

◆ TEACHER'S EDITION ◆

THE YOUNG MUSICIAN'S TEXTBOOK

intune

VOL. 23 • NO. 3

MONTHLY

HOW TO PLAY
ROB THOMAS'
"SMOOTH"

SLOW DOWN
STRATEGIES

RELEASING
MUSIC

5 SECONDS OF SUMMER

With a new label and album, and a big world tour coming next year, 5SOS has grown up

- ◆ **The Tao of In Tune**
- ◆ **Activities to Retain Music Students**
- ◆ **A Chance to Thrive Through Music**
- ◆ **Step Up to Sound**

Every Music Student Needs to Get **In Tune!**
To get subscriptions for your class, see the back cover



THE NEW ENDUR™

WE'VE BUILT AN EVEN TOUGHER MUSIC STAND

We've taken durability to the next level with an all-steel stand that's built to withstand the most challenging classroom environments.



18-gauge steel post and 22-gauge steel desk won't bend easily



Durable black powder coat paint finish



Rolled steel edges won't scratch instruments



Enhanced post and premium hinge confidently hold more weight



Steel welded base reduces teetering and tipping



Now, even more Wenger products are covered with our 10-year warranty!

1.800.4WENGER
wengercorp.com

Wenger®

What A Super Sup!

THIS ISSUE OF IN TUNE'S TEACHERS EDITION

includes a first-person article brought to us by our friends at Wenger Corporation. There's a Wenger mention towards the end of the piece, but it's not an advertisement at all. It's a reprint from *"The American School Board Journal"*, written by Dr. Jennifer Collier, a Missouri school district superintendent, who is described as a "lifelong advocate for arts education".

The points she raises about the efficacy of arts education aren't new. In fact, the underpinnings of her argument for arts education while time honored, almost sound a bit tired. We've heard it all before; the study of music provides leadership training, lessons about "learning to learn", and the uncovering of talent in students they didn't know they had. But making her arguments, she is quite literally preaching to the choir.

What's noteworthy about the story, and Dr. Collier, is that this advocate for arts education is a school superintendent! Her advocacy therefore isn't aimed at her district's administration. In a manner of speaking, she *is* the administration. Her messaging is therefore targeted at students and their families, and, as it turns out, they are cheering her on! The results of her arts program expansion – better attendance, less violence, better scores – of course prove her points.

The passage that made us smile is, "Education is so much more than reading, math, science, and social studies. Those are certainly important; we will always emphasize them. Literacy is my number one priority. But just like some students excel in sports, many children find their niche in the arts. Plus, many skills developed in the arts are transferable to other areas of life." Talk about flipping the script!

Don't miss a close read of this story. Collier is creative, inspiring, she's got the goods and is making it happen. Looking for good news for a change? Here you go. ●

QUIZ ANSWERS: 1A, 2D, 3C, 4B, 5C, 6A&C, 7D, 8D, 9B, 10A

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



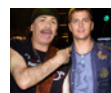
5 Seconds of Summer Grows Up

Since their 2015 founding, 5 Seconds of Summer's music has evolved from pop-punk exuberance to arena-ready pop-rock, to synth-polished introspection. That arc has created expectations among the band's fans for continued reinvention. With their new release *Everyone's A Star!*, the quartet fulfills the mission, with a return to sharp hooks and big-room guitars, albeit served up with the modern pop mechanics they've learned along the way.



Slow Down Strategies

Tempo, the speed of the underlying pulse of a piece of music, is one of the most significant elements that shapes the way a composition is experienced. Choosing a tempo is like choosing the size of your canvas for a painting. Sometimes, a melody, like a folk song, might sound great in a whole range of tempos. Other times, there's only one tempo that makes a piece of music really pop.



How To Play "Smooth" by Rob Thomas, (feat. Carlos Santana)

This month's article is about "Smooth," a smash for Rob Thomas (and late career hit for guitarist Carlos Santana), that's perfect for a school jazz ensemble to cover.



On Releasing Music

It is likely that students who write songs will someday want to share recordings of their music with the world. These days, that's easier than ever. In this post, our writers unpack the basics of releasing music; where to release it, and the other business aspects they'll need to consider.

The Tao of In Tune

WE FIND OUR IDEAS OF WHAT WE THINK WE KNOW CHALLENGED ALL OF THE TIME. Perhaps other people don't find that to be the case, but our rock-solid assumptions are continuously being rocked. A quote attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson is, "Knowledge is when you learn something new every day." Well, we then, must have a lot of knowledge! Take this issue's cover subject 5 Seconds of Summer. There are...or rather were, a "boy band", right? Backstreet, 98 Degrees, 5SOS. As it turns out, nope. Never were. They've always played their instruments, they're serious songwriters, and after their original fame wave crested, they went on a decade long journey, morphing their sound and style at least a couple of times. There are three lessons here. 1) You can't tell a book by its cover, 2) Musical innovation can be a key to longevity, and 3) If you try to stay relevant, your fans may grow up with you. 5 Seconds of Summer has a new album and will embark on a world tour early next year. Who knew?



John Williams and Steven Spielberg

MUSIC NEWS

Our collection of music news is designed to keep music students aware of the broader music world around them. This issue's vignettes include "John Williams and Steven Spielberg Back Together Again," "Celebrating 100 Years of *Asheville Sessions*," "EA Sports FC: Still a Tastemaker in the Streaming Age," and more.



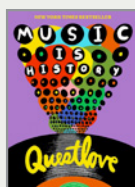
Alex Warren



Carole King

INFLUENCES

This month, we trace the influences of rising indie singer/songwriter Alex Warren and how those inspirations connect through time, from Shawn Mendes to John Mayer to Carole King.



MEDIA

Our monthly collection of music media features the new book *Music Is History* by Questlove, *Sticky Notes: The Classical Music Podcast* offering a mixture of interviews with modern composers, beginner-friendly overviews of important pieces in the classical repertoire, and in a video essay, YouTuber Fuzz Culture lays out exactly why he believes that AI will never beat human art.

Sam Fender



Izzy Escobar



Amira B.



The band CAMINO

FRONTRUNNER

This issue's five emerging acts are British singer/songwriter Sam Fender, singer/songwriter/producer/pianist and educator Amira B. whose work fuses soul, jazz, R&B and funk, alt-rock and pop-rock trio The band CAMINO, pop singer-songwriter songwriter Izzy Escobar, and genre-blending artist Felix Ames.



WHAT DO YOU DO?

Owner/founder/lead acoustical consultant of Music City Acoustics Graham Waks designs acoustic treatments and consults with customers to create the best possible sound environment for their unique studios, listening rooms, offices, houses of worship, restaurants, and more.



MUSICAL MOMENTS

When Jimi Hendrix played his instrumental version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" in the closing moments of Woodstock with his guitar's distortion and feedback emulating bombs, screams, and sirens, he turned the sacred patriotic song into a political critique of the war in Vietnam. The shocking performance then became a benchmark for live rock concerts, with traits that many later artists sought to emulate.

Available
Now!

musicfirst solution for

Modern Band

The MusicFirst Solution for Modern Band offers a comprehensive suite of tools and resources designed to bring modern music education to life.

Ideal for schools and educators looking to engage students with contemporary music styles, this solution integrates cutting-edge software with high-quality instructional content, providing everything needed to create a dynamic and inspiring music program.

\$17
per user, per year
(25-user minimum)



Comprehensive Software Integrations

- **MusicFirst Classroom**
Single-sign-on hub for music learning
- **PracticeFirst**
Practice assessment
- **OGenPlus**
Beat and loop creator
- **YuStudio**
Digital audio workstation
- **Auralia First + Musition First**
Ear training and music theory
- **Focus on Sound**
Multimedia music encyclopedia

Courses

- **Modern Band 101** – Steve Holley
- **School of Rock Levels 1-3**
Bass, Guitar, Keys, Drums, and Voice units
- **Modern Band Instrument Lessons** – Steve Giddings
Specialized lessons in modern band instruments
- **Popular Music Theory** – Ethan Hein
Exploration of music theory in contemporary music
- **Drum Channel 100-level** – Mike Packer
Foundational drumming course

Lessons and Resources

- **Music Will lessons and resources:**
Engaging materials designed to support modern music education
- **MusicProfessor Instrument Lessons:**
Comprehensive instrument tutorials for various skill levels
- **Drum Channel lessons and supplemental resources:**
High-quality drumming tutorials and resources
- **Making Music with OGenPlus:**
Creative music production and arrangement activities using OGenPlus



Learn more at:
musicfirst.com/modernband

In partnership with:

SCHOOL
of ROCK

Music
Will

DRUM
CHANNEL

TEACHROCK

Support Music Education with Every Purchase!

For every seat sold of the Modern Band solution, MusicFirst will donate \$0.25 to Music Will, supporting music education for all.

Engaging Your “Tribe”

A thriving music program gives students more than musical skills — it gives them a place to be known; to lead; to fail; to shine; to become involved; and to become their best selves.

Preparing music students for their transition to high school is not just about musical growth. It’s also about helping them imagine the relationships they’ll build and experiences they’ll have by becoming a part of a vibrant, exciting next level music program. If this culture of musical matriculation is created within the middle school, students will remain committed to their music education, continuing to grow as musicians *and* people.

Building relationships with middle schoolers should be a collaborative effort, with involvement beginning on day one. Asking for assistance and assigning tasks helps high school directors relieve some of their heavy burdens and allows students, parents and administrators to become a part of the organizational machine. Here are some techniques a high school director might employ, and delegate to various constituents.

- Set up a parent committee to track middle school music student successes, whether it’s an award in music, sports, or academics. Design a “congratulatory” card for personalized notes—*Hey, great job on your science fair win! Can’t wait to see you in a couple years!* Those little touches build relationships.

- Assemble a student leadership team (if you don’t already have one) and ask them to design and display HUGE signs in front of the performance venue celebrating beginning students’ “first performance” concert. Have high schoolers attend in an identifiable uniform to greet the beginners as they arrive—anything that makes students feel special. Challenge your students to come up with more ideas!

- Have high school students perform in the lobby in small ensembles and/or help with handing out programs to parents. Stay to serve refreshments to the students and their families after the performance.

- Host a high school band night and establish “big brother/big sister” mentorships with the middle school students.

- Work with middle/high school administrators and counselors to create a clear, four-year plan showing how music fits into the



student schedule. Many students assume they can’t fit music into their high school schedules and still meet graduation or college entry requirements. This myth must be dispelled!

Music education is about much more than competitions and perfect performances—it’s about building a lifelong relationship with music *and with other people*. While these events are certainly exciting, they shouldn’t be the only motivation. Many students also stay for the relationships—the shared experiences, laughter, bus rides, and post-concert celebrations. *Shared responsibility builds shared pride.* **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.



give a note™

FOUNDATION

CREATING BETTER HUMANS
THROUGH MUSIC!

LEARN MORE
VISIT
GIVEANOTE.ORG

Give A Note foundation is a 501(c)(3)



STEP UP T



Brillhart
mouthpiece
finishing

**How the right
mouthpiece can
transform your tone,
your technique, and
your musical future**

Every musician reaches a point where the mouthpiece that came with their instrument no longer brings out their best sound. Maybe the tone feels thin, or endurance starts to waver, or your technique has simply outgrown the limitations of a student setup. Whatever the reason, stepping up to a new mouthpiece can be one of the most rewarding upgrades in your musical journey. The right fit doesn't just enhance your sound—it changes how you play.

Across brass and woodwinds, Conn Selmer's family of Bach, Selmer, Brillhart, and Conn mouthpieces offers carefully engineered paths for players moving from beginner setups toward professional performance. Here's how to find your next step, from your first real upgrade to the piece that will carry you through college, concerts, and beyond.

TRUMPET

From Bright Beginnings to Balanced Brilliance



For trumpet players just beyond the beginner stage, the *Bach 3513C (3C) Classic Trumpet Mouthpiece* represents an ideal upgrade.

With its medium cup and slightly larger diameter, it offers comfort, control, and a well-rounded tone in nearly any setting.

"Comfort, endurance, attack, dynamics, all with a full sound, without compromising range! That's why I play a Bach 3C," says international jazz artist Bria Skonberg.

For more advanced players fine-tuning orchestral tone, the *Bach 3511HC (1½C)* brings warmth and resonance while maintaining a centered sound. Principal trumpet David Krauss of the MET Opera Orchestra notes, "My Bach mouthpiece stands the test of time because it gives me the balanced resistance I need to produce a centered tone."

TO SOUND



FRENCH HORN
Focus and Clarity
for the Advancing Player

Hornists ready to move beyond their factory mouthpiece often find lasting value in the *Bach 33611 (Size 11) Classic Series*. Its medium cup depth and narrow rim deliver a bright, focused response that helps serious players develop endurance and precision. “For players building endurance and technique, it delivers substance, presence, and control,” says Ben Reidhead, Conn Selmer Product Manager for French Horns and Marching Brass.



TROMBONE
Building Depth and Character

For developing trombonists, the *Bach 3506HAL (6½AL) Classic Trombone Mouthpiece* offers a warm, rich tone and smooth response that help bridge the gap between student and advanced playing.

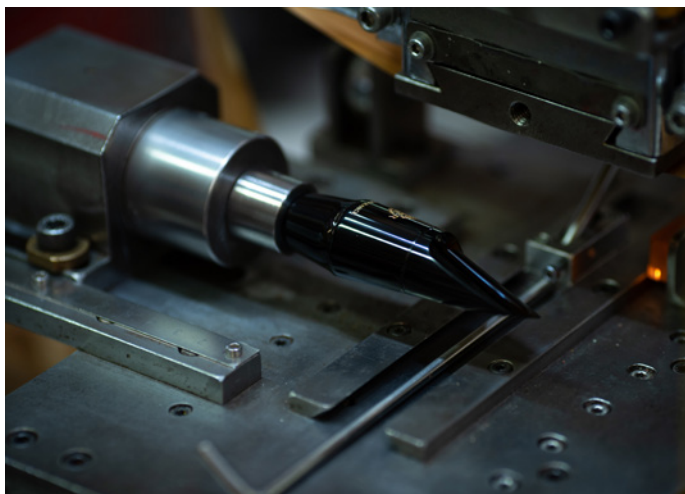
As players progress to large-bore instruments or college auditions, the *Bach A4415G2 (5G) Artisan Series* provides a deeper, more refined sound. With its vintage-inspired design and modern CNC precision, it’s the perfect mix of classic feel and contemporary performance. “The Artisan Series represents the best of two eras,” explains Aron Sklar, Conn Selmer’s Director of Product Development. “Historical New York-era designs fused with modern precision—at a price accessible to advancing players.”



TUBA
Expanding Tone and Presence

For students stepping up from school-owned gear, the *Conn 120S Helleberg Tuba Mouthpiece* delivers a dark, powerful tone with excellent projection. Its deep funnel cup and narrow rim help players develop strength and resonance across the low register.

More experienced players looking for a broader, more commanding tone often choose the *Bach 33518 (Size 18) Classic Tuba Mouthpiece*. With its large cup and wide rim, it offers warmth, depth, and projection that fills any hall. “With its large cup and wide rim, the Bach 18 mouthpiece delivers real depth and projection,” says Ben Reidhead. “It’s perfect for players whose sound and support are ready to grow.”





SAXOPHONE

From Consistent Control to Expressive Edge

For saxophonists moving beyond plastic beginner mouthpieces, the *Selmer Paris S80 Series (C*)* remains a gold standard across all ranges—soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone. Made from hard rubber, it’s known for its consistency, comfort, and longevity. “Imagine two islands,” says educator Dr. Shelley Jagow. “On one is a pro sax with a student mouthpiece, on the other a student sax with a professional mouthpiece. I’d choose the second every time. A pro mouthpiece gives richer tone, clearer articulation, and supports long-term growth.”

For jazz players, the *Brilhart Ebolin Mouthpiece* offers just the right mix of edge and warmth. Revived from Arnold Brillhart’s original 1950s molds, it captures the essence of the cool, dry West Coast sound. “We started with the original Carlsbad-era molds,” says Scott Kurtzweil, Conn Selmer Category Manager for Woodwinds. “The result is that classic, resonant sound that defined American jazz.”

CLARINET

Clarity, Control, and Expression

For advancing clarinetists, the *Selmer Paris Concept Bb* mouthpiece offers a natural next step from plastic beginner models. Its

precision-milled hard rubber and modern chamber design provide rich tone, focused intonation, and stability. “Geometry is more important than material,” explains Scott Kurtzweil. “The Concept encourages proper air support and produces a pure, compact sound.”

At the professional level, the *Selmer Paris Focus Bb* mouthpiece refines that clarity even further. With a close tip opening and hand-finished craftsmanship, it allows for effortless articulation and control. “The Focus lets you think less about mechanics and more about musical expression,” Kurtzweil adds.



The Sound of Growth

From the first Bach 3C to a Selmer Focus, every upgrade tells a story of progress. The best mouthpieces don’t just make you sound better—they

make you *play* better, challenging you to refine your tone, expand your range, and express your musical personality.

Because in the end, the perfect mouthpiece isn’t just about fit or finish. It’s about finding the sound that fits *you*. **T**



Kansas City Public Schools,
Garcia Elementary

A CHANCE TO THRO

By Dr. Jennifer Collier



Originally published in “The American School Board Journal”, the superintendent of Missouri’s Kansas City Public Schools writes about bringing instrumental music back to her district.

Growing up in Kansas City, my twin sister and I didn’t plan to pursue music, although we often sang together at church. But our focus shifted at age 13 after we sang at our grandfather’s funeral. Music educator Maxine Stetzler heard our potential. As a teacher who worked at the school where our mother was principal, she offered to give us voice lessons. That moment marked the start of a journey that would shape the rest of my life.

Several years later, our high school choir teacher, Kathy Crispino, took us under her wing and also gave us voice lessons. She encouraged us to study music in college, even driving us to auditions. This led to our earning scholarships at the University of Kansas’ Conservatory of Music.

For me, music became more than a skill — it became a refuge. It carried me through challenges, opened doors to opportunities, and taught me about discipline and resilience, traits that would later help in my career. In college, I discovered another gift of music: its therapeutic power. Music helped me cope with the stress



Dr. Adrianna Marshall and Dr. Jennifer Collier.

and uncertainty of life. It also provided a sense of grounding and purpose.

Finding My Calling

After graduating from college, I planned to pursue a professional singing career in New York. I wanted to follow in the footsteps of my cousin who worked on Broadway. But my parents encouraged me to work and save some money first. The Kansas City School District had openings for music teachers; I planned to only teach for a year.

DO THRIVE THROUGH MUSIC



Kansas City Public Schools,
Holliday Montessori

It turns out I found my true calling at that Kansas City school. Teaching brought me a sense of contentment I hadn't anticipated. That feeling was cemented during my second year, when I started teaching at Northeast High School. Those students came from all over the world — more than 30 different languages were spoken — and many were new to the country. I was terrified at first, wondering how I could connect with students who didn't even speak English. But then I discovered something profound. Music was the bridge. It allowed us to communicate and connect in ways I never imagined. I knew I was exactly where I was meant to be.

“Music has the power to change lives. I know this because it changed mine.”

Students who entered my classroom scared and disconnected came alive through music. It gave them confidence, a sense of belonging, and a community to call their own. This belief in the power of music has been my guiding star as an educator and now as superintendent of Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS). I want every child in our district to experience the joy, connection, and opportunities that music can provide. Everyone needs the arts.

Envisioning Equity

Our vision for expanding the art programming began with a focus on equity. Early in my teaching career, elementary instrumental music programs were cut districtwide, due to budget constraints. Only families who could afford private lessons had access. Later, as a principal at Border Star Montessori, I saw how strong parent groups could advocate for instrumental music programs. But this was

only happening in certain pockets of the district; access wasn't equitable.

When I became superintendent, I prioritized finding a way to offer instrumental music at every elementary school. Our fine arts director, Adrianna Marshall, like me, grew up in our district and eventually returned to teach music here. The two of us share a common vision; her role in these efforts has been vital. Together we developed a districtwide proposal for equity in the fine arts.

Fortunately, we had ESSER funds during the pandemic, which enabled us to purchase instruments well before we started instrumental music classes. We worked closely with our Wenger representative to outfit each school with the necessary equipment, including music chairs and stands. Fixed and mobile storage options were also crucial to support multi-use spaces and provide easy transport between rooms.

Now we can offer instrumental music for all district third-through sixth-grade students; this was implemented across the district in two phases over consecutive summers. We're

focusing on all the arts, including theater, dance, and visual arts. As an educational institution, and as an education leader, it's important that I champion that. Students may have gifts lying dormant because they never get exposure or the opportunity. If we didn't offer the arts, we'd miss the chance to help our students thrive. Education is so much more than reading, math, science, and social studies. Those are certainly important; we will always emphasize them. Literacy is my number one priority. But just like some students excel in sports, many children find their niche in the arts. Plus, many skills developed in the arts are transferable to other areas of life.

Engaging Parents

One of the keys to our initiative's success has been engaging parents. From the very beginning, we made it clear that music education isn't just an "extra" — it's a vital part of helping their children succeed. Parents have been some of our most enthusiastic supporters.

To help gain parental support, we first made sure they understood the benefits of music education.



Kansas City Public Schools,
M.L. King Elementary

Research shows that students who participate in the arts have better academic outcomes, fewer discipline issues, and higher rates of school attendance. But we also made it personal. Many of our district leaders have a music degree, and many of our principals also have music backgrounds. Together we share stories about the impact of music on our own lives, along with stories about students who gained confidence and forged friendships through music.

One parent engagement strategy we implemented was offering third graders early exposure to music. They are introduced to musical instrument families and given the chance to explore band, orchestra, and choir. Families are invited to music nights where they can hear professional ensembles, learn about the instruments, and see what their children might achieve. Upon entering fourth grade, students are ready to choose their own path and instrument, which for choir could be their voice. This process empowers and excites students and brings parents into the decision-making process.

Such outreach events have been transformational for parents. Many of them never had access to music

education themselves and are thrilled to see their children experiencing something they never could. For families who may struggle financially, we've ensured that no child is turned away due to cost. Elementary instrumental music is free; rental fees for older students are minimal.

This approach has strengthened our relationship with families. Parents who once saw schools as distant institutions are now active community participants. They attend concerts, engage in conversations about their children's progress, and advocate for the arts in ways that inspire us every day.

Building Community

One of the most profound impacts of our music programming has been the sense of belonging it creates. For students who feel disconnected — whether because of language barriers, socioeconomic challenges, or other obstacles — music becomes a sanctuary. In my own teaching classroom, I saw this firsthand. Today, I see the same magic happening in classrooms across our district. We're also



seeing the positive ripple effects. Families are returning to our district because they want their children to have these opportunities. Over the past few years, enrollment has increased significantly, reversing a long trend of decline. Parents tell us they're choosing our schools because we're offering something they can't find anywhere else: a robust, inclusive arts program.

I talk about our arts programming wherever I go in our community; I make some broad connections. People talk to me a lot about violence in the city. I tell them that we must invest in our children if we want to see this trend change. Kids need something to lean into, something to be engaged and involved with that's productive.

Just telling students, "Don't do this! Don't do that!" is too easy. Tell them what they can do. By giving them music and the arts, we are opening up worlds for them to explore. When our kids are engaged in these activities, they have less time and inclination to engage in harmful behaviors.

Making Connections

One of the keys to our success in expanding arts education has been holding face-to-face conversations with families in our community. This is the best way to build trust and hear what matters most to parents. For example, when we are setting district budget priorities, I meet with parent advisory groups, our Hispanic advisory council, and even our student advisory council. I want to make sure we're listening to everyone's voices.

These conversations have shown me how much parents want opportunities like arts education for their children. When parents are excited and involved, they often influence others in the community. Principals play an important role too, leading similar discussions at the school level. We also use surveys to gather broader input and reach families who might not attend these meetings.

For other districts looking to expand arts education, my advice is simple: Start with your community. Talk to parents, teachers, and students about what they value and what they need. Share the research but also share stories. Show — and tell — how music has the power to transform lives and bring communities together.

Partnerships are also invaluable. We're working with the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music; two of their graduate students teach dance in our schools and we're looking to add more. We are also partnering with organizations like the Kansas City Youth Symphony, the Kansas City Lyric Opera, and the Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey dance organization. These groups bring their expertise and resources into our schools, helping support our instruction. The connections we build are equally valuable. Some of our students are auditioning

for these groups, which could provide them with exciting opportunities.

From a financial perspective, don't let funding challenges deter you. As noted earlier, we leveraged ESSER funds to jumpstart our initiative. We've now integrated arts funding into our regular budget. We also are seeking support and funding from organizations and private donors who value arts education. Sustainability takes planning and creativity, but it's worth every effort.

Finally, I would tell other districts: Despire not-small beginnings. Don't become frustrated because you can't enact the grand plans you envision. Just stay with it, show results, and people will want to get involved. The community will coalesce around what you're doing and help build your program over time.

I agree with my colleague Marshall, who says it's essential to have a vision and realize that achieving it "will come with small steps and big bites."

Funding can be uncertain; we as educators must always be ready with concrete ideas that advance this vision when resources become available.

Expanding Opportunities

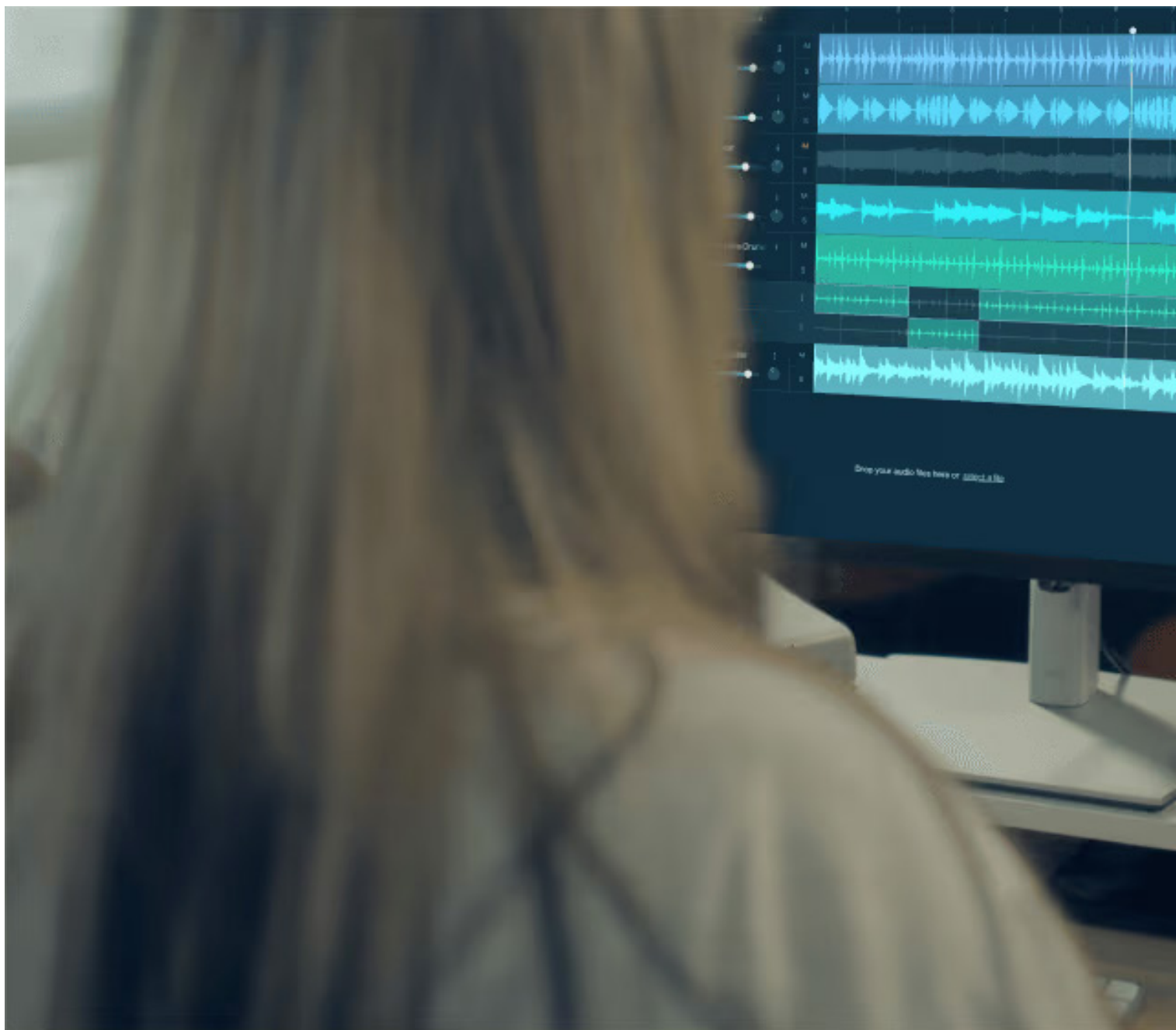
I often tell people that I'm not just trying to create professional musicians, although I would love to eventually see some come from our schools. I certainly want people to recognize the artistic talent our district can produce — an amazing violinist or ballet dancer, for example. Some of our kids should lean into that; it's probably their gift. But for others, music is a great opportunity — maybe a pathway to college.

I want all our students to flourish and find their unique place in the world. The skills students learn through music — teamwork, discipline, creativity — are transferable to every aspect of life.

As I walk through our schools, I see and hear the impact of our work every day. I see students discovering their passions, building confidence, and finding joy. This year more than 20 students advanced to state competitions. I see parents beaming with pride as they watch their children perform. Our district's fine arts festival has expanded from one night to four nights; more than 1,000 parents attend. And I see a community coming together around something that matters deeply: giving every child the chance to thrive. **T**

JENNIFER COLLIER is superintendent of Missouri's Kansas City Public and a lifelong advocate for arts education.
askthesupt@kcpublicschools.org

REIMAGINING MUSIC THROUGH MOISES



By Dr. Jim Frankel

MUSICIANSHIP AI AND AI STUDIO



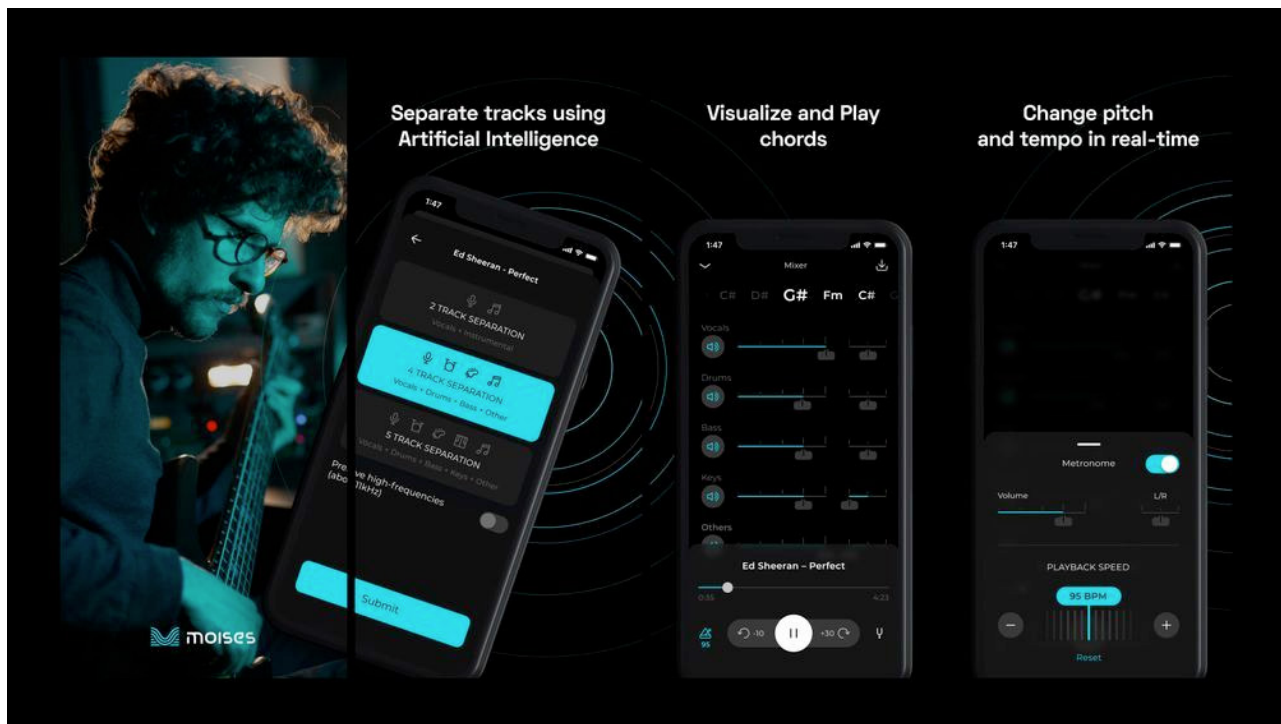
For as long as I've been teaching, I've believed that the most transformative technologies in music education are the ones that make listening, practicing, and creating more meaningful for our students. They're not the flashiest tools, nor the ones with the most complex features; they're the ones that meet students where they are, give them agency, and help teachers do what we do best — empower young musicians. Moises.ai has become one of those rare tools. What started as a clever way to separate basic audio stems has blossomed into a flexible, accessible platform that supports nearly every area of K-12 music instruction — and now, with the launch of Moises AI Studio, the possibilities have grown even deeper. MusicFirst recently became the exclusive reseller of Moises, and we are so excited to make this incredible technology available to music educators.

Before we dive in, it's worth clarifying an important point about what Moises can—and cannot—do. While the platform excels at separating broad categories like vocals, drums, bass, and “other instruments,” it *cannot* isolate specific like-sounding instruments (for example, distinguishing two flutes or separating alto sax from trumpet). However, for the vast majority of teaching scenarios, the separation tools, stem-mixing capabilities, metronome overlays, chord detection, tempo/key adjustment, and now creative AI-assisted generation, are more than sufficient to radically improve students' understanding and practice habits.

Hearing the Part to Understand the Whole

One of the most powerful aspects of Moises is also one of the simplest: allowing students to *actually hear what's going on in the music*. Anyone who has taught middle school band, orchestra, or choir knows that students often struggle not because they can't play or sing their part, but because they can't reliably *perceive* it within the full texture. Inner voices get lost; accompaniment lines disappear; students listen “to survive” rather than listening to *understand*.

With Moises, teachers can upload a recording and remove or emphasize broad stems to highlight the musical content that matters most. Want your choir's altos to hear the harmonic motion? Mute



the vocal stem and play only the instrumental. Want your jazz band's rhythm section to understand how the drums interact with the bass or guitar comping? Isolate those stems and let the students follow the groove visually and aurally. The spectral display (a kind of visual map of sound energy) adds another dimension — students can *see* the texture unfolding. Many learners absorb information more easily when they have both aural and visual reinforcement.

Even though the platform cannot separate specific orchestral or band instruments, being able to emphasize the “other instruments” stem (for example) while lowering the vocals or drums, still illuminates inner textures students typically overlook. Over time, these listening experiences develop stronger ensemble awareness, better intonation, and—perhaps most importantly—greater musical independence.

Custom Backing Tracks That Match Student Needs

I talk with music teachers around the world, and one universal truth remains: students practice more effectively when the materials are tailored to their ability level. Moises makes this unbelievably easy. You can slow a track down, speed it up, change the key, rebalance stems, or even add a click—all within minutes.

Imagine a young clarinetist preparing a solo for adjudication. Instead of struggling with a single, fixed-tempo accompaniment, they can practice with a slower version, gradually working their way up to the full tempo. A middle-school baritone singer dealing with range limitations can practice with a transposed accompaniment

that supports good vocal technique. Students who play by ear can rehearse with a track that includes live pitch detection and chord symbols.

These aren't bells and whistles—they're essential scaffolds. They remove barriers, build confidence, and make practice *more* musical. For many students, Moises is the first time they've had access to an accompaniment that *meets them where they are* rather than forcing them to stretch beyond what's developmentally appropriate.

A Game-Changer for Sectionals and Small Groups

While Moises cannot isolate like instruments (e.g., two flutes playing together), its ability to provide broad separation—vocals, drums, bass, other instruments—still delivers enormous benefits in sectionals. You can raise the “other instruments” stem to help players hear their general timbre family more clearly or lower the accompaniment to bring out inner rhythmic and harmonic gestures that are otherwise buried.

This is especially valuable for:

- **Percussionists** who can rehearse with the drum stem isolated, hearing nuance in time-feel, articulation, and dynamic contour.
- **Rhythm sections** who can study the interaction between bass and drums or between chordal instruments and soloists.
- **Choirs** which benefit from hearing the instrumental accompaniment on its own, clarifying harmonic structure and phrasing.

In short: Moises becomes a rehearsal partner—a digital coach that reinforces the listening habits we try to cultivate every day in our teaching.

From Deconstruction to Creation: AI Studio Steps I

Here's where things get even more exciting for us in education. AI Studio takes the same audio-separation backbone, adds rhythm and harmony analysis, and enables students (or teachers) to upload their own melody, chord progression, or rhythmic loop—and then ask the system to generate instrumental parts (drums, bass, guitar, keys, etc.) that align with the “feel” of the input. It even allows genre presets (funk, rock, pop), expressive controls (fills, articulation, dynamics), and smart-selection tools to build transitions or variations.

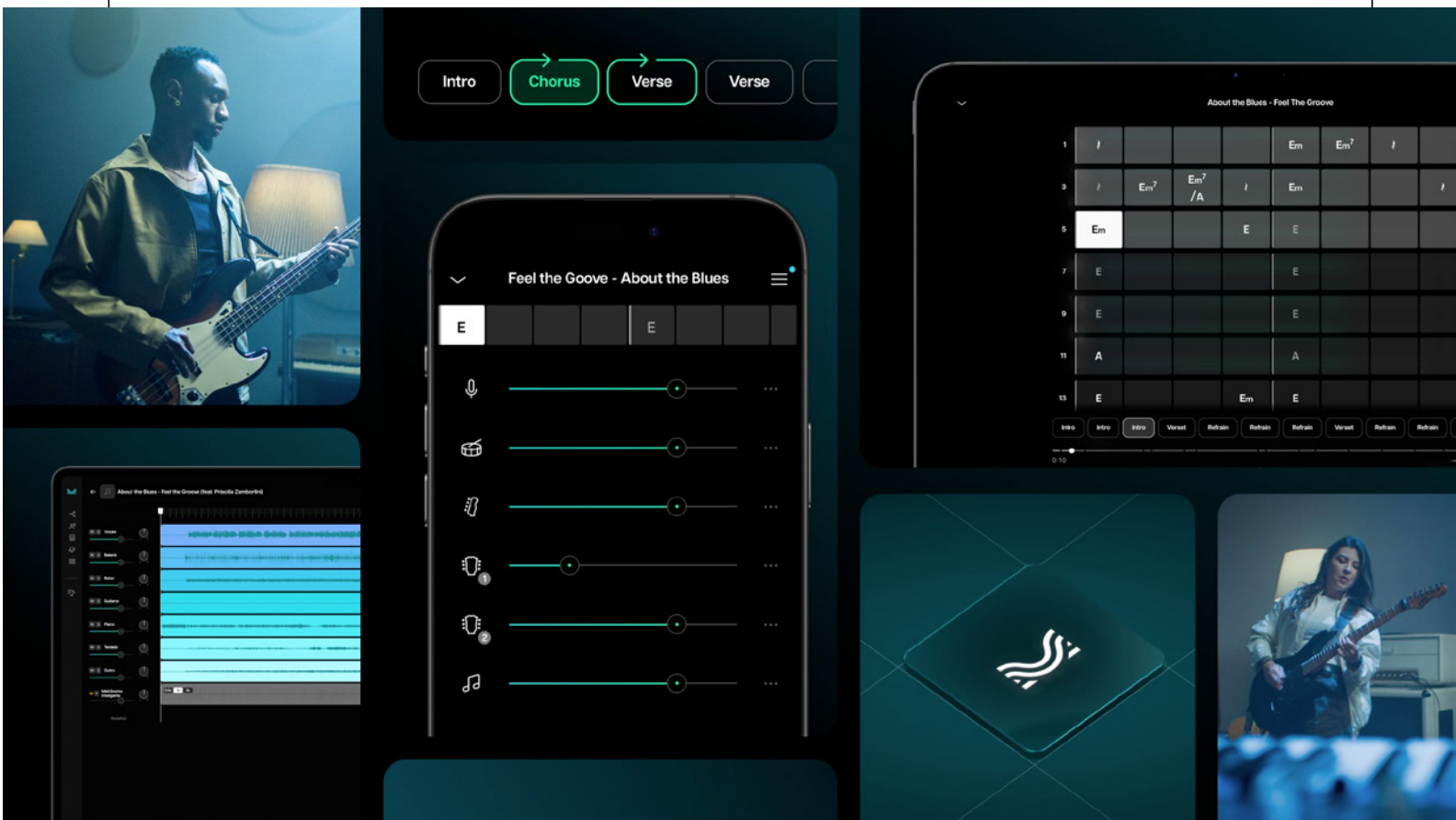
From an educational standpoint, this means we can shift from solely analytical work (listening, isolating, understanding) into generative work (creating, remixing, exploring). When students generate stems using AI Studio, they actively make musical decisions: “Do I want the bass line to be walking or floating? Do I want the groove tight or relaxed?” They then regenerate and refine, keeping what they like, changing what they don't. According to your

post, “the student—not the algorithm—is at the center.” This distinction matters; it aligns with our best pedagogical practices around student agency.

Differentiation and Accessibility at Scale

Perhaps the most significant pedagogical benefit of Moises—and now AI Studio—is that they enable true differentiation, something every teacher values but few tools genuinely support. With minimal effort, you can create multiple versions of the same track:

- A slower version with a strong click for rhythmic reinforcement.
- A transposed version for vocalists or instrumentalists with range limitations.
- A “simplified mix” that reduces cognitive load for beginners.
- A visually enhanced version that includes chords, tempo markings, and spectral analysis.
- Because Moises works across nearly all devices—phones, tablets, Chromebooks, laptops—students can practice in ways that match their strengths and needs. It creates an environment where every learner can thrive, regardless of prior experience or access to private lessons.



Lesson Ideas for the 21st-Century Classroom

Here are several classroom-ready ideas that incorporate both the stem-separation features *and* the creative opportunities of AI Studio:

1. “Find Your Role” Listening Activity (Ensemble)

Upload a recording of your current repertoire. Have students listen to three versions:

- Full mix
- Full mix with the **instrumental** stem only (mute vocals)
- Full mix with the **drums** or **bass** stem emphasized.

Ask students to write or discuss what changed in each version and how their part *fits* into the overall texture.

2. Slow-Motion Sectional (Band/Orchestra/Choir)

Use Moises to create 70 %, 80 %, and 100 % tempo versions of the track. Students begin slowly, focusing on tone, accuracy, and ensemble awareness, and gradually work toward full tempo. Use the “other instruments” stem emphasized so they hear the general texture.

3. Remix the Canon (General Music / Modern Band)

Students pick a public-domain or teacher-provided track.

- Use stem separation to mute or isolate different elements.
- Then move into AI Studio: upload a melody or chord loop, select a genre preset (e.g., funk), ask AI Studio to generate drums/bass, then students refine or replace parts to create a “modern reinterpretation” of the piece.

This fosters creativity and teaches structural analysis, arrangement, and production simultaneously.

4. Harmony Map and Compose (Choir / Theory / Composition Class)

Use the instrumental stem and view Moises’s chord display. Students identify cadences, modulations, recurring patterns. Then, in AI Studio, they upload their own short melody, select a chord style, generate accompaniment, and export it for student performance or lyric writing.

5. Groove Study and Variation (Modern Band / Jazz Band)

Percussionists and rhythm-section players isolate the drum

To get a **FREE 30-day trial** of Moises, alongside all of the solutions that MusicFirst provides, visit: musicfirst.com/free-trial

and bass stems, analyze how groove is constructed (fills, articulation, syncopation). Then students use AI Studio to generate alternative bass or drum parts (e.g., “give me a laid-back groove” vs “give me an aggressive rock groove”). They compare both versions, choose one, tweak it, and then perform it live.

A Tool That Amplifies What We Already Do Best

The real magic of Moises.ai—and now its AI Studio module—isn’t in the technology itself, though the technology is impressive. It’s in how naturally it aligns with great teaching. It enhances listening. It personalizes practice. It nurtures creativity. It breaks down barriers to access. And it gives students authentic, hands-on ways to *interact* with the music they love.

Most importantly, it reinforces a truth we should all remember: **technology works best when it amplifies the human elements of teaching, not replaces them.** Moises and AI Studio do exactly that. Whether you’re leading a beginning-band rehearsal in a rural district, coaching a high-school choir in a major metropolitan area, or teaching general music from a cart with 30 Chromebooks and a dream, this platform offers tools that genuinely elevate instruction.

If you haven’t explored Moises yet—particularly its AI Studio component—I encourage you to dive in. Let your students experiment, play, remix, and discover. They’re already living in a dynamic, digital musical world. Moises simply invites you—and them—into that world with confidence and creativity. **T**

DR. JIM FRANKEL is the Founder and President of MusicFirst. Previously, he was the Managing Director of SoundTree, and before that he was the instrumental and general music teacher for 15 years in New Jersey Public Schools. Jim is a widely published author in various state, national and international journals of music education. He is the author of *The Teachers Guide to Music, Media & Copyright Law*, co-author of *YouTube in Music Education*, contributing author for *Critical Issues in Music Education* and co-author of *Making Music with GarageBand & Mixcraft*. In addition to his writing, Jim is a highly sought-after clinician and keynote speaker in the local, national and international music education community.

Sound Induced Hearing Loss is Cumulative and Irreversible

Etymotic's reusable earplugs filter sound rather than block it,
lowering volume while maintaining its integrity,
and actually helping musicians (and teachers) hear better!



Teach your students
to sing, play,
and protect their
hearing.

For special educator
pricing contact Mona at
mkornfeld@intunepartners.com
914-358-1200 ext.702

etymotic[®]

For more information go to: intunemonthly.com/etymotic-education/

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) What is the age requirement to upload songs to Soundcloud?

- A. 18
- B. 23
- C. 16
- D. 21

2) What is the name of 5 Seconds of Summer's new album?

- A. MOOD
- B. Not OK
- C. Youngblood
- D. Everyone's A Star!

3) Which Ray Charles album is considered one of the most famous "fusion" or "crossover" albums of all time?

- A. Smooth
- B. Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music
- C. Supernatural
- D. I've Got A Woman

4) What is the title of the first single from 5 Seconds of Summer's latest album?

- A. "Sounds Good Feels Good"
- B. "Not OK"
- C. "Boyband"
- D. "Telephone Busy"

5) Which Bruce Springsteen song features a "snapback" slowdown?

- A. "Thunder Road"
- B. "I'm on Fire"
- C. "Born To Run"
- D. "Dancing in the Dark"

6) What are the two main performing rights organizations?

- A. BMI
- B. The MLC
- C. ASCAP
- D. SoundExchange

7) What type of tempo change is featured in "We Are Young" by F.U.N.?

- A. Snapback slowdown
- B. Gradual slowdown
- C. Delayed slowdown
- D. Sudden slowdown

8) Which of the following services do not require a distributor to upload music?

- A. Spotify
- B. Apple Music
- C. Tidal
- D. YouTube

9) Which major label distributed 5 Seconds of Summer's self-produced album 5SOS5?

- A. Republic Records
- B. BMG
- C. Atlantic Records
- D. Fueled By Ramen

10) Which of these instruments does not play the unison intro on "Smooth" by Rob Thomas and Santana?

- A. Guiro
- B. Timbales
- C. Conga
- D. Drum Set



BE A PART OF NAfME: WHERE MUSIC EDUCATORS BELONG

Join today: nafme.org/collegiate



- Engage in professional development opportunities
- Network with music educators nationwide
- Showcase leadership skills on your resume
- Participate in the annual Collegiate Leadership Advocacy Summit
- Advocate for music education at the local and national levels

collegiate@nafme.org | 800-336-3768



Now's the Time to Get Your Students **intune!**



In Tune Digital Magazine is accepting subscription orders for the 2025-2026 school year.

Act now to get your students **IN TUNE**. Order today to get eight issues of the digital magazine that addresses students' passion for music and helps you give them a well-rounded music education.

Digital Magazine

for all computers, tablets and mobile devices

Including the online In Tune Teacher's Edition

\$329.00 flat fee for unlimited subscriptions (open one-click access)

1-12 Subscriptions
\$24.95 per subscription (requires Username and Password)

- No extra charge for tax
- Includes access to online lesson plans and audio and video resources
- Digital copies of In Tune can be accessed by any device that can connect with the Internet

FILL IN TO ORDER MAGAZINES

Name _____

School _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail _____

Number of Magazine Subscriptions _____ Phone _____

Payment Enclosed Bill Me/PO# _____

For more information, call 914-358-1200 x702

In Tune's digital platform offers increased functionality including audio narration and printable pages.

Order online at www.intunemonthly.com

Or send this page by email to mkornfeld@intunepartners.com,

or fax this page to **914-741-1136**, or mail this page to:

In Tune, 55 Larry's Lane, Pleasantville, NY 10570

Order In Tune Books

Presenting a series of books for students and lesson books for teachers from the publishers of **In Tune Monthly** and **Music Alive!** magazines. Lesson books feature reproducible articles with lesson plans, and activities.

www.intunemonthly.com/product-category/books

