

MUSIC EDVENTURES

NEWS AND NOTES

An Association of SongWorks Teachers

July 2016

From the President

Greetings MEI Members!

As I am writing this newsletter I am feeling especially relaxed, because today was the last day of school! Spending the past few weeks preparing for spring concerts, musicals, and graduation ceremonies has been tiring to say the least. As you know, it is all worth it to see our students thrive and grow. Now, for the part where WE thrive and grow: SUMMER! A time to recharge and explore some interests that do not involve principal approval.



Ruthanne Parker
Wyncote, PA

In honor of the season, I have created a summer bucketlist—a collection of things I hope to accomplish before school starts again. My list includes a weekend at the beach, dinner on the patio more often, and enjoying quality time with my son. I've also included some work-related goals: preparing new activities for my students, writing lesson plans so I'm not stressed in September, and brainstorming ways I can be more mindful of



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my teaching. Have you noticed that personal growth often comes from working towards professional growth goals? A late-summer gathering of like-minded educators may be just what you need to be personally and professionally inspired. Do you live in or near Colorado? There will be an August gathering in Colorado of MEI folks to exchange ideas and help start the upcoming school year off right (see flyer on p.12). And, the Minnesota group has been meeting regularly for years. If you are in or near Minnesota, joining that Saturday group will help you be refreshed to begin the school year. What about hosting a “summer meet-up” in your area? You’ll be helping yourself and others with these kinds of initiatives.

While I don’t know if everything on my bucketlist will be accomplished—will my beach body ever come?-- I do know that it is important to set aside some time in August to recharge my teaching. You can do it too. Pick up the phone or send an email to a colleague for inspiration. Read the Music EdVentures newsletters with a glass of wine! Most importantly, take some time for you.

What’s on your summer bucketlist?

-Ruthie

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REFLECTIONS FROM 2015 SONGWORKS CERTIFICATION COURSES:

EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED**Melody Epperson**

What has changed in my classroom since taking the summer SongWorks Certification Course? Hmmm Well, I would say almost everything: everything from my thoughts and attitudes and the way I engage students, to the songs we sing and my understandings about why I am teaching them.

I should tell you where I was before finding Music EdVentures and SongWorks. I began teaching music through Orff Level I training. I loved parts of it, like the way students composed music and creatively responded to music. My struggle was that

I wasn't sure *how* to teach the skills that supported such responding and composing. I saw the finished product but did not see the process. Also, the music skills seemed so separate from the product.



Melody Epperson
Arvada, CO

"I grew
in my own
self-compassion..."

When I saw Peggy Bennett and Betty Phillips present at our Colorado Music Educators Association state conference in January 2015, I was frustrated and stressed about teaching music. They provided the compassion and the empowerment I needed right then. So I signed up for the July SongWorks Certification Course. After a summer of being surrounded by

compassionate, patient, and supportive people, I grew in my own self-compassion. I was also able to see how I wanted to grow and was able to take specific actions to address that growth, without the negative self talk that usually accompanied my thoughts.

I was then able to be more compassionate and patient with my students. I slowed down my pace and went deeper, taking time to talk to students and seeing the value of their ideas and process. SongWorks reminded me of my values. My curriculum is more holistic: it allows students to take the time to grow socially, personally and intellectually. One of the most powerful take-aways was the phrase "How can I take my best self to school today?" I sometimes ask myself this as I walk into school.

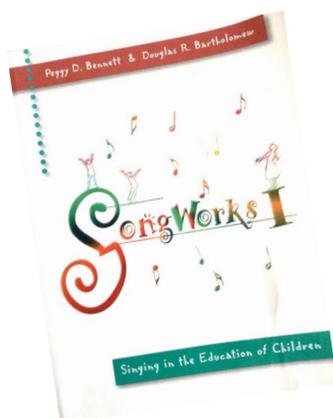
Another big change in my classroom is my understanding of why I do what I do in class. I am more aware of how the process of writing music and listening carefully to music can be scaffolded in a way that students feel successful and autonomous. There are so many “best practices” embedded in song dotting, song maps, ideographs, and hand signs. The playful tone with which these practices are implemented engages students so amazingly. My skills as a teacher have grown in huge ways by adding these tools to my teacher toolbox.

Here is a list of some of the new things I have tried this school year: song dotting, hand signs practiced in language chunks, song mapping, ideographs (especially when preparing for a performance), story plopping (and intentionally including students’ voices in lessons), sending home scores and ideographs, ukuleles as a way to create music and write songs, letting students make decisions about selected parts of the lesson, giving specific feedback to guide students to proficiency. And, of course, the songs and song games!

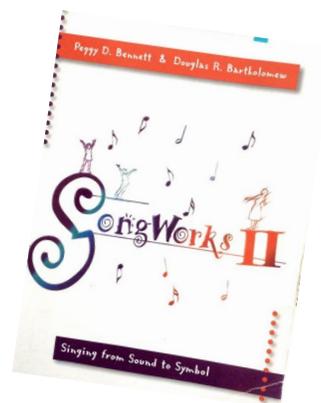
“Everything has changed, and that is because...”

SongWorks

by Peggy D. Bennett and Douglas R. Bartholomew



Available
on Amazon.com



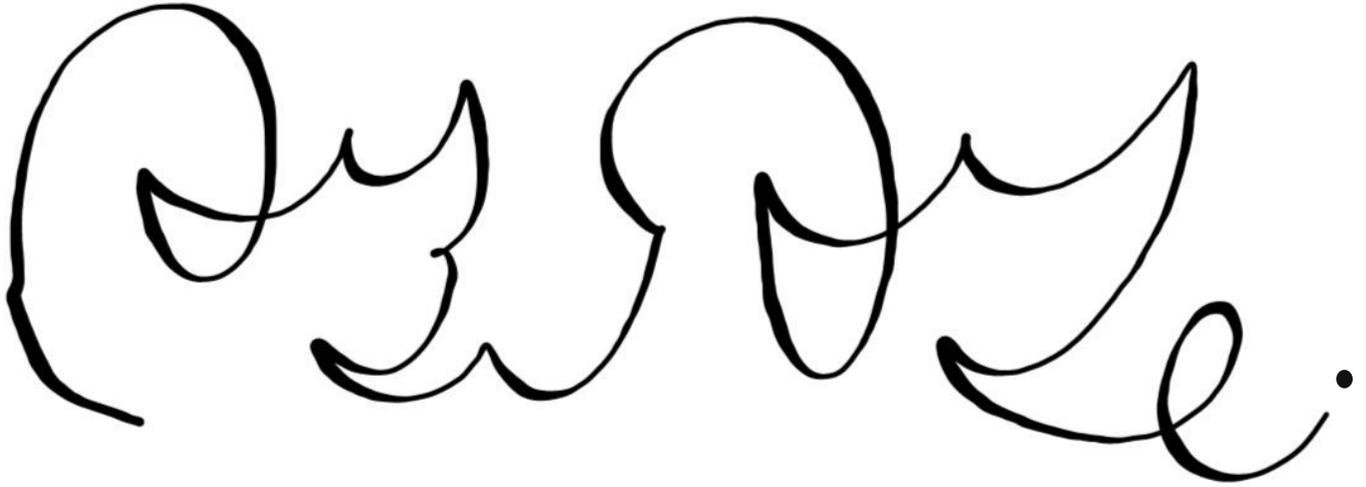
As I am writing this, I am again reminded that *everything* is different in my classroom. Even if I teach familiar songs and folk dances, my approach is completely different. I use the many tools I have learned, and I bring new eyes to the old. My attitude and perspective have shifted:

- ♦ I am supported by the amazing MEI community, and therefore I am less isolated.
- ♦ I am confident that I am changing students' lives in their knowledge of music as well as their personal and social growth.
- ♦ I know how to analyze music for the potential music skills I teach.
- ♦ I listen to my students. Everything has changed, and that is because I have changed.

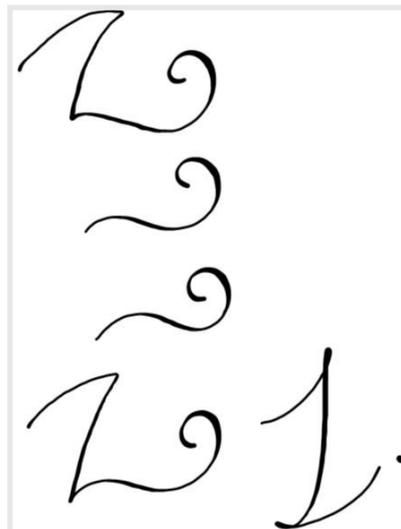
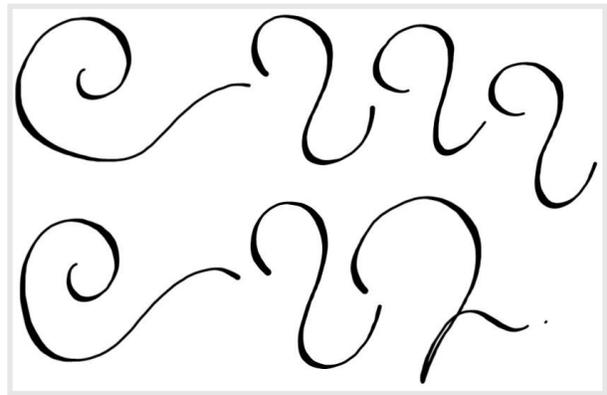
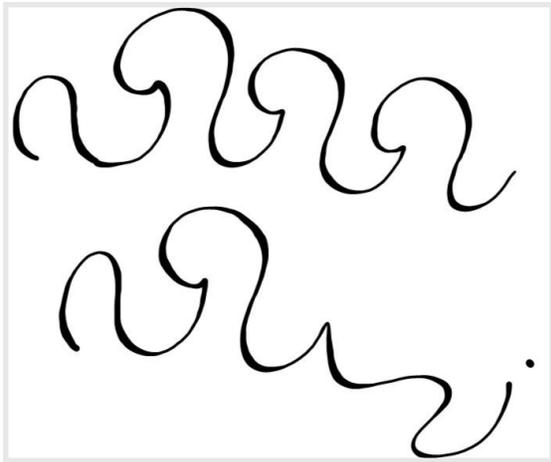
Melody Epperson teaches K-6 music and art at Jeffco Open School in Lakewood, Colorado. She has a BA in Elementary Education from Western State College, a BFA in Art from Metro State College Colorado, and an MA in Integrated Arts from Lesley University. Melody has performed with Arvada Chorale and the rock band Martha's Wake. In addition to a great love for finding new ways to share art and music with her students, she also loves being outside with her husband Alex riding bikes in the beautiful Colorado mountains.

MYSTERY MAP: June

Did you figure out the June Mystery Map?



One more clue: maybe you noticed it was in echo form, and thought about Sandgate, London Bridge, or Mary Had a Little Lamb. The dot at the end is a final clue: it is neither a sound from your voice, nor a silent rest in the song. See p.10 for the answer!

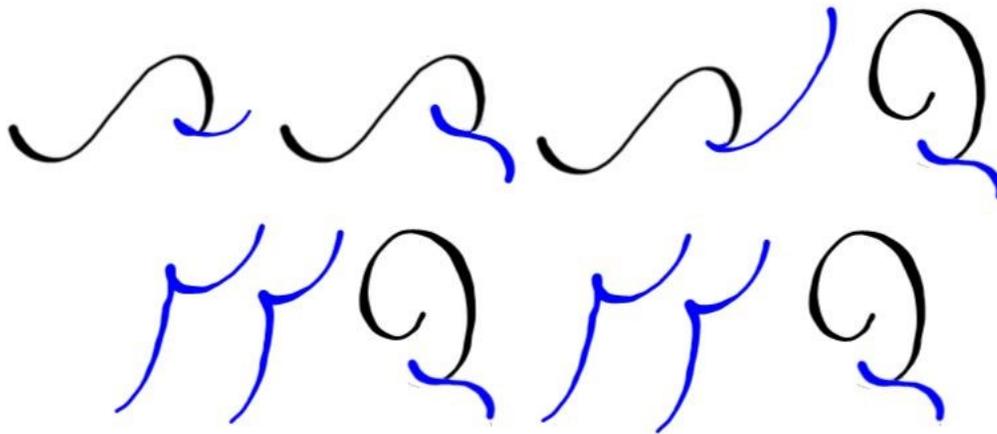


MYSTERY MAP: July

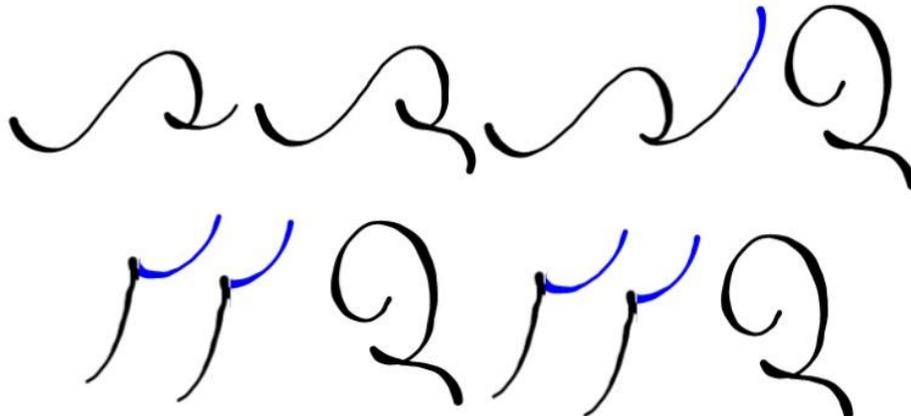
Do you hear what I hear?



Think you've got it? To check your work, audiate the blue parts of the map. They are always the same word.



Still not sure? Here's one more clue: the blue parts below are solfeggio high "DO."



Check back next month for the answer!

Want to submit a secret map from one of your favorite songs? Don't be shy!
Submit maps for consideration to jeharkins@fcps.edu

RECHARGE THIS SUMMER

Jeanette Potvin

Wednesday, June 15, 2016: My first day of Summer Vacation.

Finally! Having blissfully turned off my alarm the previous evening, I let my body sleep as long as needed. I woke naturally and completely rested, energized and ready to greet the day.

5:45 am.

I lazily plodded downstairs, made a fresh pot of coffee, and cooked and ate a hearty breakfast

6:10 am.

Dumbfounded by my efficiency, the first day of summer break, I relaxed with my cup of coffee and my iPad. I did the only appropriate, decadent thing I could think of: check Facebook. One of the first posts I came across was a question posted by another music teacher: “[Does] anyone else have trouble transitioning from the insanity that is a music teacher’s life in Spring to the first day of vacation? I honestly don’t know what to do. How do you manage the transition?”

Ha! This woman was inside my BRAIN! The switch from “full-time end-of-year music teacher business” to “summer break” is a shock to my system, both mentally and physically. Over time, I have come to value rest, reflection, rejuvenation, and recharging. Perhaps you will also find them useful.

Rest

- ◇ Give yourself a few days of completely unstructured time. It’s a wonderful sensory break from the necessary structure of a teacher’s life. You undoubtedly have a list of tasks you’ve been putting off until summer. This is not the time to begin tackling them. Allow yourself to be lazy. If you’re anything like me, it is more difficult than it seems.
- ◇ Don’t look at the clock.
- ◇ Eat slowly. Focus on your meal and the people with whom you are eating (even if you are eating alone). Challenge yourself to a) not multitask during your lunch and b) make it last more than 15 minutes.
- ◇ Pro tip: Give yourself a finite END to your allowed unstructured time. You don’t want to putter away the whole summer. While you are resting, do some planning. Schedule a trip or outings with friends or family. Make a list. You’ll be amazed at how quickly your summer fills up!



Jeanette Potvin
Woodbury, MN



Reflect

- ◇ Take time to reflect on the school year. I keep a notebook handy to capture my thoughts. I jot them down as they come, and then I am able to come back to them as I feel/need. Return to these reflections every so often - I find that once a week works. It keeps my ideas fresh and flowing and helps me to plan my next steps at whatever pace suits me.
- ◇ Schedule pockets of time to do pre-planning for the coming school year. I like to do this in June while the previous school year is a fresh memory. It helps my mind to wind down.
- ◇ It is helpful for me to practice self care and reflect on life in general. How was your work-life balance? Do you need to make changes? If so, how will you do that? What areas of your personal life are healthy? Why is that?



Rejuvenate

After my unstructured time, I find I function best when I have a schedule for the day. Remember that to-do list? Tackle it! Don't have a to-do list? Here's mine:

- ◇ Read books. Don't have books? Go to the bookstore or the library and find some.
- ◇ Take your time and enjoy the journey!
- ◇ Do that thing you love to do. The one that you set aside far too often. Mine: Make music (Ironic, isn't it?).
- ◇ Organize those spaces in your home. Yes, *those* ones: closets, papers, pantry, laundry.
- ◇ Try something new. Look at this list of life-enriching skills I have learned over several summers:



Ukulele
 Guitar
 Piano
 Notation software
 Excel
 Video editing
 Garage Band
 Furniture refinishing
 Photography
 Safe use of power tools
 How to drive a boat
 Golf
 The art of Pinterest

Recharge

Many teachers take time in the summer for professional development. It hones our skills, challenges our thinking, and allows us to collaborate with others who inspire us. In July, I will be attending the 2016 Music Literacy for Children course at St. Catherine University, taught by our very own Dr. Peggy Bennett and Dr. Anna Langness. I am looking forward to meeting again with so many Music EdVentures teachers from around the globe!



It seems counterintuitive, but I have found that the key to relaxation over my teacher summer is to have a great plan. My favorite quote about planning is, "A goal without a plan is just a wish" - Antoine de Saint-Exupery. As you enter this season of teacher relaxation, set aside a few moments to plan how it will best serve you. If you are active online, visit the Music EdVentures Facebook page, and let us know how you plan on resting, reflecting and recharging over YOUR summer.

Jeanette Potvin teaches PreK-5 elementary music at Royal Oaks Elementary in Woodbury, MN. She is a member of the first SongWorks Certification Class. Jeanette lives in Woodbury, MN with her husband and two children. **2011 Emerging Pioneer, MEI Treasurer**

June Mystery Map Revealed!

GINGER SNAP



1. Here comes a pretty bird through the window, through the window, through the window.



Here comes a pretty bird through the window, oh ginger snap!

2. Make a little bow and tap him on the shoulders, oh ginger snap!

3. Take him by the shoulders and fly off to London, oh ginger snap!

**April 2016 CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS from
VISITING SCHOLARS**

It was truly a delight to share a deeply meaningful experience with you at the 2016 MEI Conference in Denver! You swept me up in your infectious joy of making music in playful and creative ways. I wished I could go back with each of you to enjoy seeing you give these masterful lessons to your students.

You shared gems in your workshops and papers for us to put in our pockets and take home with us. As one of you mentioned, the value of these experiences flows outwards like ripples on water. Finally, the touching and often humorous performances at the gala dinner remain fondly in my memory. May you all be richly blessed.



Dr. Sheila Woodward
Eastern Washington University
Cheney, WA



Dr. Lynn M. Brinckmeyer
Texas State University
San Marcos, TX

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as a Visiting Scholar for your recent MEI Conference. It was an absolute delight to learn from all of you during our time together in such a rich, nurturing environment.

Exploring the heritage and deeper meaning of each of the songs brought them to life. Watching teachers mentor each other affirmed that students, whether children or adults, need what you have to offer to the world.

Thank you for sharing your music with me!

In 2015, the leadership of MEI voted to initiate a Visiting Scholars program. Each year, select scholars will be invited to our conference for the purpose of exposing them to the principles and practices of SongWorks and the activities of our organization. Visiting Scholars are chosen based on their leadership in and contributions to education, as well as their commitments to excellence in learning and teaching. Throughout the conference, Visiting Scholars observe our presentations and interact with attendees. We were very excited to welcome and get to know our first Visiting Scholars!



**Inaugural Meeting of the
Colorado SongWorks Study Group**

Saturday, August 6

9:00-12:00

**Mamie Doud Eisenhower Library
3 Community Park Road
Broomfield, CO**

**Cost
FREE**

RSVP
alangness@gmail.com

Certificate of Participation
for CEUs available

Start your year with SongWorks inspiration!

~ Presentations ~

SongWorks Pathway
to Music Literacy
Anna Langness

Executive Functions
Aimee Newman

Sharing favorite
mixers, name games, activities
Attendees

EVERYONE WELCOME!

CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS FOLLOWING THE MEETING
JOIN US FOR LUNCH AT A NEARBY RESTAURANT

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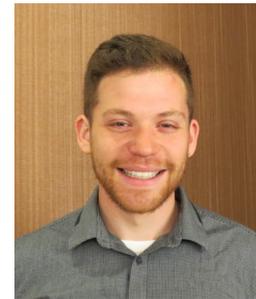
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The Purpose of Music EdVentures, Inc.

is to search for and practice ways of making music and interacting with people that preserve and celebrate the dignity of both. As a guiding principle, this purpose will focus our work on:

1. Practices that foster interactive, facilitative learning environments.
2. Strategies that empower the learner within the context of music experience and study.
3. Networks that encourage collaboration between diverse disciplines, professionals, and interest groups.

Any Member of Music EdVentures, Inc. can receive a copy of the MEI Policies and Procedures Manual by contacting Past President Samantha Smith at samanthameese@gmail.com

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News and Notes is the monthly communication of Music EdVentures, Inc. (MEI). Regular features will keep members and friends up to date on coming events and the latest teaching techniques, tips and strategies. Submissions are due on the 15th of the month prior to publication and may be submitted months in advance, indicating the month in which publication is preferred. The committee reserves the right to select material to be published according to length and appropriateness. Articles should be 200-325 words. Visuals should be scanned and submitted as pdf or jpg files. Submissions may be sent to jeharkins@fcps.edu with the subject line "MEI Newsletter" and may be edited to accommodate space limitations.