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# KODÁLY EDUCATORS OF IOWA

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September/October 2016

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## From the Presidents~Amy Schoene

Happy school year, KEI! It seems each year that August is upon us and I am left wondering where the summer has gone! As this school year begins, though, I am excited to utilize my summer experiences within my own classroom! This summer I was lucky enough to volunteer at Hanuman Yoga Festival in Boulder, CO and take Orff-Schulwerk, Level 1 at Drake University.

While you might be wondering how I plan on utilizing material from a yoga festival within my classroom, I would like to clarify that this yoga festival was unlike anything I had ever experienced due to the power of music! It was because of the chants that we sang in call and response style that I learned how to become one with a group of strangers. Through our spontaneous dancing to the beat and rhythms of a presenter's djembe, I learned how to really be comfortable within my own skin.

I carried those experiences with me into Orff level 1 and left that certification with a greater sense of self-identity and a drive to tailor my classroom to ALL learning styles by incorporating more instruments, manipulatives, and student-led activities. No, I will not be abandoning my Kodály ways, as I believe the Kodály-inspired sequencing of concepts, the 3 P's and the high quality literature that I have acquired in my years as a Kodály teacher are what's best for kids. I am excited to experiment throughout this year in combining Kodály, Orff, and even yoga within my classroom to create a unique experience for my students. One that is inspired by my interests and passions because we all know that when you are passionate about what you are teaching, students are going to be eager to learn! A few ideas that I will be implementing in my classroom this year that have worked for other teachers are:

-“Recentering Spot”- I have a desk in a corner of my classroom where I will send students when I see they may need a break. On this desk are mindfulness cards with activities for the older students to complete to refocus their minds and bodies.

-“Mindful Minute”- Students will participate in a mindfulness activity at the beginning of class to focus their minds and bodies on the present moment in the music room. These activities will span the gamut of listening activities to breathing to yoga!

-Including instruments in games I already use- Once a class is familiar with a song and its game, add a couple of instruments so students can accompany the piece once they are “out.” This could be as simple as playing the steady beat or adding parts that they might have already learned to go with that song.

-Transitions- When students need to move from one spot to another, play the steady beat on temple blocks or bongos. They match the beat with their feet while moving, and I try to trick them by playing different subdivisions of the beat with corresponding pitches on the instrument.

I wish you your best school year yet, KEI, and encourage you to think about your passions and how you can incorporate them into your own classroom if you have not done so already!

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## Upcoming Events!

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9/10/16 - *Active Learning Strategies & Motivators for the Music Classroom*, Teresa Schroeffer, [Simpson](#)

10/8/16 - *Stress-free and Fun Assessment Strategies and Easy Instrument Integrations*, Kris VerSteegt, GDSMO, [Grand View](#)

**10/28-30/16 - Kodály-owa: Fields of Opportunity**, [Johnston](#)

11/17-19/16 - IMEA, [Ames](#)

1/15/17 - *Examining Orff through Storytelling*, Paul Cribari, [Simpson](#)

KEI Winter Sharing - date TBA

4/22/16 - *Reflection and Next Steps*, Beth Melin Nelson, [FIO](#)

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## Kudos

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This summer Kathy Seiberling taught *Engaging Students in the Elementary/Middle School Choral Rehearsal*, assisted by Sandy Miller and Erica Seeley.

Allan Tierney took Kodály Level I at DePaul.

Erica Seeley and Amy Schoene completed Orff Level 1 at Drake.

Sara McCue completed World Drumming Level 1.

On July 8 Carly and Michael Schieffer welcomed their first child, Silas Vernon.

Kris VerSteegt is teaching a section of Music for Elementary Education Majors at ISU.

## How I spent my summer vacation



This summer I had the opportunity to take the Level 1 Kodály class at DePaul University in Chicago. This was a fantastic experience, and I had a number of amazing teachers while I was there. Janell Bjorklund taught Pedagogy as well as Research and Materials, Dr. Julia Shaw taught Musicianship and Douglas Beam taught Choral Conducting.

Janell is a wonderful person and I feel very lucky to have met her. She was the first teacher for my class and the teacher that we spent the most time with. She was always helpful and supportive of me and was always there to make sure that I was understanding and excelling at everything. She shared her passion for finding and cataloging good original folk music and has shaped my views on classroom music a lot. Dr. Shaw may have seemed intimidating at first, but it didn't take long for me to realize how incredibly nice she is. She had high expectations for us as a class, but she really took the time to be supportive and make sure that everyone was able to be successful. She wouldn't allow us to say we couldn't do something, and she never let us apologize for trying. Doug was also amazing. He teaches at an American School in Amsterdam and comes to teach in Chicago every year. Choral Conducting was by far my weakest subject and Doug was able to help me work through some of my difficulties and actually produce something within the music.

Looking back on my class I find it hard to believe that I was afforded such an amazing opportunity this early in my career. I finally feel like I have a solid foundation to build upon in the coming years. Taking the class in Chicago provided me with a fun and engaging experience, from walking past the Sears Tower twice a day on my hour long commute, to the hours spent doing homework every night, to the many new faces I had the pleasure of meeting in Chicagoland. I hope to be able to grow on this experience in the coming year as I continue through my student teaching, and I look forward to completing my certification in the years to come.

*Allan Tierney is a senior in music education at ISU. He is student-teaching this fall in Ames and Urbandale and will graduate in December. Besides studying for Kodály Level I, he also played the tuba this summer with the Ames Municipal Band.*



## Pay it forward: MKMEA Conference Invitations

Do you remember your first MKMEA conference? Mine was PlainSongs in Lincoln, NE in 2000, and I never would have attended if it hadn't been for my friend Mary. I was young in my teaching career and had finished Level 1 at the University of St. Thomas, but I hadn't joined OAKE. I didn't really understand the member benefits yet, and there wasn't an Iowa chapter that I could join. So I kind of went along under the radar, so to speak.

Then one night during a Des Moines Choral Society rehearsal, Mary said something to me like "Hey, I'm going to a Kodály conference in Nebraska in a couple of weeks, and I think you'd enjoy it. You're welcome to ride with me, and we can split the lodging." I had never been to any Kodály conventions and was still new to the whole idea of Kodály-inspired teaching, but I had a lot of respect for Mary. Plus a weekend road trip sounded like fun so I registered, paying the late non-member fee. Money well spent.

I still remember the opening concert, the Nebraska Children's Choir directed by Z. Randall Stroope, a name I didn't know at the time. It was an amazing concert and I bought a cd to add to my children's choir collection. The conference clinicians' names were all new to me, but the sessions I attended were fun, engaging and easy to understand, giving me great ideas to write into my lesson plans for the upcoming week while Mary was driving us home. The Friday night folk dancing was a first, I didn't know anybody did that sort of thing outside of the classroom. And of course the reading session was fantastic, a hallmark of a Kodály conference.

Over the years I have had the pleasure of attending several MKMEA conferences, and I've never regret the time and financial resources invested in the weekend. The great concerts, the relevant and inspiring sessions and the fellowship with other music educators have proved time and again to be a bountiful return on my investment, not just for my students but also for me.

As we approach MKMEA here in Iowa, I'd like to ask you this question. Who should you invite to attend with you? Sometimes we don't share because we figure that people have already heard and will come if they want to. Sometimes we think they don't care for things associated with "the Kodály method" and wouldn't be interested. I encourage you to hand out a brochure or send an email invitation and then follow up with a personal phone call or conversation specifically highlighting a session that interests you. Share an activity that you picked up at a conference with other music colleagues. Offer to split the transportation and/or lodging to help defray their expenses, especially if they are not yet OAKE members. If they are middle school music educators who don't yet see the applications of Kodály-inspired teaching beyond the general music classroom, highlight those specific topics for them. Don't forget about college students and first year teachers - what a gift to get started with Kodály-inspired teaching so early in their music education careers!

None of us joined OAKE or attended an MKMEA conference by accident. Someone shared something that resonated with us, made sense to us, made a difference for us. So let's do the same and pay it forward because the passion that is Kodály-inspired teaching shouldn't be kept to ourselves.

*Sonia Johnson*

## Thank you, IMEA!

KEI and MKMEA are pleased to announce that IMEA awarded KEI a grant to assist in supporting the 2016 conference ***Kodály-owa: Fields of Opportunity!*** We are very grateful for their support, and we are excited to share this amazing professional development opportunity with the music educators of our great state and the Midwest!



## OAKE 2017

OAKE invites you to join hundreds of Kodály-inspired educators in historic Philadelphia, PA March 23-26 2017 for the 43rd annual national conference, ***Let Freedom Ring: Fostering Musical Independence!***

## Food for Thought

“Often a single experience will open the young soul to music for a lifetime.” *Zoltán Kodály, 1929*

*Amy Schoene, President \*Patty Haman, President-Elect\*LeAnn Houlette, Vice- President\*Molly Loftin, Secretary\*Sonia Johnson, Treasurer\* Kelly Janson, Sara McCue, Members at Large\*Carly Scheiffer,Past President*

*KEI is an affiliate of the Organization of American Kodály Educators*

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