



TOUCHPOINT

The Division of Education Newsletter

Conn-Selmer
DIVISION OF EDUCATION

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VOL. 1 • Issue 24 • December 16, 2013

A Note from Dr. Tim

Greetings. In this edition of *Touchpoint*, Dr. Paula A. Crider, Professor Emerita at the University of Texas, Austin, reminds us of the importance of those wonderful educators who are often the catalyst responsible for inspiring a life-long love of music.



By Paula Crider

In Praise of the Teacher of Beginners

If you are responsible for those all-important formative years; the time when placing the right child on the right instrument may ignite a passion for music that will last a lifetime, this article is for you. If, on the other hand, you do not teach beginners, may I suggest that you take the time to thank these most important teachers? Give them a gift certificate, take them out to dinner or give them the gift of an important major food group: CHOCOLATE!

I am always saddened when I meet a teacher who says, "oh, I'm just an elementary music teacher." "Just," indeed! This is where it all begins. This is a time when the students are still open enough to fearlessly do whatever is asked: dance, draw, sing, play an instrument. Great elementary music teachers send enthusiastic students to the first beginning band, orchestra or choir class with rhythmic and note reading skills already ingrained. Even more significant is the fact that great elementary music teachers create an atmosphere that teaches young students to LOVE MUSIC! These teachers work magic in their classrooms, and deserve a level of praise that is rarely extended. Invite elementary music teachers to attend concerts...and perhaps even guest conduct. This is a great way to make them feel appreciated, and in this manner, they may follow their students as they progress through middle school and into high school.

Next on the list of those deserving the highest of praise are those who teach beginners....an activity

that is not altogether unlike herding cats. These dedicated and highly skilled teachers begin by enduring sounds that would drive the average person from the room as they carefully begin to mold raw, and often highly uncoordinated group of young beginners into ever more accomplished musicians. Their challenges are legion. They must teach classroom discipline with the skill of a drill sergeant but with the human kindness of Mother Teresa. They must organize each classroom and each lesson plan as if planning the invasion on D Day, while being flexible enough to handle a multiplicity of problems in any given second. They must learn to demonstrate on all of the instruments as if they were virtuosi on such memorable tunes as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Their knowledge of instrumental pedagogy must be equal to, or surpass the commensurate knowledge of a cardiovascular surgeon. They must fulfill the role of parent, psychologist, nurse, physician, engineer, coach, technician, statistician, legislator, arbitrator, judge, motivator, terminator, and even the fashion police. (To name but a few.) They must have the sensitivity of a neurosurgeon, and the coordination of an NBA superstar. They are also well served if they develop the patience of Job.

As the holiday season approaches, let us not forget to celebrate those who fill the lives of legions of young students with the precious gift of music. **To all who share their love of music with the youngest of musicians, we salute you!**



Welcome to our new VIPs:

Matthew McInturf

Sam Houston State University, TX

Joe Clark

Spring ISD, TX

Larry Livingston

University of Southern California

Sir Davis

Benton Harbor High School, MI

Our Next Issue Featuring:

An article by **Herman Knoll**,
Senior Vice President of Hal
Leonard Corporation

In Our Last Issue:

**Creating a Plan for Instrument
Inventory** by **Michael Kamphuis**
[Click here for the full article](#)