

Please Welcome our

November VIP's

Joe Craig

Director of Bands

Adam Proctor

Asst. Director of Bands

Beechwood High School

Kentucky

Mike Back

Director of Bands

Walton High School

Georgia

Robbie Freeman

Director of Bands

West Monroe High School

Louisiana



Links

www.csinstitute.org

www.conn-selmer.com

www.namm.org

www.nafme.org

www.amparents.org



Conn Selmer

Division of Education Newsletter

NOVEMBER 28, 2012

ISSUE #9

A Note from VFP Chip Staley



Our weak economy has forced many school districts to make cuts in their budgets to keep from going into deficit spending. Budgets in our district have been squeezed for years, but the arts had never been disproportionately cut. Two years ago, however, our school board decided that they could no longer afford a GRAMMY® Award winning program. We were not

prepared for this targeted cut. We decided that we had not done enough to educate our community about the overall educational benefits of a thriving arts program. ARTSpeaks was formed to bring the message of the value of the arts to our community.

ARTSpeaks is a committee of arts education stakeholders in the Naperville/Aurora area that sponsors events raising awareness of the role the arts play in a comprehensive public school education, particularly in developing 21st Century skills that are essential for success.

Additionally, ARTSpeaks solicits, records and shares stories from District 204 graduates who have gone on to be successful and can articulate how their involvement in their high school fine arts program gave them an edge in their chosen career.

To that end, ARTSpeaks surveyed the musicians graduating with the class of 2012 at Neuqua Valley High School. We found that all of the 130 respondents were accepted into college to study the field of their choice. They also accepted a combined total of 2.7 million dollars in academic scholarships. The largest percentage of respondents selected engineering as their major field of study. This year, 7 of the 11 students at NVHS to receive perfect ACT scores are enrolled in music. Because of our bolder approach to promoting music student's academic successes, our community is learning about the direct connection between enrollment in the arts and student achievement.

ARTSpeaks aims to collect data, research, and compelling anecdotal evidence that convincingly supports the premise that the arts are essential in a 21st Century public school and cultivate a community commitment to support increased school funding to benefit all curricular areas, including the arts.

Campaign message:

“The Arts create THE competitive edge. People involved in the arts acquire “21st Century Skills” that are PROVEN to be intrinsic to SUCCESS. Students, parents, educators, school districts, employers, taxpayers, the country, and YOU benefit from this success. Invest in the future by supporting the arts. When students are successful, EVERYONE wins! SPEAK UP!”

Event format:

ARTSpeaks events feature speakers from a wide range of professions and industries who can share their personal stories about how the arts have directly impacted their lives, academically, professionally and personally. Speakers at the first **ARTSpeaks** event in February 2012 included [David King](#), Harvard University; [Sean McCollum](#), author; and [Brian Pertl](#), Lawrence University. The speakers all visited classrooms; McCollum spoke with creative writing classes, Pertl presented a lecture/demonstration on Aboriginal music and King gave a presentation on the Harvard experience.

The most recent **ARTSpeaks** event was held at METEA Valley High School on September 13th, 2012. The featured speakers were: **Bob Dreveny**, a 36 year member of the Leo Burnett creative team; Roger Schmidt, Executive Director of the Sitka Fine Arts Camp in Sitka, Alaska and an encore appearance by **Brian Pertl**, a 16 year manager with Microsoft. A highlight video of this event is posted at <http://www.ARTSpeaks204.org/previousevents.html>

ARTSpeaks events follow the TED Talks format. Speakers are allotted 18 minutes for their presentations which are followed by panel discussion. Videos from the February 2012 event are posted on the [ARTSpeaks Facebook page](#) **ARTSpeaks** recently received a generous grant from the Indian Prairie Educational Foundation for the 2012-13 school year. <http://204foundation.org/index.php>

The next **ARTSpeaks** event will be held on February 5, 2013 and will feature Dr. Peter Boonshaft as the keynote speaker.

Every community has successful people who were involved in the fine arts. The **ARTSpeaks** format can easily be replicated in your community. If you are interested in developing a similar program, feel free to contact me for how to get started.

Interesting Links on ARTSpeaks Facebook Page:

http://www.soc.northwestern.edu/brainvolts/documents/Kraus_HJ2011.pdf

http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2012/08/every_leader_is_an_artist.html

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/17/jodi-dipiazza-katy-perry-duet-firework_n_1970861.html?utm_source=Triggermail&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Daily+Brief&utm_campaign=daily_brief

http://www.ted.com/talks/robert_gupta_between_music_and_medicine.html



**Chip Staley**

Director of Bands

Neuqua Valley High School, IL

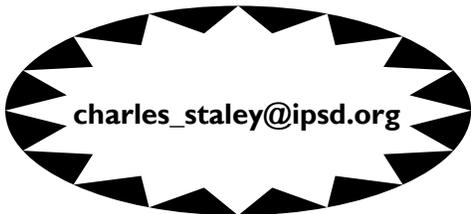
<http://neuquamusic.org/>

Charles "Chip" Staley is the Fine Arts Chair At Neuqua Valley High School, Naperville, Illinois where he also teaches the Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble and Musical Theater Orchestra.

Neuqua Valley's music department has been awarded GRAMMY® Gold distinction on six occasions, most recently in 2011, with grants totaling \$50,000. In 2010, the Neuqua Valley High School Fine Arts department was awarded the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts National Schools of Distinction in Arts Education Award for music and the visual arts.

Mr. Staley has taken three groups to the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic held in Chicago, Illinois; the Waubonsie Valley Wind Ensemble in 1995, the Neuqua Valley Symphony Orchestra in 2007 and the Neuqua Valley Wind Ensemble in 2009. He will appear with the Neuqua Valley Chamber Strings at the 2012 Midwest Clinic. His bands have performed at the Association of Concert Bands National Convention, the Illinois Music Educators Association (IMEA) State Convention, the American School Band Directors Association National Convention (ASBDA), and the University of Illinois Superstate Festival. He has traveled with students throughout the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Europe and China.

Mr. Staley holds degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign. He is a National Board Certified teacher. He began his teaching career at Eisenhower High School in Blue Island, Illinois and taught for twelve years at Waubonsie Valley before moving to Neuqua Valley when it opened in 1997.



charles_staley@ipsd.org

Two Simple Steps to Improving Conductor Visual Communication

By Dan Moore

“Look up!”

“Get your heads out of the stands!”

“WATCH!!!”

These are statements that I have virtually eliminated from my teaching. Earlier in my career, I probably said those things (or something like them) half-a-dozen or more times each rehearsal. “What’s your secret?” you may ask. “Mandatory memorization? Mirrors? Electro-shock? Or did you stop caring and just go with it?”

The answer is: none of the above (thankfully). When I stepped back and considered the dilemma from the students’ point of view, I discovered that the problem wasn’t whether or not they were watching me. Rather, it was whether or not they were seeing me. Ultimately, for even the most conscientious musician, the number-one priority is “playing the right notes”. Playing them on the conductor’s schedule is purely secondary. And this is only right. Think about it: if your heart-valve replacement is being done by a hot-shot young surgical resident, do you really want her taking her eyes off of the hole in your chest in order to make eye-contact with the supervising chief of surgery (particularly if he’s for some reason standing on a wooden box thirty feet away)? I would hope not! No, we want those students reading their music, counting their rests, and keeping their place. So how do we improve their chances of actually seeing us clearly in their peripheral vision, with only fleeting glances up from the page from time to time?

Setting Up for Success

Step 1: “Get the music stand away from your face!” Go and watch any great professional symphony orchestra, and take note of how far away the musicians (particularly the brass players) have positioned themselves from the music stands. Keep in mind that many of those folks have mostly gray hair (if any), and are wearing half-moon “Dumbledore glasses”. Watch them on TV or You-tube, and see in the close-up shots how rarely these professionals take their eyes off the page. They may have a dozen or more visiting conductors in a season, many of which have radically different ideas of where their ictus is. And yet, the musicians are perfectly synchronized, and adjust to constantly changing interpretations of pieces they’ve played hundreds of times. What is it that they’ve figured out, that we need to teach (convince) our kids?

First of all, if the music stand is at least three feet from the musician’s nose, she will find it much easier to clearly perceive the conductor in her peripheral vision. To demonstrate this, I have my students hold up one finger about six inches in front of their nose, and stare at it with both eyes. I then wave at them, and ask them what they notice about me, as they keep staring at their finger. It doesn’t take long for one of the students to say “There are two of you!” I then ask: “Am I clear, or am I kind of blurry?” If they are faithfully staring at that finger, they will report that I am two big blurs. Next, I have them slowly move their finger away from their face, staring at it the entire time, until it is at arm’s-length. When prompted, they will notice that I am now gradually coalescing into one clear entity. If they stare at their music stand, and it is at least three

feet (considerably more than arm's-length) from their face, they will see that I am much clearer to them than I was before, when their stands were only two feet away. The old "How many fingers am I holding up?" gag can also help demonstrate this difference.

Step 2: "Raise the music stand!" Though the distance is now more optimal, many students (particularly in the front rows) are still looking down at the music, when the conductor is up on a podium. So, I hold up my baton out and say: "This is the bottom of my beat. I will never conduct any lower than this. Raise your music stand until the top of it is just below my ictus." Once they finish giggling at the word "ictus", they notice that I have become much more in their line-of-sight. I can now conduct a Bach chorale as *rubato* as I want, and they'll follow me. Naturally, I use other tried-and-true pedagogical tricks (staccato attacks only; drop a handkerchief on the stand; etc.) to reinforce this. But the main impetus for improvement is getting the music stands up and away from their faces.

Some Objections:

The main complaint you'll immediately hear from the kids is "I can't see the music that far away!" Though this may be true in some special cases (I do have one legally blind trombonist that has to have his music enlarged and placed to the side), the vast majority of students simply aren't used to reading anything at that particular distance. They're accustomed to reading a book or a computer monitor less than two feet away, or a Smart-board twenty feet away, but not printed material at a distance of three to four feet. However, whereas books are generally printed at an eleven or twelve-point font, reputable band and orchestra music publishers print at about a fourteen, which is optimal for reading at the preferred three feet distance.

An added benefit of this new music-reading distance is that their reading will actually improve. Consider how children read when they are in first grade. They often read large print rather close to their face, and read...

one...word...at...a...time. As they become better readers, the print gets smaller, and they move the book out to arm's-length. They then start to see sentences, rather than just words. The same happens in music. When the music is too close, students will read...one...note...at...a...time. But when they move the stand away, they start to see phrases and "the rest of the ink".

A complaint a director might have is "With the music raised, they're playing right into the stand!" Well, if all we did was raise the stand without pushing it away, that would definitely be a problem, particularly for the bell-front brass. But, getting the stand three feet away from the face opens up a nice space for the sound to blossom on all instruments. Besides which, we generally want a more diffused sound in a concert band, as opposed to the directional sound we're looking for in a marching or jazz band. There is actually a pressure node that occurs a fixed distance from any wind instrument (I learned this from Mr. Rowzee, one of our Physics teachers). For a trumpet, this is about fifteen inches from the bell (eighteen inches for a trombone). This is the focal point from which the preferred characteristic sound actuates.

A useful (if somewhat inaccurate) comparison is to the focal point of a magnifying glass. As a kid, I was not allowed to have a wood-burning kit (or a BB gun, or a mini-bike). But, I had lots of fun burning my name into pieces of wood with a magnifying glass on a sunny day. This only worked if I held the glass a specific distance from the wood. Too close, and the light wouldn't focus. The pressure node is somewhat like that. If a trumpet player has her stand within say twenty inches of her bell, the pressure node is obscured, therefore inhibiting the ability of that lovely diffused sound to blossom. Getting the stand further away from even the omni-directional woodwinds gives their sound a chance to focus and optimize. By the way, French horns also have a pressure node about eighteen inches from the bell. So, if they sit too close together, their focal point is literally in their neighbor's lap!

One more benefit I'll tout about raising the stands: When the students are forced to look up at the music, rather than down, there is a dramatic improvement in posture. And, particularly in flutes and clarinets, a significant improvement in pitch! When they have to look up at both the music and the conductor, flutes can't help but roll out a bit, and clarinets have to get their bell out from between their knees!

Of course, I realize that everyone's rehearsal space may not be optimal for allowing five feet between rows. Though I am cursed with permanent built-in risers, I thank the maker that they are sixty inches deep. When Chicago's Orchestra Hall was refurbished a few years back, they put in semi-permanent risers that were only forty-eight inches deep. The CSO brass players had a fit! If you attend a concert, you will notice that the trumpets now place their music stands down on the next row in front of them (politely begging the violists' pardon). So, with a little creativity, the preferred stand distance can be achieved, even where space is limited.

I know, to many reading this, this whole concept is one big "Duh!" But, as I've watched many groups perform over the years, and have heard them struggle with "watching the conductor", stands being placed too low and too close always seem to accompany those struggles. Sometimes an obvious solution can stare us in the face for years before we (myself included) catch on. Hopefully, some of our younger conductors will employ this little trick, and save themselves many years of needless frustration. This simple stand adjustment doesn't fix everything, but I believe it puts students in the best possible position for success.



Dan Moore

Director of Bands

Naperville North High School, IL

<http://nnhsmusic.org/band.html>

Dan Moore is in his twenty-sixth year teaching music in Illinois, the past fourteen at Naperville North High School, where he teaches three concert bands, two jazz bands, marching band, and Music Theory. He received his BA in Music Education from Western Illinois University in 1987, studying under Dr. Jon Dugle and the late (and legendary) Dale Hopper. In 1999, Mr. Moore acquired a Masters degree in Jazz Pedagogy from Northwestern University, under the tutelage of Don Owens, Antonio Garcia, and Mike Kocour.

While at Naperville North, Mr. Moore's Symphonic Wind Ensemble has been twice selected to perform at both the IMEA State Convention and the Bands of America National Concert Band Festival, as well as Illinois Superstate and other prestigious events. The NNHS Jazz Ensemble has also been twice featured at IMEA, and has consistently earned high honors at various Chicago-area jazz festivals. The Naperville North Marching Huskies, under Mr. Moore's direction and show-design, have been Illinois State Finalists twelve times, and Bands of America Regional Finalists six times.

An accomplished trumpeter, Dan Moore performs regularly with (and arranges for) the Pete Ellman Big Band, and has been a featured soloist with various community bands and orchestras. He lives in Naperville with his wife Kay, who is the band instructor at two of the NNHS feeder schools.

CONTACT US ANYTIME

Division of Education

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

Vice President of Education

TimACT@aol.com

260-410-0717 cell

Jennifer L. Grice

Director of Education & Outreach

jgrice@conn-selmer.com

859-351-2987 cell 574-523-0651 office

Kendra Ellington Nafziger

VIP Coordinator

knafziger@conn-selmer.com

574-323-6258 cell 574-523-0629 office

Grant Johnston

Executive Administrator

gjohnston@conn-selmer.com

574-523-0701 office

