift for the time being into other artistic processes, or individual skill development outside of a large ensemble setting. The hand-holding, singing, folk dance, and song culture of our general music setting may also change for a time and challenge us to explore other aspects of being a musical person. THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY! Instead of seeing change as a bad thing, we can look at all the positive benefits it can bring to our programs, students, and greater school community. There are so many other things we can do to engage students and support their needs, and that is what music does BETTER than any other subject/content area. Music is what unites us and makes us human. Even if we have to make music from 6+ feet apart, or separately at our homes, we can still find ways to connect with each other and with our students.

It is more important than ever to reach out to your professional organizations for support and to lift

up others. Our advocacy efforts are critical at this time. I want to be there for you to support your professional development needs and am always looking for ways to do this best. We have added a Distance Learning Resources page to our website, so [click here to check it out!](#) If you have a resource you would like to share with your colleagues, [click here to submit it.](#) And please consider joining the PD Committee, which generally meets once a month during the school year. If you have suggestions, requests, or ideas please reach out to me at cmeaPD@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you. And most importantly, make sure to schedule time for yourself to check out of all the stress and take care of yourself - get outside for a hike, practice martial arts or yoga, read a book, garden, play with legos, whatever it is that makes you happy, take lots of time for that!



From the March 3rd Coffee and Conversation with the Connecticut Children's Chorus. One participant commented: "Thank you for opening up your CCC's rehearsals to us tonight and for the read through. It really was fabulous..... The quality of music in the read through was equally wonderful and I'm so glad I came."

EASTERN REGION REPORT

Megan Kirwin, Director

Greetings from the Eastern Region!

Thank you all for a wonderful year of music for our students and thank you for being so supportive and understanding as I began my role as Eastern Region Director this year. I hope I can continue in CMEA in the future!

Our dates for next year are as follows:

High School Auditions: November 14, 2020 at Manchester High School.

High School Festival: January 8-9, 2021 at UCONN

(snow dates are January 15-16, 2021).

Middle School Auditions: December 5, 2020 at East Lyme Middle School.

Middle School Festival: March 13-14, 2021 at RHAM Middle and High School

(snow dates are March 20-21, 2021).

In this time of uncertainty I wish you all patience, flexibility, and understanding. We need to support each other and lift each other and our students up more than ever. Music is an important part of every child's education and we need to make sure each of our districts understand its importance. We can deliver this message not only with research and data, but with impassioned teaching and performances. I wish you a restful, safe summer and I am eager to see you all in the fall!



SOUTHERN REGION REPORT

Jaminda Blackmon, Director



Congratulations on a very successful year, and thank you for all of your support, patience, and love as I completed my first year as Southern Region Director. As a region we successfully instilled confidence and taught discipline, perseverance, collaboration, and that hard work does not go unnoticed. We created lifelong memories and a lifetime love of music, and through our example showed patience, understanding, and most

importantly, love for all of our students. We may have even started a student or two on the road to becoming a music teacher.

This year our students had the opportunity to work with the best musicians and they, as well as some of us, are

better because of the musical artists that joined us. And this is only what we did with the festivals. What has happened in your classrooms, and now your homes, is nothing short of amazing. Although it was incredibly challenging, as a group we were able to move our lessons online ensuring that our students were able to continue their music education. We did this while having to console many students on the fact that their final performances were not going to happen. It's been a very emotional year, to say the least. Thank you so much for all of your hard work, sacrifices, support, and love for our students throughout it all. Thank you for supporting each other in this time of confusion and transition into the virtual world. Thank you for pushing through and not giving up, though there are many times when you wanted to. Please thank your families as well.

With the summer approaching please take the time to relax and spend time with your families. It is well deserved. I look forward to returning next year and creating even more memories and experiences. You are amazing educators and supportive colleagues. Your students are blessed to have you in their lives, and as an organization we are better because of teachers like you. Have a great summer and see you in the new school year.

RETIRING EDUCATOR TRIBUTES

We offer these sentiments and highlights in honor of our music educators retiring across the state this year. We thank you for your service to students and to the art of music. Editor Nick Loafman would also like to thank all the contributors to this project.

Judy Abrams
Leonard J Tyl Middle School
Oakdale, CT

Judy is retiring after 26 years at Tyl Middle School. In addition to initiating the first and only music tech lab in the district, she built the choral program at Tyl from the ground up. Her students have performed at CMEA Eastern Regionals, CMEA Elementary Honors Choir and the Honors Performance Series at Carnegie Hall. Last year, Judy's select Chamber Choir scored the 2nd highest rating out of 52 middle school choirs in New England at Fantastic Festivals. She has been an active certified CMEA Adjudicator for the past 25 years. A winner of the CAS Exemplary Educator Award in 2005, Judy taught Grades 6-8 Chorus, General Music, and started the first honors choir at Tyl middle school. She wrote and implemented the school's first fully-integrated learning project in 2002 and 2005, using the Bahamian festival of Junkanoo. Teachers from all grades and various disciplines wrote lessons on Bahamian culture, lifestyle, science and history, and the 8th Grade Adventures in Music students made costumes, Goombay drums and cowbells for the Junkanoo Rush (parade). Judy also directed the school's Drama program for 16 years. She has toured and performed with The Disciples Quartet, served as church choir director, worship leader, and singer in North Stonington, and has led yearly summer mission trips to Poland. She holds degrees from Wheaton College Conservatory and Central Connecticut State University. Congratulations Judy on a wonderful career!

Richard Sadlon
Darien Music Department
Darien, CT



Richard Sadlon has been the Director of Music for Darien Public Schools since 1999, after having served as the Darien High School Band Director from 1994 to 1999. He was also teaching Music Exploration at Middlesex Middle School until his retirement. Rick skillfully led the town's music department to great heights while advocating for teachers, students, and the arts at the local and statewide level. He worked tirelessly to build the music department into a dynamic program and to provide excellent musical experiences for students at all grade levels. Among his contributions are the inception of the Darien Young Composer Concert program, an annual concert showcase of works composed and performed by students in grades K-12, and district-wide co-curricular music department themes which promote opportunities for interdisciplinary study. Rick is described

by his colleagues as “a constant source of encouragement”, a “good-natured, understanding administrator”, and a “jazz woodwind player / pit musician extraordinaire”. He was a longtime member of the Goodspeed Opera House Orchestra and toured with an international company of “Cats”. In addition to his leadership of the Darien music program, Rick is active in the Connecticut Arts Administrators Association. Congratulations Rick and thank you for your service!

Contributed by Gretchen Perrett, Malcolm Karlan, and others

Monica Dostaler
Jack Jackter Intermediate School
Colchester, CT

Monica has taught General Music and Chorus for Grades 3-5 for many years in Colchester at Jack Jackter Intermediate School. Thank you Monica for your many years of service! Congratulations on a wonderful career, and thank you for all you have done for students.

Gretchen Perrett
Middlesex Middle School
Darien, CT

Gretchen has worked tirelessly for over 34 years at Middlesex in building a strong instrumental band program—one of the best in our region. She has recently directed the 6th Grade Band, the MMS Honors Band, and worked with students in the Adaptive Music program. She always put student needs and program needs first. Gretchen spearheaded many initiatives at Middlesex Middle school including organizing and promoting the music portion of our annual Veteran's Day



ceremony along with working with our Ambassador's Club by providing small ensemble music for the 5th grade students as part of our step up program for incoming 6th graders. Gretchen interfaced often with our elementary band directors by visiting our feeder elementary schools, introducing herself and joining the students in making music in their elementary band rooms. Gretchen understood the importance of building and maintaining a strong instrumental program through a sense of community and connection with her students and their families.

Gretchen gave of her time freely to help out with other programs, band trips and concerts that weren't necessarily for her own band students. Gretchen brought her talent, skill, organization, enthusiasm and genuine empathy each and every day. Gretchen completed her undergraduate degree from the Hartt School and her masters degree in Music from the Yale School of Music where she met her husband (and fellow trumpeter) Steve. Together they continue to perform for graduation ceremonies and religious events. Gretchen has performed for both New Haven, Hartford and Bridgeport Symphony Orchestras. For 16 years she was a mainstay in the orchestra pit of the GoodSpeed Opera House. Gretchen was also the first to perform the music for "Annie" before it came to Broadway and became a hit. Gretchen is a devoted member of The First United Church of Christ, Congregational, initiated their church band, and has been a mainstay in their

church choir for over 30 years. All of us from the Middlesex family will miss Gretchen and wish her well in her retirement!

Contributed by Jim Carter and Rick Sadlon

Sandra Kleisner
Kent Center School
Kent, CT

Sandy is retiring after teaching chorus and general music Grades PreK-8 at Kent Charter School. Her students have earned numerous awards at Fantastic Festivals. She has brought many students to participate in NRMS chorus, and has directed some amazing middle school musicals, as well as musicals for the first and second graders. Sandy is also the general music teacher at Norfolk Elementary School and has taught at Shepaug and Housatonic Valley Regional High Schools. She is a church organist, accompanist for Chorus Angelicus, and a graduate of Western Connecticut State University. Congratulations, Sandra!

Contributed by David Poirier

Luann Saunders
Cherry Brook Primary School
Canton, CT

Luann has taught Classroom Music, PreK through Grade 3. Luann creates celebrations that are true expressions of the curriculum. Students demonstrate their learning for their school and families at the 1st Grade Cinco de Mayo Celebration, 2nd Grade Native American Celebration, 3rd Grade Recorder Concert, school-wide Family Folk Dances, Sing-Alongs, and annual May Dance. Her musicianship is unparalleled and her care for every student is palpable. Luann holds bachelors and masters degrees from SUNY Buffalo. She taught First Steps in Music through the Hartt Community Division, taught for 7 years in Granby, and the remainder of her career in Canton. Luann and her husband Clark raised a very musical family and often perform together

**"Arts education supports
the social and emotional
well-being of students, whether
through distance learning or
in person."**

*From "Arts Education Is Essential," a unified statement
from national arts organizations across the United States*



as a family band at their summer home on Lake Canada. Luann's work at Cherry Brook is the foundation of all our district's success in music. Congratulations Luann!

Keith Hedin
Newtown Middle School
Newtown, CT

Keith Hedin is retiring from Newtown Middle School at the end of an impressive 40-year career, with 35 of those years in Newtown. Keith taught Orchestra and Music Technology, and is considered the beacon of the program. His unwavering dedication to music and his professionalism present the bar to which we are all reaching. Congratulations, Keith!

Contributed by Jonathan Pope

Corinne Brewer
Rochambeau Middle School
Southbury, CT



Corrine has taught Grade 6-8 Chorus and General Music, 8th Grade Guitar, and music at the Alternative High School. She is a Dog Frisbee World Champion, participates in Dock Dogs events, is Music Director at her UCC Church, and also enjoys kayaking and fishing. Thank you for sharing your gift of music with us all. Like you always say, "it's about the kids!" Congratulations, Corrine!

Contributed by David Kean, Kevin Klepacki, and Linnea Bronson

Peter Hohmeister
Eastern Middle School
Greenwich, CT



Peter is retiring after 30 years with Greenwich Public Schools, including 20 teaching middle school band at Eastern. His students have excelled in the Western Region festivals and in adjudicated festivals around the area. He has been so gratified to see so many

Eastern musicians succeed in their music making at Greenwich High School and beyond. He holds degrees from the Hartt School and the University of Bridgeport. He is a percussionist with the Norwalk Symphony, the drummer for Aztec Two Step, plays in many pit orchestras, and accompanies the FCCC. Peter is an avid long distance runner, a cyclist, and swimmer, although he asserts he's not too fast in the water. He looks forward to spending more time with his daughter in Charleston, SC - his "home away from home". Congratulations Peter!

Anne Tornillo
Trumbull High School
Trumbull, CT

Anne is retiring from her position as Choral Director at Trumbull High School. Her choral groups performed at Carnegie Hall and numerous other venues, both at home and abroad. Congratulations Anne on your career and success with students!

"It is imperative that all students have access to an equitable delivery of arts education that includes dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts that supports their educational, social, and emotional well-being, taught by certified professional arts educators in partnership with community arts providers."

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A HYMN FOR THE LOST & THE LIVING - A RETROSPECTIVE

By Eric Ewazen

In September, 2001 as I was writing a work entitled “Flight”, commissioned by the USAF Heritage of America Band at Langley Air Force Base and celebrating the 100th anniversary of powered flight, the catastrophe of 9/11 occurred. The conductor of the band, Col. Larry Lang, asked me if I would write a work memorializing that awful moment. This became my work “A Hymn for the Lost and the Living” for wind ensemble. It was subsequently arranged for orchestra by Otto Werner Muelle for the Juilliard Orchestra, and premiered by them in Alice Tully Hall in New York City.

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, I was teaching my freshman Music Theory class at Juilliard. Towards the end of the class a student came in late, saying that a plane had hit the World Trade Center at the Southern tip of Manhattan. It seemed that maybe it was a tragic accident, that perhaps a commuter plane might have accidentally hit the building. But subsequently my department head came in and asked to speak to me, and he relayed the true scope of the calamity that had occurred, not only in NYC, but in Washington, D.C., where the Pentagon was also hit by a plane. I will remember that moment of hearing those words for the rest of my life. It seemed as if we were experiencing the start of World War III.

Immediately dismissing the class, we all went to Juilliard’s Library where they had a radio. This was in the days prior to the common use of computers -- so it was only on this small transistor radio that we heard the horrifying events unfold - all of us listening in dead silence. It was there where we heard the moment the 2nd plane flew into the South Tower, heard about the

fires erupting, and the chaos ensuing in Lower Manhattan. We heard the shocking moment when the South tower collapsed, and then the North Tower, and how all airborne flights in the U.S. were being diverted. The Dean, Stephen Clapp, passed a message around the school to the rooms where teachers and students had gathered, directing us all to go down to the Juilliard Theatre. He addressed all of us, saying that all the students would be taken care of but could not stay in their dorm rooms, which were in the high rise building in the Northwest corner of Lincoln Center. All public places like Lincoln Center were deemed to be targets. So the students that night all slept in the Juilliard Theater, which is actually located below ground in a sub-level. They brought their bedding and pillows and slept in the aisles and on stage. Wednesday, like all of America, we simply watched the aftermath events of the tragedy unfold.

On Thursday, school resumed. As I was teaching my traditional theory classes, the very concept of teaching music seemed, somehow, trivial in the face of a world that had unalterably changed in that one instant.

On Friday, a message had gone around in the newspapers and on TV encouraging people to go out on the streets at night with candles, and just join together to pay tribute to those who had died. And so that night on streets like Broadway, normally so crowded with noisy joyful life, people were walking together on the streets, holding their votive candles... AND



they were singing. Singing anything - familiar tunes, popular tunes, hymn tunes, and in that process they were honoring the slain and giving comfort to each other. It was the music that helped the healing begin.

And THEN I realized that this is what was real, enduring, and powerful. The music was not trivial. It was life affirming and healing and comforting.

That became the genesis of my piece “A Hymn for the Lost and the Living”, a tribute to those who died, and to those who grieve. It also portrays the stages of grief with melodies that are serene and lyrical, beginning with the opening trumpet solo which honors those who died. Other musical passages reflect the strong emotions of the Living who grieve for their loved ones with sadness and heartbreak; the music is powerful and even tragic. The loss is profound and the music disappears in silence, but the melodies and emotions will linger on forever, in our hearts and minds and memories.

Eric Ewazen, composer and faculty member of the Juilliard School, has had his music played by many of the most distinguished orchestras, wind ensembles, chamber ensembles and soloists around the world. His music, especially for brass instruments, has become standards and staples of the repertoire.

THE POWER OF A SONG IN A STRANGE LAND

By Rev. Donna M. Cox, The University of Dayton

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From the moment of capture, through the treacherous middle passage, after the final sale and throughout life in North America, the [experience of enslaved Africans](#) who first arrived at Jamestown, Virginia, some 400 years ago, was characterized by loss, terror and abuse.

The [Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807](#) made it illegal to buy and sell people in British colonies, but in the independent United States slavery remained a prominent – [and legal](#) – practice until December 1865. From this tragic backdrop one of the most poignant American musical genres, the Negro spiritual, was birthed.

Sometimes called [slave songs](#), [jubilees](#) and [sorrow songs](#), spirituals were created out of, and spoke directly to, the black experience in America prior to the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, that declared all slaves free.

West African roots

Spirituals have been a part of my life from childhood. In small churches in Virginia and North Carolina, we sang the songs of our ancestors,

drawing strength and hope. I went on to [study](#), perform and teach the spiritual for over 40 years to people across the U.S. and in various parts of the world.

Despite attempts, white slave-owners could not strip Africans of their culture. Even with a new language, English, and without familiar instruments, the enslaved people turned the peculiarities of African musical expressions into the African American sound.

Rhythms were complex and marked by syncopation, an accent on the weak beat. Call-and-response, a technique rooted in sub-Saharan West African culture, was [frequently employed](#) in spirituals. Call-and-response is very much like a conversation – the leader makes a statement or asks a question and others answer or expound.

An example of this is the spiritual, [Certainly Lord](#). The leader excitedly queries, “Have you got good religion?” and others jubilantly respond, “Certainly, Lord.” Using repetition and improvisation, the conversation continues to build until everyone exclaims, “certainly, certainly, certainly, Lord!”

[“Certainly, Lord” performed by the Alfred Street Baptist Church Male Chorus](#)

In Africa, drums were used to [communicate](#) from village to village because they could be used to mimic the inflection of voices. As early as 1739 in the British colonies, drums were [prohibited by law](#) and characterized as weapons in an attempt to prevent slaves from building community and inciting rebellion.

As a result, enslaved people “played” drum patterns on the body. Hands clapped, feet stomped, bodies swayed and mouths provided sophisticated rhythmic patterns. This can be observed in Hambone, an example of improvised body music.

[Hambone technique, performed by Steve McCraven](#)

Oral tradition

Some spirituals were derived from African melodies. Others were “new,” [freely composed songs](#) with a melodic phrase borrowed from here and a rhythmic pattern from there – all combined to create a highly improvised form.

The spiritual was deeply rooted in the oral tradition and often created spontaneously, one person starting a tune and another joining until a new song was added to the community repertoire. The sophisticated result was beautifully [described](#) in 1862 by Philadelphia musicologist and piano teacher [Lucy McKim Garrison](#).

“It is difficult to express the entire character of these negro ballads by mere musical notes and signs,” she said. “The odd turns made in the throat; the curious rhythmic effect produced by single voices chiming in at different irregular intervals, seem almost as impossible to place on score.”

Textually, the spiritual [drew from the Hebrew-Christian Bible](#), particularly the Old Testament, with its stories of deliverance and liberation. Songs like “Go Down Moses” direct the awaited deliverer to “go down” to Southern plantations and “tell ole Pharaoh” – the masters – to “let my people go.”

[“Let My People Go”](#)

Songs of survival

For the slaves, the spiritual proved to be an ingenious tool used to counter senseless brutality and the denial of personhood. In order to survive emotionally, resilience was critical. In the spirituals, slaves sang out their struggle, weariness, loneliness, sorrow, hope and determination for a new and better life.

Yet these are not songs of anger. They are [songs of survival](#) that voice an unwavering belief in their own humanity and attest to an abiding faith in the ultimate triumph of good over systemic evil.

Interspersed within these seemingly hopeless texts are phrases that reflect the heart's hope: the words "[true believer](#)" amid the acknowledgment that "sometimes I feel like a motherless child," for example; and "glory, hallelujah" interjected after the text, "[nobody knows the trouble I see](#)."

Songs declaring, "[I've got a crown up in a dat kingdom. Ain't a dat good news](#)" proclaimed the certainty of a future hope totally unlike the day-to-day reality of enslavement.

People whose every movement was dictated audaciously declared, "I've got shoes. You've got shoes. All God's children got shoes. When I get to heaven gonna put on my shoes,

gonna walk all over God's heaven." In the same song they denounced the hypocrisy of the slaveholders' religion: "Everybody talkin' 'bout heaven ain't going there."

["I Got A Robe" - Moses Hogan \(with score\)](#)

Spirituals weren't simply religious music. In his seminal work, "Narrative Of The Life of Frederick Douglass An American Slave," published in 1845, the abolitionist [explains](#),

"they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains."

The spirituals were [also acts of rebellion](#). They were used to [organize clandestine meetings](#), and announce activities of the Underground Railroad. For example, songs like "[Great Camp Meeting](#)," were used to announce when secret gatherings were being planned.

The spiritual served as a mediator between the dissonance of oppression and the belief that there was "[a bright side somewhere](#)." Four hundred years after the birth of slavery, as the world still struggles with racial division, injustice and a sense of hopelessness, spirituals

can teach how to build hope in the face of despair and challenge the status quo.

Rev. Dr. Donna M. Cox, is a graduate of Washington University St. Louis where she received the Ph.D. and M.M. degrees in Performance Practices: Choral Conducting and the University of Dayton where she earned the M.A. in Theological Studies. Dr. Cox has performed in various parts of the world, including Nepal, Barcelona, Jamaica, Hawaii, Prague, Italy, Ghana. Her scholarly research includes publications in The Conversation, The African American Lectionary, The Journal of Black Sacred Music, Triad, Rejoice!, Ethnomusicology, and several book chapters. She has authored several books; her most recent are [Meeting Space: One On One With God and Anthology of Art Songs & Spirituals By African American Composers](#). Dr. Cox regularly conducts workshops and symposia celebrating the works and lives of African American composers and arrangers. She has gained recognition throughout the academic community for elevating the study of gospel music within the college curricula. She is ordained by the American Baptist Churches USA and is pursuing the Doctor of Ministry degree in Semiotics, Church, and Culture at Portland Seminary.



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MUSIC IN TIMES OF TRAGEDY

What can we learn from the music written during the Holocaust about the importance of music in our times?

By Dr. Amit Weiner - Composer and pianist, Head of The Cross-Disciplinary Composition Division at The Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, and founder of the project "Music in Times of Tragedy" – the music from the Holocaust.



Amit Weiner, Tel Aviv, May 2020.

Introduction

"When the guns roar the muses are silent" - we all know this famous Latin saying, and we usually think it is true. We think that when the guns roar, in times of war, tragedy, and suffering, that the muses and music among them, are silent. But I think it is wrong! I think that proverb got it all completely wrong.

We are living at a turning point of this century, a difficult period of time - the time of COVID-19. I believe this period is a challenge for all of us to strengthen our beliefs, to see what is more important in our lives and what is less. As a musician I feel it is a challenging time to think over many of our prejudices and to look at music and the arts with a new and fresh perspective. A perspective that will change what we think about music, a perspective that will show us how wrong that opening saying is. A perspective that might change our lives.

About the project "Music in Times of Tragedy"

The project "Music in Times of Tragedy" was launched in 2012 as a collaboration I founded between the Jerusalem Academy of Music, where I teach, and Yad Vashem Museum in Israel. The project is dedicated to the music written during the Holocaust by Jewish composers who did not survive. Since 2012, I have had the honor of sharing this beautiful music, written in such dark times, in many places around the world: from Beijing to Bangkok, Myanmar and Vietnam, Taiwan and Nepal, Singapore and Manila.

I have traveled to audiences that sometimes did not have any knowledge of the Holocaust, and I have seen the transformation

of people as they realized the power of music through the stories of the composers and the beauty of their compositions and songs.

Over the years, I have been brought to tears many times during these performances:

After 500 audience members in Chegndu, China, sang in Chinese a song by Mordechai Gebirtig, a Jewish composer who was murdered during the Holocaust:

["Years of Childhood" in Chinese](#)

Or after the communal and emotional singing of some 200 kids from the British Vietnamese International School in Hanoi, as they sang in English the same song by Mordechai Gebirtig:

["Years of Childhood" in English](#)

Or in my home country of Israel, when the same song was performed in Yiddish and Hebrew by two famous Israeli singers accompanied by an orchestra, in a concert commemorating the Holocaust Remembrance day:

["Years of Childhood" in concert, in Yiddish and Hebrew](#)

(orchestration arranged and conducted by the author)

How is it possible that music was composed during the Holocaust?

Music is different from other art forms, different from a painting or a book. A book is read by a single person in their own room. A painting can be experienced by anyone at their own time. But music is usually listened to in a crowd. It is a communal experience, and this is part of its power to connect and join people together.

The first question about the music from the Holocaust: How is it even possible that music was written at all? In other words, how can it be that in such horrible times, inside the Nazi Concentration Camps, under un-human pressures and tortures, when the main concern was physical survival, finding food, water and shelter - how is it possible

Concert photos

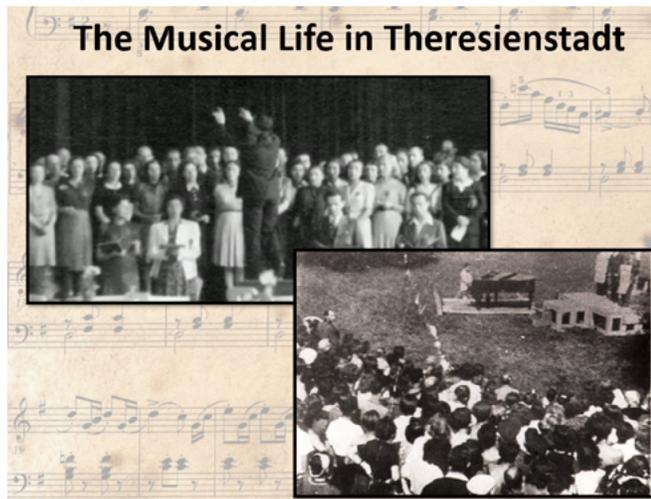
January 26th, 2017
Bangkok, Thailand



that music was written? How did those composers find the time, the inspiration, and the spiritual motivation to write music at all?

It is important to know that not all the Ghettos and Concentration Camps had musical activities in them. There were Concentration Camps and Death Camps where music was not allowed at all by the Nazis. There were also Death Camps where music became a method of torturing the Jewish prisoners and a deception tool of the Nazis, where the music accompanied the entire extermination process. But there was one Concentration Camp where music thrived: Theresienstadt near Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Theresienstadt Concentration Camp



Many of the composers from the Holocaust were prisoners in Theresienstadt Concentration Camp. Theresienstadt was established by the Nazis near Prague, in what is now the Czech Republic. Theresienstadt was a little different from other Nazi Concentration Camps. It was the only camp the Nazis allowed the Red Cross to visit, under special approval. This occurred only because the government of Denmark insisted on sending representatives to find out where the Jews were being sent. Denmark was the only country in Europe to make such a demand of the Nazis, and from these actions Theresienstadt had more cultural life than any other Concentration Camp, at least for a short period of time.

Because of the unique status of Theresienstadt, it is common to refer to it both as a Ghetto and as a Concentration Camp. The writer Norbert Fried, a survivor of Theresienstadt has said about his time there: "Up until today I meet people who are whispering to me: 'We have seen nowhere else such an abundance of cultural life like there was in Theresienstadt'". Most of the composers included in the "Music in Times of Tragedy" project were prisoners in Theresienstadt. Among them are Ilse Weber,

Viktor Ullmann, Hans Krása, Pavel Haas, Gideon Klein, Rafael Schächter and more.

In 1944 all the cultural activities in the camp stopped, and the Nazis began the liquidation of the camp by sending all the prisoners to Auschwitz and other Extermination camps in Poland. 160,000 Jewish prisoners were held in Theresienstadt - almost 90% of them did not survive.

You can find out more info about Theresienstadt from the "House of Terezin" Museum in Israel: <https://bterezin.org.il/en/>

The music in other camps



There are unbelievable stories about how hard it was to have a musical and cultural life inside other camps, and yet how far people went in order to have it in their lives. The music made them feel human again, gave them hope, and strengthened their will to live.

Some interesting examples are the Jewish symphony orchestras in the Ghettos. It is truly unbelievable, but there were active symphony orchestras in almost all the major Jewish Ghettos in Poland. These orchestras were working against all odds, without any means at all - without money, proper concert halls, and sometimes without the proper musical instruments. Sometimes they had to replace the missing instruments with saxophones to play classical music. But still, they managed to sustain symphony orchestras with concerts and audiences that bought tickets. This activity went on up until the last days. Even in the most horrible conditions, people played music, sang, performed, and reminded themselves they were human.

This quote was written on the concerts bulletin board of the Jewish symphony orchestra in the Warsaw Ghetto: **"Music is more important than bread, especially at times when it is not needed at all."** I believe this saying summarizes the importance of music for these people during the Holocaust.

The composers from the Holocaust

These composers are among the most important from the Holocaust:



Conclusion:

“When the guns roar the muses are louder than ever before!”

I believe that the music from the Holocaust, and the stories of the composers who wrote it, can be proof to us that the Latin saying “When the guns roar the muses are silent” is definitely wrong.

History, especially the history of the Holocaust, tells us that in times of tragedy, war, and suffering music plays a very important role. Suddenly music is seen not just as entertainment. It is not the “Auditory Cheesecake” that Steven Pinker has talked about when he discusses the evolutionary aspect of music. Instead, music becomes an important tool which enables people to survive. As we saw earlier, music becomes even “more important than bread”.

The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche wrote *“If someone has WHY to live for, he can suffer almost any HOW”*.

As a musician myself, I strongly believe that the muses do not need to be silent in times of tragedy and violence. I personally believe that music is always about life, and never about death. A person’s music can survive long after the person is gone. The music from the Holocaust has survived long after the composers are all gone. I also believe this message of hope is very relevant in our time. In the last couple of months we have seen people gathering to perform music through video-chat apps, overcoming all the technological difficulties just to play music together. We see members of orchestras and choirs from all over the world solo-performing symphonies and compositions, and mixing together afterwards as if they were all playing in the same room. In our era of social distancing, we are all being made aware of the power of music to connect people in the most profound way.

For me as a composer, delving inside the music from the Holocaust is a revelation of the power of the subtle and fragile areas of the sub-conscious. Not the power of what we can achieve with great force, but the power of a delicate art that can only be alive while people are performing it, the power of music in times of tragedy.

For more information about the project “Music in Times of Tragedy” – The Music from the Holocaust, visit the author’s website: <https://www.aweinermusic.com/holocaust-music>

For more information about the music of the Holocaust, visit Yad Vashem Museum website: <https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/music/music-in-the-holocaust.asp>

Israeli composer Amit Weiner has an international career as a composer, a concert pianist, and a presenter. He has performed in concert tours in Asia and America, included Hong Kong, Macau and Vietnam, and all over the US. His music has been performed in festivals and concerts, including New York’s Carnegie Hall, Europe and Asia. As a composer he is active in both the genre of concert music, and in music for films and TV. His oeuvre includes over 50 chamber, vocal and orchestral works. Dr. Weiner is a senior member of the faculty of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, where he teaches composition, harmony, theory, and ear-training, and is the head of the Cross-Disciplinary Composition Division. He holds a Ph.D. in composition from Bar Ilan University, with undergraduate and graduate degrees from the JAMD. His works are published by the Israeli Music Institute and the Israeli Composers’ League.

The Federal Music Project: An American Voice in Depression-Era Music

Audrey S. Rutt, *Cedarville University*

After World War I, the United States was musically transformed from an outsider in the European classical tradition into a country of musical vibrance and maturity. Especially during the 1920s, the formerly young musical nation saw classical music reaching new heights in the hearts and minds of the American people. In fact, it might be argued that “the World War was the most important single factor, up to that time, in converting America into a musical country.”¹ Because of the war, American students were less likely to study abroad in Europe and instead sought American teachers. At the same time, the American music scene became more “European;” conservatories, symphonies, and orchestral music flourished like never before.² The quality of music education in public schools rose significantly.³ Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Los Angeles began to develop new orchestras rivalling those that were already established in Boston, Chicago, and New York.⁴ During the 1920s, orchestral music became more prominent than any other form of classical music in the States. Toward the

end of the decade, even chamber music, which had none of the spectacle of the symphony orchestra or opera but was music only “in its purest form,” became popular with audiences.⁵

Internationally, musicians were impressed by the “remarkable efforts,” “great progress,” and raised standards of musical life in America by 1930.⁶ These great advances, however, were deeply threatened by the Wall Street crash of 1929 and the consequent Great Depression. Unlike in Europe where music was government-subsidized, American arts were primarily sponsored by private patrons up until 1929. When the Depression hit, many of these arts patrons lost their fortunes.⁷ The nation that was developing an international reputation in the arts for the first time now faced a crisis of how to support them.

Despite the bleak economic circumstances that the Depression held for all Americans, especially musicians, this period from 1929 through the 1940s also fostered extraordinary musical growth and success. In response to the economic downturn, government sponsorship became prevalent in all major industries through Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal. Roosevelt especially desired to support the arts because the “American Dream” offered “the promise not only of economic and social justice but also of cultural enrichment.”⁸ Each of these aims—

economic justice, social justice, and cultural enrichment—was fulfilled in a unique and substantial way by the Federal Music Project (FMP), which sought to address the needs of the national music community.

Unfortunately, the Federal Music Project is perhaps the least researched and least understood of the New Deal Federal One projects, receiving less scholarly attention today than the similar Federal Arts Project (FAP), Federal Theatre Project (FTP), and Federal Writers’ Project (FWP).⁹ Although this is the case, the Federal Music Project is significant to the discussion of twentieth-century American music due to its extensive economic, political, and social consequences. With a wide-reaching impact, the Federal Music Project elevated the role that music played in the lives of the American people, empowered the minorities who were in the American music industry, and encouraged all Americans from East to West to join forces as a unique voice in the world of music.

The most immediate consequence of the FMP was in economic assistance to musicians across the nation. According to an estimation by the American Federation of Musicians, two-thirds of AFM members were unemployed by

¹ David Ewen, *Music Comes to America* (New York: Allen, Towne, & Heath, 1947), 135.

² *Ibid.*, 135–136.

³ Cornelius B. Canon, “The Federal Music Project of the Works Progress Administration: Music in a Democracy” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1963), 6.

⁴ Ewen, *Music Comes to America*, 141.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁶ Ewen, *Music Comes to America*, 209.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁸ Audra Bellmore and Amy S. Jackson, “The New Mexico Federal Music

Project: Embodying the Regional Spirit of Roosevelt’s New Deal,” *Notes* 69, no. 1 (2012): 23, doi:10.1353/not.2012.0125.

⁹ Peter Gough, *Sounds of the New Deal: The Federal Music Project in the West* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 4.

1933.¹⁰ Even internationally acclaimed teachers in New York City lost up to ninety-nine percent of their pupils.¹¹ Publishers and instrument technicians alike suffered when the figure for annual piano sales dropped from 400,000 to 90,000.¹² As a result, major orchestras all over the country struggled financially; the Philadelphia orchestra took a ten percent salary decrease in 1932 and an additional nine percent decrease the very next year.¹³ Performers faced the added challenge that their jobs were actually being taken by technological substitutes.¹⁴ For example, live performances all over the country declined as recordings played by studios and radio stations replaced live bands.¹⁵ Although audio recording had already been existent in American musical life, “the depression merely helped the sound film, the radio, and the phonograph to become firmly entrenched in the American economy.”¹⁶ In fact, while other industries were struggling to make ends meet the first year after the crash (1930), the phonograph industry hit a five-year peak in sales.¹⁷ Unemployment due to technological replacement proved to be such a lasting issue that the American Federation of Musicians held a recording ban from 1942–1944 in

order to promote live performances and to reevaluate protocol for royalties.¹⁸ Roosevelt founded the Works Progress Administration (WPA) by executive order in 1935 as a response to such widespread unemployment. The purpose of the WPA was to “recommend and carry on small useful projects” that would preserve the “self-respect,” “self-reliance,” “courage,” and “determination” of the working public.¹⁹ In particular, the Federal Project No. One (commonly referred to as Federal One) sought to support those in the fields of art, music, theatre, and writing. Under the umbrella of the Federal One projects, which were headed by Harry Hopkins, Nikolai Sokoloff took up directorship for the Federal Music Project in 1935.²⁰ The FMP was soon instituted nationwide, with the largest units scattered throughout New England, the Midwest, and California, and with significant units in Mississippi, New Mexico, and Oklahoma.²¹ According to an official statement, the aims of the FMP were to educate the public about excellent music, to aid the community in its relief efforts, and to create a culture that valued the arts in everyday life. This was to be accomplished by employing and supporting musicians who would be providing services to the community. Of course, being a temporary project, all of this was directed toward an end of musician reemployment.²²

The project was largely successful in these goals. Within six months, the FMP employed the largest number of workers (15,000 musicians) compared to any of the other federally sponsored arts projects.²³ By 1937, one year after the FMP’s creation, 1,835 of those employed musicians left the relief rolls to go “to private employment.”²⁴ Many of these musicians went on to major symphony orchestras.²⁵ FMP workers were employed in a variety of settings. Financial concerns generally caused production of large-scale projects, such as operas, not to be a “practical venture” for the FMP.²⁶ The San Diego music project, however, found that the Depression actually offered “propitious conditions” for the undertaking—there were many highly trained people that were available and willing to work.²⁷ When the WPA took over the California State Emergency Relief Administration programs in 1935, it continued the federal opera company that existed in San Diego. The federally sponsored personnel included a sixty-member chorus, a double set of principals, and a fifty-member Federal Philharmonic Orchestra. Although the title characters were occasionally guests, the cast was comprised primarily of local musicians. The costumes for the production were made by the WPA sewing project. Altogether, a single opera could put more than one hundred employees to work. They initially

¹⁰ Canon, “The Federal Music Project,” 9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹² Ewen, *Music Comes to America*, 210.

¹³ Ronald L. Davis, *The Modern Era, 1920–Present*, Vol. 3 of *A History of Music in American Life* (Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger, 1981), 9.

¹⁴ William H. Young, *Music of the Great Depression*, with Nancy K. Young (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 193.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Canon, “The Federal Music Project,” 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Young, *Music of the Great Depression*, 193.

¹⁹ Canon, “The Federal Music Project,” 34–35.

²⁰ Young, *Music of the Great Depression*, 194–195.

²¹ “The Federal Music Project: The Second Preliminary Report Covering Its Scope and Activities during Its First Nine Months,” Dr. Nikolai Sokoloff, dir., Harry L. Hopkins, admin. (Washington, D.C.: Works Progress Administration, 1936), 6.

²² Ewen, *Music Comes to America*, 204.

²³ Young, *Music of the Great Depression*, 195.

²⁴ Canon, “The Federal Music Project,” 76.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁶ William F. McDonald, *Federal Relief Administration and the Arts* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969), 621–622.

²⁷ Peter Mehren, “San Diego’s Opera Unit of the WPA Federal Music Project,” *Journal of San Diego History* 18, no. 3 (1972), n.p., <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/1972/july/opera/>.

considered it an “experiment” to create an opera only with employees from several of the Federal Work Projects, but the final production displayed a “strictly professional air.”²⁸ In that first season, complications with royalties and building regulations cancelled one premiere and delayed the other, but the first two performances of *Cavalleria rusticana* by Pietro Mascagni were so well attended that five more performances were added. For the opera, a total of 15,000 people were in attendance.²⁹ Immediately, production began for *Gondoliers* by Gilbert and Sullivan, with the “hope to eclipse the presentation of *Cavalleria rusticana*.”³⁰ *Gondoliers* and other San Diego company operas were especially successful as travelling shows. By using inexpensive sets and costumes, the company was able to produce these operas all over rural southern California.³¹ As a result, the popularity of opera in San Diego allowed manager William Dean to shift the local Federal Music Project’s focus to classical music. Even popular music groups in San Diego followed the trend to expand and heighten their repertoire for “cultural education.”³²

As could be expected, this type of economic environment was not especially conducive to experimental works. Because “musical innovation and economic insecurity ebb and flow in inverse ratio,” the Depression naturally encouraged tradition rather than innovation.³³ In order to deal with a 100,000-subscription decrease in 1932, the directors of the Philadelphia Orchestra ordered conductor Leopold Stokowski to fill programs exclusively

with “acknowledged masterpieces” that the audiences knew and loved. Stokowski, who had just conducted Berg’s opera *Wozzeck* and had plans to perform Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex*, was not happy with their instruction that “performances of debatable music should be postponed until a more suitable time.”³⁴ Because the Depression called for “an end to self-indulgence and a turn to larger social issues,”³⁵ composers themselves “began to question the relevance of their earlier, ultra-modern aesthetic beliefs.”³⁶ In the midst of economic instability, however, the FMP allowed the country to sustain its reputation in the world of art music. Compared to the other Federal One projects, the FMP had a rather conservative board of directors. In the opinion of FMP director Sokoloff, jazz and swing were worth as much as the daily “funny papers” in comparison to serious classical music, especially that in the romantic symphonic tradition.³⁷ Because the advisory board for the distribution of FMP funds was comprised almost entirely of classical musicians like-minded to Sokoloff, the FMP allocated “a considerable portion of its energies and budget to more elitist areas of music.”³⁸ Although jazz, swing, and other vernacular types of music were in high demand during this time, Sokoloff had the option, as a government-funded music program, of not being confined to public tastes.³⁹

One specific branch of the FMP, the Composers’ Forum-Laboratory, was

created to economically assist and encourage American composers. Including branches in New York, Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles, the concerts featured the works of a living American composer with free admission to the public. Afterwards, the composer would explain the work and answer questions at a public forum. This opportunity had several beneficial results. First, the composer was supported financially in an environment that otherwise would not have nurtured the creation of new music. Second, the composer could play a direct role in public education about classical music. Most importantly, the composer was allowed the extremely valuable experiences of hearing his/her works performed and of receiving critiques. Over the course of the Composers’ Forum-Laboratory from 1936–1938, one hundred American composers premiered close to one thousand works.⁴⁰

Composer Ruth Crawford Seeger’s involvement with the Composers’ Forum-Laboratory in 1938 gave her the inspiration she needed in order to “reestablish her faltering professional identity.”⁴¹ When the Depression hit, Seeger felt the need to shift her career from promoting modern techniques, such as dissonant counterpoint, to composing with publicly accessible materials, such as political texts and folk music.⁴² This period of musical uncertainty also coincided with a psychological crisis in her life.⁴³ The

²⁸ Mehren, “San Diego’s Opera Unit of the WPA Federal Music Project,” n.p.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Kyle Gann, *American Music in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Schirmer, 1997), 49.

³⁴ Davis, *The Modern Era*, 9–10.

³⁵ Gann, *American Music in the Twentieth Century*, 49.

³⁶ David Nicholls, ed., *The Cambridge History of American Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 521.

³⁷ Gough, *Sounds of the New Deal*, 12–13.

³⁸ Young, *Music of the Great Depression*, 195.

³⁹ Ewen, *Music Comes to America*, 205.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 205–207.

⁴¹ Melissa J. De Graaf, “The Reception of an Ultramodernist: Ruth Crawford in the Composers Forum,” in *Ruth Crawford Seeger’s Worlds: Innovation and Tradition in Twentieth-Century American Music*, ed. Ray Allen and Ellie M. Hisama (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 94.

⁴² Nicholls, *The Cambridge History of American Music*, 521.

⁴³ De Graaf, “The Reception of an Ultramodernist,” 94.

support that Seeger received from the FMP and the interactions that she had through the Composers' Forum-Laboratory allowed the struggling composer to envision "the fusion between simplicity and her old techniques."⁴⁴

Johanna Beyer was another composer particularly involved in and influenced by the program. In addition to receiving federal aid through the FMP to teach piano, she was able to compose and debut various piano, choral, and chamber works through the Composers' Forum-Laboratory.⁴⁵ Three of her five choral pieces were composed specifically to enter in FMP-sponsored composition contests.⁴⁶ Beyer was actually one of the first women to be chosen for a Composers' Forum-Laboratory concert, at which she premiered her *Three Songs for Soprano and Clarinet*.⁴⁷ Although members of the public forum afterwards criticized her "strange and ineffective tonal combinations,"⁴⁸ likely due to her close association with Henry Cowell and his avant-garde techniques, the Composers' Forum-Laboratory and the FMP were able to assist Beyer doubly by bringing her out of both poverty and obscurity.

Director Sokoloff's emphasis on high art music within the FMP was, whether intentionally or unintentionally, resisting a host of ideologies: the "attempt at democracy and inclusivity in art and music," "the progressive nature of the Roosevelt administration," and "the belief that America was a 'melting pot' of cultures."⁴⁹ The elite

⁴⁴ De Graaf, "The Reception of an Ultramodernist," 103.

⁴⁵ Amy C. Beal, *Johanna Beyer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 17.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁸ De Graaf, *The New York Composers' Forum Concerts, 1935–1940* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2013), 98.

⁴⁹ Bellmore and Jackson, "The New Mexico Federal Music Project," 25.

ideal of "art for art's sake" that was espoused by Sokoloff and his board was met with criticism by populist New Deal supporters.⁵⁰ Joseph Weber, president of the American Federation of Musicians, complained that under Sokoloff's direction the FMP was more about "the advancing of the culture of music" than assisting unemployed workers, and he personally wrote to Sokoloff that "the standard should not be set too high."⁵¹

Despite Sokoloff's intentions, many programs in the FMP were influenced toward a populist style, which was an inevitable result of the economic circumstances and a recent growth in nationalism. Populism was a progressive political ideology that was devoted to useful purposes rather than artistic ones. It stressed democracy, simplicity, and utility. Even through the Composers' Forum-Laboratory events, many composers were influenced towards a populist style.⁵² This may be because the forums acted as feedback tools for composers, while they also served as educational tools for the public. For example, many pieces of Johanna Beyer's are notable examples of *Gebrauchsmusik* (music for use), which was associated with the populist style. Two of her works for SATB chorus were composed for a FMP choral contest and hold the simplistic titles "The Composers Forum-Laboratory" and "The Federal Music Project."⁵³ The text for the latter, written by Beyer herself, praises the FMP itself for promising "a future, oh, so bright" to all Americans.⁵⁴ Similar populist works by Virgil Thomson, Elie Siegmeister, and

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁵¹ Gough, *Sounds of the New Deal*, 17.

⁵² Gann, *American Music in the Twentieth Century*, 50.

⁵³ Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 51.

⁵⁴ Johanna Beyer, "The Federal Music Project" for SATB Chorus, ed. Margaret Fisher and Lou Harrison (Lebanon, NH: Frog Peak Music, 1996), 8.

William Schuman were premiered at the Forums.⁵⁵ Within the FMP, populism abounded in the form of songs, murals, theatre, and even political cantatas.⁵⁶ Charles Seeger noted in a 1937 Forum that "the trend is to get closer to the audience...so that the audience can build [the music] without pulling it down."⁵⁷

Indeed, the United States saw a trend toward a nationalistic style. Considering that the country had just come out of World War I, the United States wanted to unearth its "usable" heritage. Musically, this included researching the works of colonial and Revolutionary composers. The FMP became involved in this process by sponsoring music copyists to create scores out of colonial partbooks.⁵⁸ In general, the FMP promoted "distinctly American themes."⁵⁹ Howard Hanson noted that the Composers' Forum-Laboratory audiences were obsessed with each participating composer's take on the concept of "Americanness" in music.⁶⁰ Hanson, who was himself an American composer, served on advisory boards for the FMP and was an influential proponent of "American music."⁶¹ As an unfortunate result, this period of nationalism, combined with the great influx of immigration, hindered opportunities for non-native composers in the American East.⁶²

⁵⁵ Kenneth J. Bindas, *All of This Music Belongs to the Nation* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 109–111.

⁵⁶ Annegret Fauser, *Sounds of War: Music in the United States during World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 239.

⁵⁷ De Graaf, "The Reception of an Ultramodernist," 102.

⁵⁸ Fauser, *Sounds of War*, 142.

⁵⁹ Young, *Music of the Great Depression*, 196.

⁶⁰ De Graaf, *The New York Composers' Forum Concerts*, 164.

⁶¹ Davis, *The Modern Era*, 105.

⁶² Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 20–21.

In the American West, however, FMP workers adopted a strong interest in popular and folk music styles, particularly in New Mexico, Kentucky, Texas, Arizona, and California. The “creative explosions” of 1920s popular music had incredible repercussions when musicians strove to capture the “original, energetic American identity that characterized the best of the new vernacular musics.”⁶³ Ethnomusicology as a discipline was born as FMP state workers interviewed locals in remote villages and transcribed the songs that they heard: various types of “spirituals, work songs, [and] songs of the rivers and hills.”⁶⁴ For example, two song collections from the New Mexico division of the FMP include *Spanish American Folk Songs of New Mexico* and *Spanish American Singing Games of New Mexico*.⁶⁵ About the Oklahoma FMP, Sokoloff commented that the state had done “uncommonly interesting work in transcription and classification of indigenous music.”⁶⁶ By 1937, more than 2,500 manuscripts of folksongs had been collected nationwide. The song-collectors moved with a “sense of urgency;” they believed that with the rapid increase in technology, communication, and travel, indigenous songs were in danger of extinction. Interestingly, while many of these tunes had been orally transmitted from generations past, the FMP researchers also documented the creation of new folk-style “work songs” sung by WPA workers of their own generation.⁶⁷ During the Depression, the purpose of investigating and researching folk music became tied with politics, so that occupational folk music was changed into a political thing of the American

⁶³ Nicholls, *The Cambridge History of American Music*, 471.

⁶⁴ Bellmore and Jackson, “The New Mexico Federal Music Project,” 25.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁶⁶ Gough, *Sounds of the New Deal*, 185.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 168.

Left.⁶⁸ Due to its down-to-earth, vernacular nature, folk music helped to “[blur] the borders between occupational identities and social, political, and ideological identities” which were dividing the nation.⁶⁹ In other words, President and Mrs. Roosevelt believed that folksong was the type of thing that could “give Americans the feeling that they all belonged.”⁷⁰ Folk music and musics of “alterity” were especially significant because “the agency of the sense of place in American music may well be one of the most persistent processes constituting the Americanization of music.”⁷¹ Groups that had not had a voice in prior generations of American music gladly stepped forward to share their unique musical culture with the rest of the nation. Through folksong and democratic ideals, especially in the West, the FMP had considerable success in supporting the “fringes” of American music: women, African Americans, Jews, Hispanics, and other underrepresented groups.⁷² From the beginning to the end of the project, women were active members of the FMP, as previously noted in the cases of Johanna Beyer and Ruth Crawford Seeger, and as in the case of others like Ruth Haller Ottoway and Frances McFarland. Although women did not quite receive an equal status to men in the Composers’ Forum-Laboratory, the FMP did provide women a means to “claim their rightful place in musical modernism” during the Depression.⁷³ The state programs in New Mexico, Kentucky, California, Connecticut, and Mississippi were each

⁶⁸ Nicholls, *The Cambridge History of American Music*, 288–290.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁷⁰ Gough, *Sounds of the New Deal*, 167.

⁷¹ Nicholls, *The Cambridge History of American Music*, 294.

⁷² Young, *Music of the Great Depression*, 196.

⁷³ De Graaf, *The New York Composers’ Forum Concerts*, 106.

directed by women.⁷⁴ In New Mexico, director Helen Chandler Ryan chose to shift the focus of her state’s program from classical music performance to public music education. At that time, New Mexico was a relatively new state with a sparse population and a limited education system. As a result, Ryan felt that education in the low-income districts of New Mexico was much needed and “would be one of the finest achievements possible under the Federal Music Project.”⁷⁵ The FMP offered lessons to all, both children and adults, even if they were not able to pay for them. Since instruments were not as readily available in the West, students would collect bottles, glasses, food containers, and other various materials to fashion their own music-makers.⁷⁶ The project focused on turning performing musicians into teachers, and in less than a year it had thirty-six solo instruction or group units. In 1939, Ryan held a three-day WPA Federal Music Project Work Conference that held teaching seminars for piano, guitar, violin, voice, and band. Teachers from all over the state attended the conference.⁷⁷ Due to Ryan’s leadership in New Mexico, women accounted for fifty-percent of the educational personnel.⁷⁸ African Americans as a cultural minority had a significant impact on the direction of the FMP in the West and beyond. Of all African Americans who held professional employment during this time, those that had jobs as musicians accounted for an incredible ten percent.⁷⁹ Although the FMP did provide opportunities that otherwise would have been unavailable for musicians and listeners alike,

⁷⁴ Bellmore and Jackson, “The New Mexico Federal Music Project,” 35.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 25–26.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 26–27.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁷⁹ Bindas, *All of This Music Belongs to the Nation*, 77.

unfortunately a general inequality in pay existed.⁸⁰ Through the FMP, African Americans led various educational endeavors. Performances of antebellum spirituals were appreciated by multi-racial audiences all over the nation, which demonstrated along with the new populist spirit “a social acceptance open to...the civil rights movement.”⁸¹ One *People’s World* author praised the travelling choral groups as “perhaps the most wonderful example of liberated talent that the [Federal Music] Project has brought to light.”⁸²

Two significant works that were produced in western divisions of the FMP were based on the texts of the African-American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906). It has been suggested that Dunbar’s rhythmic poetry stands as an ancestor to today’s rap and hip-hop tradition. In setting these texts to music in 1937, composer Howard Biggs incorporated the unique dialect and cultural “resonance” of Dunbar’s poetry. The resulting project *An Evening with Dunbar*, a collaborative effort with the Washington state Theatre Project, set “an entirely new pattern for theatre.” The performances of *An Evening with Dunbar* were sold-out and the schedule was extended.⁸³ William Grant Still’s famous *Afro-American Symphony* is another work that was based on the poetry of Dunbar. Premiered in Philadelphia, the symphony became an influential cultural and musical bridge between the East and the West. The symphony was written to symbolize feelings of “Longing,” “Sorrow,” “Humor,” and “Aspiration” in African-American history, and one way that Still did this was through an integration of classical

forms with popular music styles.⁸⁴ For example, both this symphony and *An Evening with Dunbar* are two of the first classical works to include the banjo, which is highly evocative of African-American instrumentation.⁸⁵ As the most popular symphony of the western state Music Projects, the *Afro-American Symphony* was performed all over southern California and in several other states by FMP orchestras, conducted occasionally by the composer himself.⁸⁶ As the symphony spread throughout the West, critics noted that the vernacular music of cultural minorities was being “raised to an emotional dignity...that commands respect.”⁸⁷ This work became the first widely-performed American symphony to be composed by an African-American composer, and it stands today as one of the great masterpieces of the American literature. The spread of Jewish music in California and Oregon was also promoted by the FMP, and at the same time, Jewish community groups were highly involved in FMP activities. Jewish composer Ernest Bloch found great success in performances of his Hebraic work *Sacred Service* with FMP orchestras. One program in southern California staged the story of Esther, accompanied by song and dance, in the original Hebrew and Yiddish languages. In Portland, an FMP community ensemble was credited with aiding a Jewish community center in their “great social work” by frequently giving widely-attended performances.⁸⁸ During the 1930s, many western cities became dense with European refugees, and one Los Angeles Jewish community center held weekly “Americanization seminars” in which the city’s Music Project teachers taught the national anthem and other American folksongs.⁸⁹ In contrast

with the European climate surrounding World War II, the FMP in the American West created interest in Jewish culture by bringing together people of varied cultural and religious backgrounds through music.⁹⁰ Latin-American music, which had not received any scholarly attention in America until the New Deal, played a primary role in the activities of the New Mexico FMP.⁹¹ Unlike the concerts of the East coast which often featured experimental music, concerts of the New Mexico FMP primarily featured regional Spanish tunes and other types of folk music.⁹² For example, one arranger known as A. Armendariz transcribed Hispanic folk tunes and expanded them into choral and orchestral works.⁹³ Pedro Valles organized a children’s *tipica* orchestra to play traditional regional numbers, and this group traveled both within New Mexico and outside of the state.⁹⁴ Many of the directors and musicians who participated in the project were themselves of Spanish heritage.⁹⁵ In addition to Hispanic music, New Mexico was highly invested in the research of Creole, cowboy, and African-American music. New Mexico stood at this time as perhaps one of the most musically diverse states, with influences from Spain, Mexico, Europe, and American Natives. The state director, Helen Chandler Ryan, thought it “quite fitting” that the government would be involved with preservation of the rare and obscure regional music that had already been part of the area’s culture for generations.⁹⁶ This collaboration and integration from people groups all over the country led to a unique musical style that was

⁸⁰ Bindas, *All of This Music Belongs to the Nation*, 84.

⁸¹ Gough, *Sounds of the New Deal*, 116–117.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 137.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 117–120.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 121–122.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 119–121.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 121–122.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 92–93.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 93–94.

⁹¹ Bellmore and Jackson, “The New Mexico Federal Music Project,” 30.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 27–28.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29–31.

distinctly American. Looking ahead to WWII, this fact holds great importance. FMP programs emphasized the production of music in the American idiom for the American people. In actuality, the “stylistic simplification, nationalist retrenchment, and the politicization of musical composition” that are connected with the WWII era are only “a continuation and culmination of trends that already dominated American music in the 1930s.” This means that the systems of music bureaucracy which were in place from the New Deal “could be transformed almost wholesale into music programs for the new military” when the United States joined WWII.⁹⁷ For example, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, which produced media, films, and music toward a cooperative patriotic effort in WWII, had “obvious roots in the WPA’s cultural activism.”⁹⁸ Charles Seeger, who had been a collector of Latin-American folksongs and a leading ethnomusicologist for the FMP, used his expertise to aid “good neighbor” peace efforts within the Pan-American Union.⁹⁹ The roots of institutionalized music therapy as it was used in WWII also stemmed from the FMP. In 1935, Harriet Ayer Seymour was supported by the FMP to conduct music therapy in hospitals and women’s prisons. The institutional use of music to relieve all sorts of ills, including “mental tension, anemia, and paralysis,” was an innovative idea for its time.¹⁰⁰ During the wartime, classical music was able to “serve a far broader spectrum of purposes because of the strong aesthetic, social, and emotional values ascribed to it” through FMP educational programs.¹⁰¹ These advancements in music education and performance during the Depression era helped to

⁹⁷ Fauser, *Sounds of War*, 8.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 127–128.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

cement the reputation of the United States as a sophisticated society in the eyes of European nations. Without the New Deal as a precedent, “many cultural and other aspects of the American war effort would have been much slower to get off the ground.” Ultimately, these wartime programs gave civilian musicians and educators the privilege of becoming “soldiers, too.”¹⁰²

The Federal Music Project officially ended at the national level in 1939 when the WPA was defunded.¹⁰³ Over half of the professional orchestras that were functioning at the end of the 1930s had been founded after the Wall Street crash.¹⁰⁴ Although many schools and groups had to shut down at that time, many of the state projects had very effective lower-level organization and were able to continue until the onset of World War II.¹⁰⁵ Overall, the FMP was received with public support and satisfaction, and it ended with a surprising absence of scandal.¹⁰⁶ For contrast, unlike a controversy with the New Mexico Federal Writers Project, which “bastardized” and “romanticized” texts, the Music Project of the same state was “characterized by a conspicuous lack of ethnic or racial prejudice in its programs.”¹⁰⁷ Likewise, while the Federal Writers Project and the Federal Theatre Project were both controversial and later criticized by the House of Un-American Activities Committee (1938) for “leftist activities,” the equally populist FMP “was careful to sidestep such controversies by routinely performing music written by well-known American

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 75–76.

¹⁰³ Ewen, *Music Comes to America*, 208.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹⁰⁵ Bellmore and Jackson, “The New Mexico Federal Music Project,” 36.

¹⁰⁶ Young, *Music of the Great Depression*, 196.

¹⁰⁷ Bellmore and Jackson, “The New Mexico Federal Music Project,” 32.

composers and composers from the cities where concerts were held.”¹⁰⁸ As evidenced by the examples provided in this article, the FMP not only remedied the unfortunate economic circumstances of the Great Depression, but it provided a system that was necessary for the American musical scene to continue flourishing and growing. The FMP was an extremely successful New Deal program that paid relatively high wages to its workers.¹⁰⁹ It succeeded in developing the public’s appreciation of classical music, and during its existence, the FMP involved over ninety-million people in educational projects.¹¹⁰ At the height of the FMP’s activity in 1936, the number of symphony orchestras in the United States had quadrupled.¹¹¹ By 1939, almost two-thirds of the public listened to “serious music” through the radio, including broadcasts of concerts, opera, and chamber music.¹¹² One Arkansas woman testified, “We can deprive ourselves of necessities, but a winter season without hearing the opera broadcast every Saturday afternoon is unthinkable.”¹¹³ Through the government’s support, combined with enthusiastic generosity from the public, no music school, symphony orchestra, or opera house of reputable quality had to shut its doors for good during the Depression.¹¹⁴

More importantly, the FMP encouraged relief-workers not just by giving them charity but by giving them opportunities to shape the music of their country. In the East, the development of an American voice in the European classical tradition was

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹¹¹ Young, *Music of the Great Depression*, 196.

¹¹² Ewen, *Music Comes to America*, 191.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 202.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 210.

supported by the Composers' Forum-Laboratory, the impact of which yet "beg[s] to be fully explored."¹¹⁵ In the West, the FMP became a large force in the dissemination of Jewish, Hispanic, and other folk music as well as in the development of ethnomusicology as a discipline. Through the FMP, social groups like women and African Americans found their voice in modern music. From 1935 to 1939, the FMP sponsored an estimated 224,698 performances, including 6,772 compositions by American composers.¹¹⁶ The FMP raised the level of classical musical literacy in America and stimulated a love for both high and popular art forms. It set the tone for the coming war effort in both bureaucratic structures and a public sense of ownership of American music. Although its original purpose was for the temporary financial support of teachers, performers, and composers, the Federal Music Project soon earned its permanent place in American history, giving all American people a music to call their own.

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¹¹⁵ De Graaf, *The New York Composers' Forum Concerts*, 190.

¹¹⁶ Bindas, *All of This Music Belongs to the Nation*, 108.

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