

◆ TEACHER'S EDITION ◆

THE YOUNG MUSICIAN'S TEXTBOOK

intune

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MONTHLY



KEY LINKING

**HOW TO GO FROM
MUSICIAN TO
PERFORMER**

**HOW TO PLAY
JAMES BROWN'S
"LIVING IN
AMERICA"**

SELENA GOMEZ

Musician, Actress, Entrepreneur and Cultural Icon

- ◆ **An In Tune Special Report on Theme Parks**
- ◆ **You Can Write A Song**
- ◆ **The Missing Piece**
- ◆ **Building Critical Relationships
with Counselors and Administrators**



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Enriching lives by enabling and inspiring great performances.

The Secret To Standing Out

OUR FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE Caleb Chapman, of Caleb Chapman's Soundhouse (ccsoundhouse.com) in Salt Lake City, has contributed feature stories to both this issue's student and teachers editions about performance, and we think they're both noteworthy and timely. Caleb's after-school program for talented young musicians focuses on teaching various elements of music, but none more important – in his opinion and ours – than the *art* of performance. In the article, he suggests outstanding performing is a skill that can and should be taught and learned and acquiring it can make all the difference for a musician aspiring to one day becoming a professional or just improving overall.

Standing out has increasingly become a problem for emerging professional musicians due to the spate of recorded music flooding social media and streaming services. With so many songs being uploaded every day by so many people capable of creating credible recordings on their own, both covers and originals, it's hard for the critics, not to mention everyday listeners, to keep up. However, from time to time, a review of an act will comment about how amazingly the artist or ensemble performed live. They'll be described as being "wonderfully entertaining" or that "the connection with the audience was palpable," or that the musician(s) provided "an experience." Taking nothing away from artful compositions, musical proficiency, sonic production or great arrangements, a musician skilled in performance can separate themselves from the pack.

You will undoubtedly take your students down many educational roads this year, so - not to sound too presumptuous - we're suggesting to those not already planning to do so, to focus a bit not only on what your students are playing or singing, but how they do it. Hopefully Caleb's stories can at least serve as a thought starter. ●

Teachers can go to intunemonthly.com/lessonplans for full lesson plans and videos. This month, lesson plans are available for the following stories:



Selena Gomez

Over the course of more than two decades in the entertainment industry, Selena Gomez has grown into an influential cultural voice, known for her resilience, authenticity, and ability to reinvent herself while staying grounded.



New Key Connection

Think of the power that a key modulation gives Whitney Houston's "I Have Nothing" when late in the song she takes that fantastic vocal up a notch. That's the "new key connection" of which our writer speaks in his October issue "Techniques" column.



How To Play "Living In America" by James Brown

And speaking of power, our producer/author Seth Glassman deconstructs "Living In America," the hit by "The Godfather of Soul" James Brown featured prominently in the "Rocky IV" movie. Seth's story makes the song accessible for small ensembles, jazz bands and marching bands alike.



"Best Music Schools"

As per our tradition, October's In Tune includes a major feature on going to college for music, this time peering into the future to suggest ways in which a candidate for admission can focus on the skills they'll need to succeed after graduation. Oh, and in keeping with our tradition, we begin with the aside that "there's no such thing as a 'best' music school – only the best one for you."

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- **Modern Band Instrument Lessons** – Steve Giddings
Specialized lessons in modern band instruments
- **Popular Music Theory** – Ethan Hein
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- **Drum Channel 100-level** – Mike Packer
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Building Critical (Positive, Beneficial) Relationships with Counselors and Administrators

Your best recruitment and retention tools aren't just in the music room — they're in the relationships you build down the hall.

It's April, registration is closed, and you've just discovered three of your top clarinet players can't fit band into their schedule because of an honors chemistry conflict. Could this have been avoided? Absolutely. Recruitment and retention doesn't start on the first day of school — they start in the conversations you have with the people who influence schedules, course offerings, and school priorities, and guidance counselors are often the gatekeepers of student registration. Also, administrators control budgets, staffing, and the master schedule. If they understand and value your program, they will help protect it and ensure its growth. A strong partnership with these professionals means fewer schedule conflicts, increased advocacy when budget or staffing decisions are made, and more opportunities for more students to participate in one of the school's most impactful programs.

3 EASY STEPS FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COUNSELORS

Counselors manage hundreds of course requests and work within a tight registration timeline. Your goal is to make it easy for them to enroll students into your program.

1. Plan backwards from registration deadlines

- September – Meet with the head counselor to learn the spring registration dates for next school year (2026-27).
- Build your recruitment, retention, and audition calendars so that results are finalized before registration opens.

2. Provide tools that make their job easier

- Create a one-page Music Pathways chart showing how each

of your music courses can fit with Honors/AP courses and other electives. Students and parents also need to have this information so that they understand how your courses fit within the academic requirements of the district.

- Supply counselors with class rosters for each ensemble so they can quickly place students in the proper sections. You do not want to leave this to chance.

3. Hold a January counselor meeting

- Share current enrollment data and celebrate recent program achievements.
- Review final audition results so they know exactly who belongs in each class.
- Emphasize the importance of avoiding singleton classes that could cause scheduling conflicts for your students. Provide options.

7 STEPS TO BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADMINISTRATORS

Your principal/supervisor can be your strongest ally if you keep them informed, engaged, and connected to your program's success.

1. Communicate regularly

- Request short, quarterly check-ins with a clear, concise agenda.
- Send monthly or quarterly email updates with photos, student highlights, and upcoming event dates.

2. Align with school goals

- Show how your program supports school priorities like student engagement, academic achievement, or community involvement.
- Frame music as a vital contributor to school culture. It's important that school leaders clearly see how music can help sculpt a positive environment for the entire school community.

3. Be a professional partner

- Meet deadlines for budgets, purchase orders, and event requests.
- Maintain a solution-focused attitude when challenges arise. Working collaboratively to solve problems will result in a better outcome.

4. Showcase student success

- Highlight achievements at assemblies, in newsletters, and during faculty meetings.
- Invite administrators to concerts, competitions, and

Recruitment and retention thrive on relationships. Counselors who understand your scheduling needs will help keep more students in your ensembles.

community performances and invite them to serve in a specific capacity. (Emcee performances, distribute awards to students, speak to parent groups)

5. Contribute beyond the music room wing

- Offer your ensembles to perform for school-wide events and community outreach activities.
- Participate in cross-departmental projects and school initiatives. Show how the arts cross all academic disciplines.

6. Advocate strategically

- When requesting resources, use clear data and connect your request to benefits for students and the school. Remember that “no” is often just the beginning of the conversation.

7. Show appreciation

- Publicly thank administrators for their support.
- Send personal notes or small tokens of appreciation after key events.
- Honor and engage the entire faculty and support staff. Their contributions are vital to the success of your program. Invite them to participate/solo/speak in a concert or have students host a school-wide luncheon to thank them for their support. Your administration will appreciate your collaborate spirit.

Recruitment and retention thrive on relationships. Counselors who understand your scheduling needs will help keep more students in your ensembles. Administrators who see your program's value will fight to protect it. Start those conversations now, build trust over time, and your program will not only survive — it will blossom. **T**



MARCIA NEEL serves as Senior Director of Education for Yamaha Corporation of America. She also serves as Education Advisor to the Music Achievement Council, a 501(c)(6) organization whose sole purpose is to assist directors in recruiting and retaining students in instrumental music programs through effective professional development. Marcia also serves as a member of the Board of Directors of Percussive Arts Society.



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Sometimes, The Ultimate In M Is Just A Walk



Disney Imagination Campus - Photo by Danielle T.Bellettiere

Music Education In The Park

By Michael
Stewart



SOME THEME OR AMUSEMENT PARKS feature traditional rides and carnival-type attractions. Some are nature-based. Some offer entertainment extravaganzas tied to beloved media brands, but all offer students a set of unique opportunities. Young people travel with their peers and instructors as a group, potentially overnight and perhaps for the first time away from home. Their ensemble performs in front of a public audience. Playing the spring concert in front of moms and dads in the familiar environs of a school is great, but public performance is another thing entirely. Yes, your ensembles can certainly play local malls, some of which are set up for, and welcome student performances, but those venues feature audiences made up of shoppers focused on the sometimes harrowing process of finding goods and making purchases. Audiences at theme and amusement parks are there to enjoy themselves!

Likewise, the adjudication of a school instructor is foremost, but working with a new expert adds a new perspective on a young musician's growth. Lastly, a visit to an entertainment center is nothing short of a joyful reward for a group's hard work. Nothing gets young students more excited, and some parks have fully formed programs that turn class trips into amazing music education experiences.

Whether traveling to seasonal parks, those open year round, connecting with a park's group sales and/or education specialists, will reveal important considerations. Each has its own registration process, timelines, requirements and opportunities, but, for the most part, school ensembles that perform at theme or amusement parks can expect unique performance opportunities, that provide access to their facilities, which vary greatly. One opportunity to work with an organization that can has great experience with a long list of venues and these kind of activities is the venerable "Music in the Parks," an operation in business since the 1980's, partnering with various parks, to provide evaluated performances and award ceremonies for music groups.

According to their website, "a Music In The Parks festival provides a safe, fun, and educational end-of-the-year experience for school bands, orchestras, and choirs. Experienced instrumental and vocal teachers will offer suggestions on how to improve your ensemble's performance. Our master adjudicators evaluate hundreds of ensembles throughout the course of a festival season. A festival performance increases your music

Worlds of Fun



Knott's Berry Farm



Six Flags



program's visibility by representing your school at a national event.

Ensembles from all over the United States and Canada participate in Music In The Parks. Your school and hometown will be announced at the awards ceremony! Every performing group receives a trophy at Music in the Parks. Preparing for Music In The Parks boosts student motivation and retention. A Music In The Parks festival performance and amusement park visit adds a fun and educational goal at the end of the school year. It provides opportunities for musical growth beyond the conclusion of your spring concert season and motivates students to both remain engaged and come back the next year. Participating ensembles receive an evaluated performance, an amusement park visit, and trophies, creating a fun and educational experience."

Going Direct

Working through Music in the Parks will give you an experienced partner and access to a set variety of options, but there are many others to explore. For example, various Busch Gardens locations offer performance venues for bands and other youth groups, providing a reduced ticket rate and potential picnic packages. Kansas City-based Worlds of Fun hosts student music programs, including "Performance in the Park" and "Festival of Music".

Six Flags parks allow school bands to perform through organized music festivals and guest star programs that require advance requests and may have specific guidelines for performance length, equipment, and audience. Some individual Six Flags parks, such as Six Flags Magic Mountain, have "guest star" programs that allow groups to schedule performances on park stages. Both types of programs require advance requests and coordination to schedule a performance. You might perform on a designated stage or, in some cases, march through a specific part of the park. Experienced music teachers or a panel of



STEP INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

Your student group will shine in a live performance on Universal CityWalk Hollywood's world-class 5 Towers Stage. Professional videographers will record their show and stream it live on a massive CityWalk jumbotron, then send out a link so they can share their big moment with friends and family. And there's more awesomeness. Since 1-day admission is included, they get to spend the rest of the day enjoying Universal Studios Hollywood.



Youth Programs



Learn More about the STARS Performance Program at
www.UniversalHollywoodYouth.com

A Q&A With Our Friends at Universal Studios Hollywood

How should a teacher new to the process of bringing a group to your park begin their explorations?

Please visit our website universalyouthprograms.com/home/ to find out more information.

How should a teacher or administrator contact your park?

Please email youthprograms@udx.com or fill out an online application for one of our programs through our website universalyouthprograms.com/home/

Once teachers and their students arrive, is there a guide or other park staffer who will be available to teachers?

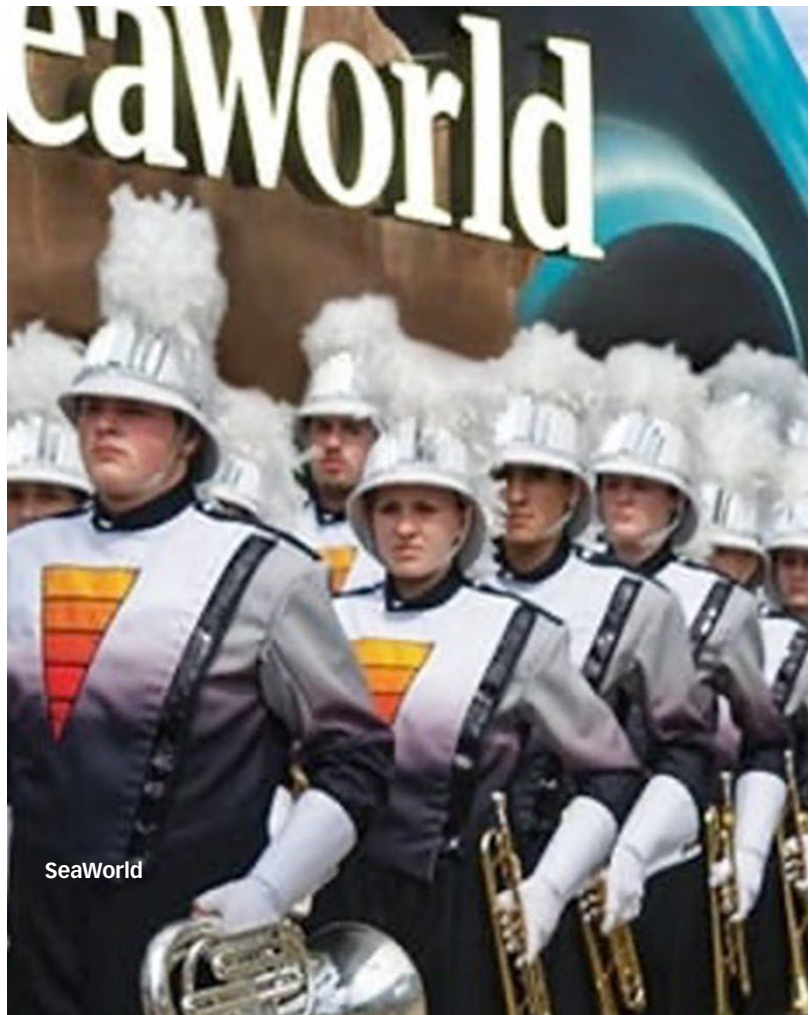
Every booked program will receive a specific set of instructions in their confirmation which includes their day-of contact and meet-up directions.

Are there any metrics on costs, or advice on payment timing or other financial considerations?

All listed prices are inclusive of taxes and include one-day General Admission tickets for each person in the group.

Can you comment on things like insurance, medical resources at the park and security in general?

Universal Studios takes the safety and security of our guests and employees very seriously. For the safety and convenience of our guests, Universal Studios Hollywood has a Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Sub-Station on property. Additionally, there are first aid stations located on both the Upper and Lower Lots of the theme park. ●



SeaWorld

educators often evaluate performances, providing feedback. The park may provide basic equipment like microphones and a sound system, but there are often limitations on what additional equipment can be used. The exact program details, including available stages and specific requirements, can vary by park location.

Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park, CA, allows school band performances through their Performance in the Park and Festival of Music programs, which offer performance opportunities, adjudication, and a unique setting for young musicians to showcase their talents. While specific dates for general performances vary, the Festival of Music has specific dates and is held at the Walter Knott Theater, providing a focused environment for elementary, middle, and high school choral and instrumental ensembles to

“We had such an incredibly easy experience. The sound staff were all so accommodating, so knowledgeable and made us feel so welcome and not a burden. It was so great to work with such professionals!”

-Laura Sagers from Laura Jean Music Academy

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Explore performing arts opportunities with
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Universal Studios Hollywood

perform, receive expert critiques, and enjoy the park. Interested groups should contact the Knott's Berry Farm Youth Sales Department to apply and confirm details.

SeaWorld has hosted school bands and performing groups in the past, but the current availability and process for booking these performances are not detailed on the park's general FAQ page, so you will need to contact your specific Sea World park for details on their policies and performance opportunities. SeaWorld has parks in Orlando, San Antonio, and San Diego.

Visit the official website for the SeaWorld location you are interested in. Search for links or sections related to group visits, school programs, or performing arts.

Dorney Park in Allentown, PA, Kings Island in Cincinnati, OH, California's Great America in Santa Clara, CA, Cedar Point in Sandusky, OH, Dollywood in Pigeon Fork, TN, and Hershey Park, in Hershey, PA, among others, all have programs that welcome scholastic ensembles. Some offer organized festivals and most offer adjudication. Many also work with Music in the Parks.

The Elites

While cost, location, trip duration and other factors might mean that one of the parks previously mentioned could be the right one for your program, all things being equal, two

of the best known theme parks stand out. Universal Studios Hollywood in Los Angeles, CA, and the *Walt Disney World* Resort Theme Parks in Orlando, FL, are iconic in that they are attached to global media franchises and have broad and rich music education programming. Going to an NFL game is amazing. Going to the Super Bowl is a life experience. Enough said...

Groups can participate in any of the music education programs at Universal Studios Hollywood and still have a full day of fun. Programming can be differentiated based on age and learning levels and sessions are limited to two hours each day so that students have the chance to get to their favorite rides and attractions. High school students can enjoy attractions independently with check-in points with their chaperones while middle school chaperones tend to stick with the students. The park can also provide groups with meal vouchers to redeem inside the theme park for an entree and drink at select dining locations.

Universal Studios Hollywood offers an array of activities designed exclusively for the education communities. In addition to music education programming, there's a STEAM App Series combining national education standards with real-world critical thinking to transform the park's top attractions into learning environments. The "Stunts and Pyrotechnic Tour" allows students to research the fascinating secrets

behind the special effects of WaterWorld® in a special on-site class. They will also learn how sound design is integrated into our show with help from a sound technician. The “Student Backlot Tour” highlights the career opportunities available in the entertainment and production industries, by taking students behind-the-scenes of sets, sound stages, and more.

The best way for a music ensemble to perform at Universal Studios Hollywood is through the STARS Performance Program. Students are invited to audition year-round to become “Hollywood stars” at the theme park and perform on the 5 Towers Stage at Universal CityWalk Hollywood, which features thousands of LED lights and a state-of-the-art audio system. After each performance, the group will receive a link to their performance to share with family and friends. Each group leader will receive an award, and each performer will receive a dated commemorative STARS pin. Every group that participates in the STARS Performance program receives a link to a professionally mixed video recording of their performance. Students and chaperones are allowed to capture their experience at the theme park to post to their social channels with photos and short videos.

Disney Imagination Campus at *Walt Disney World*® Resort Theme Parks holds accommodating the varying needs of different student groups and their staff as a top priority amongst the various student group travel experiences available. They offer a variety of flexible options from a one-day adventure to weeklong experiences. Local schools can come and visit with Disney Student Tickets where a group creates their own experience based on what’s important to them. Student groups can celebrate in the parks or they can experience learning opportunities with Disney Imagination Campus by participating in Performance Opportunities or attending a variety of workshops. Afterwards, groups can enjoy one of the four *Walt Disney World*® Resort Theme Parks for the remainder of the day.

For longer visits, student groups can check into *Walt Disney World*® Resort Hotels which offer special rates for student groups. There are large food courts for groups to utilize and groups can schedule a special catered meal or dessert party as well, all in addition to special Youth Meal Certificates and Dine Cards available for access to participating Disney locations.

Groups can also take advantage of performance opportunities offered by Disney Imagination Campus over the course of their trip. From Marching down *Main Street*, U.S.A. or EPCOT, to performing on stage at Disney Springs in front of a live audience, or even being a part of a Festival Event, there are numerous performance options available to experience the excitement of imagination-powered learning at Disney®. **T**

A Q&A With Our Friends at *Walt Disney World*® Resort

How should a teacher new to the process of bringing a group to your park begin their explorations?

The Disney Imagination Campus team is ready and excited to help you along the process by offering their support and expertise! Disney Imagination Campus provides [events and inspiration](#) for guests interested in gaining additional resources and information to help plan their experience!

How should a teacher or administrator contact your park?

Go to the “Contact Us” form on the [disneycampus.com](#) website or contact via phone number: [\(321\) 939 7560](#) to talk to a dedicated Disney Imagination Campus Cast Member.

Once teachers and their students arrive, is there a guide or other park staffer who will be available to teachers?

When choosing a Workshop or a Performance option, the Disney Imagination Campus team will be there to meet and support the group during that portion. Otherwise, groups will have the freedom to do as they please on property, whether that’s going to the Resort, enjoying the Theme Parks, or learning, performing, and celebrating with Disney Imagination Campus.

Are there any metrics on costs, or advice on payment timing or other financial considerations?

Each group is different, it depends on accommodations, length of stay, number of students, food & beverage, Workshops or Performances, etc. However, for timeline, final payment is due about a month out from their event.

Can you comment on things like insurance, medical resources at the park and security in general?

The safety and care of Guests is something Disney takes very seriously. Each of the 4 Theme Parks at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort have a medical resource center and staffed Disney security to ensure that proper security measures are taken to keep Guests safe each day.

Find more information about Disney security measures [here](#).

THE MISSION



Caleb Chapman works with middle school students at Soundhouse in Park City, UT to demonstrate creating moments in music performance
Photo by Talon Cardon

ING PIECE



Why Performance Training Is Needed in Music Education

By Caleb Chapman

I'm a music educator who has established an after-school music program called Soundhouse in Salt Lake City, Utah, and when people ask me about the biggest threat to the future of music, they often expect me to talk about shrinking school budgets, the impact or distractions of social media, or artificial intelligence replacing musicians. But in my experience, the biggest problem is more personal—and fixable. The issue isn't the music or the media. It's the performance of the music—or rather, the lack of performance education.

I find that students enrolling in my program today are more technically proficient than ever. They can read fluently, play complex passages, and master challenging styles from jazz to rock to classical with precision. But I also notice that while these students are practicing more, they seem to be connecting less, with each other and with audiences. Why? Perhaps it's an outgrowth of personal listening over earphones and too much attention-isolating screen time, but somewhere along the way, as music teachers, I think we may have



and overlook connection. They walk onstage with their heads down barely acknowledging the audience and then retreat before the applause has even stopped. But music isn't meant to be a monologue. It should be a conversation. Whether you're playing Beethoven or Beyoncé, people don't just want to *hear* music—they want to be moved. They want to be seen. Too often, our musicians are looking at their own instruments rather than out into the crowd.

overlooked the fact that we also need to teach young musicians how to *perform*—potentially missing the enjoyment that comes from engaging audiences at the highest level.

There's no doubt that music education is powerful in myriad ways. It boosts academic performance, improves brain development, enhances discipline and teamwork. But let's be honest—*none* of those reasons are why a 12-year-old picks up a saxophone or plugs in a guitar. Kids don't fall in love with music because it helps them with math. They do it because it's fun.

And that's the same reason people go to concerts. Not to be impressed, but to *feel* something. To escape. To enjoy. To be swept up in the moment. To have fun. But in our well-meaning efforts to elevate music in the academic system, we may have inadvertently drained some of the joy out of it. We've prioritized rubrics over the rush. Technique over thrill. And while technical rigor is important, it's not what makes music *magical*. Performance changes that. When students feel the crowd respond—when they *connect*—music becomes more than just a subject. It becomes a passion. And that joy? That's what keeps both the students *and* the audiences coming back.

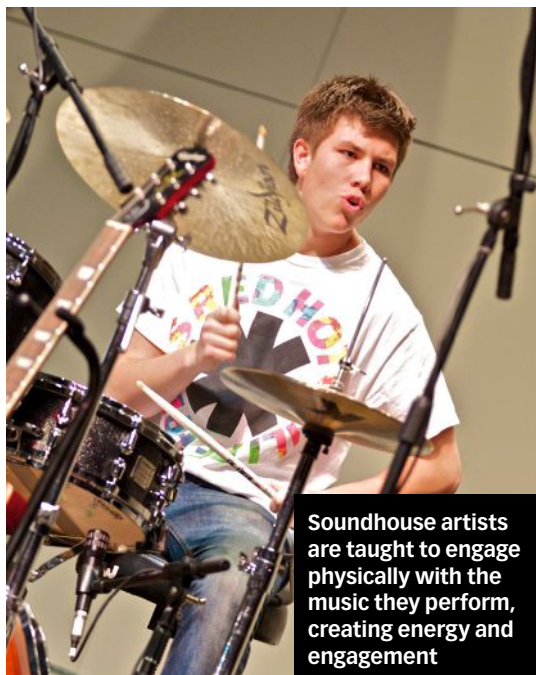
The Lost Art of Connection

Great music isn't just about accuracy—it's about expression. At its best, it's an act of storytelling. But many young musicians are trained to view performance as the final step of a process, not the purpose. They focus on technical perfection

Contrast that with the energy of a great pop concert, a soul band, or even a school musical. The performers are present. They engage. They radiate charisma. There's a feedback loop between stage and audience. That isn't just entertainment—it's connection. And that's something we can, and should, be teaching.

A Personal Mission

When I launched Soundhouse over two decades ago, my goal wasn't just to create better musicians—I wanted to create *artists*. That meant teaching not just scales and voicings, but also presence, poise, and power onstage. It meant treating performance not as a bonus, but as a *discipline*. And just as importantly, it meant bringing *massive fun* back to the process. Some might say that an after-school program has the bandwidth to do such things. But, I've taught in public schools and I think that there's room, and a need, across the profession to include performance training.



Soundhouse artists are taught to engage physically with the music they perform, creating energy and engagement

Sometimes, performance skills are dismissed as “fluff” or “showy.” But what could be more central to music than the act of effectively sharing it? And what better way to inspire a lifelong love of music than to show students how thrilling it can be to move a room? At Soundhouse, our artists learn how to walk onstage with confidence. How to smile. How to move with the music. How to speak to a crowd between songs. How to dress like professionals. These aren't gimmicks. They're bridges. And our students learn to build them with intention and joy. This isn't just a call to young musicians—it's a challenge; to reimagine and

truly prepare a performance, and in so doing, reap extraordinary benefits.

Music as a Performing Art

Let's not forget: the greatest musicians in every genre are and were performers first. Prince didn't just play guitar—he commanded the stage. Yo-Yo Ma doesn't just play the cello—he inhabits every note. Taylor Swift doesn't just sing songs—she creates moments. Even the jazz and classical legends we revere—Louis Armstrong, Leonard Bernstein, Ella Fitzgerald, Luciano Pavarotti—were magnetic forces of nature when they stepped on stage. They weren't just technically flawless. They were unforgettable, and it was their performance that made all the difference.

There's a myth in some circles that "real" artists don't care what the audience thinks. You hear them quoted from time to time saying, "I make music for myself," and that somehow, if you focus on performance, you're somehow compromising your art. I could not disagree more. Engaging with your audience is not selling out—it's showing up. It's generosity. It's an act of service. Without an audience, you're just practicing in public.

If we want our students to succeed in the real world—whether they pursue careers in music or not—we need to develop their ability to communicate and elevate. These are human skills. And in a world increasingly dominated by technology, they are also the most irreplaceable.

What AI Can't Do

Artificial intelligence is already transforming the music industry. It can compose, produce, mimic, and analyze. It can even generate voices and lyrics that feel eerily human. But here's what AI *can't* do:

- It can't walk onto a stage, take a breath, and electrify a room.
- It can't share a glance with a bandmate after a risky solo.
- It can't feel the goosebumps of a standing ovation.
- It can't *move* people in real time.

No one's ever going to pay to see an iPhone in concert. If our most essential contribution as musicians is the human experience of live performance, then that's what we should be doubling down on. Not just for future generations—but for *this* one.

Performance Training Should Be Required

I believe that performance training should be a core part of every music curriculum—at every level and in every genre

and not tacked on at the end. Not optional, but essential. Just as we teach rhythm and harmony, we should be teaching:

- How to walk onstage with intention
- How to engage with an audience
- How to design a setlist that tells a story
- How to speak with clarity and confidence
- How to move with purpose
- How to recover when things go wrong
- How to make people *feel*

And—maybe most importantly—how to have *fun* doing it! At Soundhouse, we use a framework called the **SHOW 4-CAST** to prepare artists for performance. This acronym helps us forecast the impact of a show through four essential lenses:

- **C**hemistry – The interplay and unity between performers
- **A**llure – The visual and emotional magnetism of the group
- **S**pectacle – The energy and wow factor of the experience
- **T**one – The pacing, professionalism, and polish of the presentation

It's a system that transforms shows from mediocre to *unforgettable*. And our students love it because they see the results—not just in audience response, but in their personal enjoyment.

The Future Is Live

The good news? Young musicians *want* to connect. They aren't opposed to performing, they just haven't been taught how to embrace it. Give them the tools, and they shine! And audiences? They continue to crave real, honest, emotional music. They don't need it to be perfect—they need it to be *alive*. The future of music education depends not just on what we play, but how we play it. Let's raise a generation of artists who can not only play the music—but who can bring it to life - because the world doesn't need more music in the cloud. It needs music that lights up the stage. And that's something no machine will ever replace. **T**



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CALEB CHAPMAN is a GRAMMY-nominated educator, producer, performer, author, and founder of the Soundhouse, an internationally recognized music performance training program for youth. He's also a co-founder of the Sound Support

Foundation, a national non-profit promoting music performance training. A past president of the Jazz Education Network (JEN), his students have performed at many of the world's most prestigious venues and are known for their combination of musical excellence and electrifying stage presence.

Photo By Russ Dixon

YOU CAN WRITE



E A SONG

A new online course offers educators and their students a novel approach to learning music creation

By Randy Klein with Marjorie LoPresti

LEARNING TO WRITE SONGS may seem daunting, but for those educators whose training didn't include music creation, teaching it can seem even more so. Yet songwriting is an essential form of human expression. And, with the help of a new online course *You Can Write A Song* available in MusicFirst, (a one-stop destination for curated tech content, software, hardware, and support) any student or teacher can write a song about anything.

You Can Write A Song is an organized method featuring more than eighty carefully chosen video song examples that teach how to listen to songs and learn from them. With on-screen lyrics that appear as a song is heard, it's a fun course to take and a fun course to teach. This honing of the focused listening skill by isolating and evaluating a song's elements is key.

Students, (and most humans) speak and write every day, and as such, songwriting can be an outgrowth of skills we already have. Telling others that you know something is core to education in general, as students must demonstrate evidence of their learning. Songwriting ties music to language arts, but also to most other subjects. To distill any learning into a song, the songwriter needs to understand it well.

With *You Can Write A Song*, music notation skills and an understanding of chords are not required but can be woven into the process after lyrics and melody are established. Music teachers may also be able to enlist language arts teachers in the creation of lyrics and dedicate more of their class time to writing melody and adding harmony.

Listening First

The easiest way to learn about songwriting is by listening to great songs. It is amazing how much the act of listening can teach about the craft, and it's fun to do. But songwriters must learn to listen to songs in a more insightful way, focusing on the different aspects of a song to discover how they work. In the same way reading and then discussing great books and poetry improves comprehension, focused listening makes for better songwriting. This kind of observation can reveal how composers and lyricists wrote a song. What is the song's structure? What is its rhyming pattern? What is it about the lyric construction that compels our interest and feelings?

By analyzing well-written songs, one can hear the structure, rhyming patterns, subject, melodic and harmonic decisions made by the composer and lyricist, and feel the marriage of the music and lyric.

Listening can be a creative activity in itself, and song response and interpretation are often highly personal for each student. Asking





whether “I like it” or “I don’t,” and the more important question— “why?”—are key to developing critical skills for discerning musical elements, timbres, and effects. This fundamental act of listening helps develop each person’s individual musical palette and toolkit.

For a deeper dive into this subject, read renowned music educator and songwriting teacher Dr. John Kratus’s article “Music Listening is Creative” (Music Educators Journal, March 2017, p. 46-51.) <https://tinyurl.com/itte231jk1>

Speak, Then Sing

For different songwriters, the parts of a song may come together in different ways. Starting with lyrics is one approach, with ideas beginning as spoken word. This is a time-tested pathway to songwriting. If you can hear what you speak, you can write a song. Then, melody and melodic rhythm become natural outgrowths of the creator’s speaking voice. Model ways of speaking and singing lyrics that are varied and inventive. The more you are willing to take creative risks and not judge the process of experimentation, the more your students will explore their own creativity.

In *You Can Write A Song*, the beginning songwriter chooses a

subject, then distills the main idea into the lyric for the hook. Hooks are short—a few words that feel good to the ear and encourage repetition. The process of free-writing or brainstorming about the feelings associated with the hook and song topic can then lead to lyrics for the chorus. More free-writing can add details about the topic or a storyline and lead to the first verse, and so on.

At each step, songwriters need to stop and speak the lyrics out loud. This is true for the hook, then the chorus, then each verse. Revisions and changes are a natural part of developing the lyric. Students should try a variety of ways of speaking each line of the lyrics, record themselves, and then listen back.

Self-assessment of recorded versions serves the topic and goal of the song best - not vocal quality. “*I have a terrible singing voice*” isn’t a concern. If you can sing it, it means you can hear it.

Once a rhythm is set for the hook and chorus, a melody may naturally emerge. Whether the songwriter has melody ideas or not, they should try different ways of singing the chorus, and record and listen to each. This process is repeated for the first verse, and so on.

As soon as a melody is established for the hook, chorus and verse, they should be recorded in their intended order (usually verse first.) If the sections don’t flow together naturally, some more experimentation and revision will be needed.

Melody, then Harmony

With the melody established, songwriters will need to play an instrument into a DAW or use the instrument sounds inside the DAW software to determine the starting note for the vocal and begin a full recording. Create a bass line first – single note harmony. DAW software like Soundtrap, Garageband, etc., have tools inside that may also assist with adding harmony. Trust that students’ internal music knowledge and history of listening to songs will guide them and encourage them to

EXPLORE MORE RESOURCES FOR SONGWRITING:

In Tune Monthly –

“The Write Stuff: Songwriting Resolutions” by Randy Klein

<https://tinyurl.com/itte231mf1>

“Quickstart Guide to

Songwriting” by Randy Klein

<https://tinyurl.com/itte231mf2>

Growing Songwriting: Student Creativities in the Classroom

and Beyond by Clint Randles

<https://tinyurl.com/itte231mf3>

Songwriting is a cumulatively learned process. You learn from the song you are writing and take it with you to the next song you write.

change harmony notes where it feels right. Music educators may now want to teach the concept of chords and chord progressions here as part of song revision.

Rhythm Tracks and Software

Once the new songwriters have finished and recorded their verses, choruses, perhaps added some harmony and rhythms with chord patterns, drum tracks can follow. Lyric and melody take the lead. Songwriting is a cumulatively learned process. You learn from the song you are writing and take it with you to the next song you write.

About Assessment

While scholastic assessment and evaluation are necessary, couch your feedback in positive terms as much as possible. By modeling positive suggestions, students will follow your lead and use this type of language to support and encourage one another.

Try sentence starters like these:

- I like how you...
- It was very effective that you...
- Did you think about trying...
- I wonder what might happen if...
- Maybe try something like in (song heard in class) ...
- Congratulations! You wrote your first...

When it comes time for grades, focus on process, song elements and effort rather than the “quality” of the song. Provide credit and grades for listening activities. If a student’s first song has a singable, memorable hook inside a chorus and at least one verse that makes sense with that chorus, it’s a success.

Chicken or Egg?

Many songwriters start adding rhythm and harmony parts early in the process. Sometimes lyrics even come with a melodic and rhythmic framework. Keep in mind that the approach presented here is a proven entry point to songwriting that works for all ages, regardless of prior experience, but there many paths.

Celebrate!

Creating an original, singable song is an achievement. John Kratus wrote about a group of his students who wanted to perform their songs in a “concert with snacks.” Performers

Go to youcanwriteasong.net for info on Randy’s workshops

You Can Write A Song

RANDY KLEIN

shared their songs voluntarily. Songwriters and their friends were invited. (“A Return to Amateurism in Music Education.” *Music Educators Journal*, September 2019, p. 31-37.) <https://tinyurl.com/itte231jk2>

Consider creating a singer/songwriter event with your students. Involve them in the planning process from the beginning. It’s their music, and they should have the most prominent voice in whether and how to share their songs.

- Consider whether your “concert with snacks” should be organized by class, grade level or as school-wide or after school events.
 - Create a class web page featuring the songs.
 - Collaborate with other classes to create music videos.
 - Create podcasts featuring one or more songs.

Looking for more?

Create higher quality recordings of each song This will require setting up some type of recording booth (acoustical foam, thick curtains, etc.) and some DAW skills to mix and master the recordings. Also, consider extending your own professional practice by writing songs yourself. You do not have to share them with anyone, but developing your own songwriting is a great way to inform your instruction. **T**



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POP QUIZ

The following quiz questions can be used to test for comprehension or for general reading of this issue of *In Tune*.
(The answers are on page 3 of the Teacher's Edition.)

1. "When you're performing, you are telling a story. It's not just singing the song. It's being the story," is a quote from which famous artist?

- A. Bruce Springsteen
- B. Lady Gaga
- C. Prince
- D. Bono

2. What was the name of Selena Gomez's first band?

- A. Selena Gomez & Friends
- B. Selena Gomez & the Scene
- C. Selena Gomez & the Wizards of Waverly Place
- D. Selena Gomez & the Sheen

3. Which of the following areas do music business programs tend to cover?

- A. Artist management
- B. Music publishing and licensing
- C. Marketing
- D. Live performance
- R. All of the above

4. Which soul vocal group did James Brown join in the mid-1950s?

- A. The Famous Flames
- B. The Soul Stirrers
- C. Jimmy James and The Blue Flames
- D. The Temptations

5. How old was Selena Gomez when she became the youngest ever UNICEF ambassador?

- A. 23
- B. 19
- C. 11
- D. 17

6. "Living In America" was written for which 1985 film?

- A. The Godfather
- B. Ghost
- C. The Shining
- D. Rocky IV

7. Why do music fans "willingly shell out significant sums to go to a live concert where the music will likely never sound as good as over headphones?"

- A. They crave the experience that can only come from live performance
- B. They are tired of listening through small phone speakers
- C. They have expendable income
- D. They want to buy tour merch

8. Which notable music school collaborates with the Recording Academy to offer mentorship opportunities?

- A. Berklee College of Music
- B. Oberlin Conservatory
- C. Frost School of Music
- D. USC Thornton School of Music

9. Which acting role landed Selena Gomez her first Emmy?

- A. Barney & Friends
- B. Only Murders In The Building
- C. Spring Breakers
- D. Wizards of Waverly Place

10. Which organization distributes nearly \$60,000 each year through 10 different scholarships and grants?

- A. The National Federation of Music Clubs
- B. The Yoko Ono and Gibson Musical Instruments Scholarship Fund
- C. The Percussive Arts Society
- D. The Jack Kent Cooke Young Artist Fund



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