

2026 AMEA Conference Schedule

Wednesday, January 21

5:00-7:00 pm	AMEA Governing Board Meeting, Forum D (2nd Floor)
5:00-7:00 pm	ABA Leadership Training, Forum C (2nd Floor)
5:30-9:00 pm	Conference Registration, Sheraton Forum Registration Desk (Lower Level)
7:15-9:30 pm	ABA Board Meeting, Forum C (2nd Floor)
7:15-9:30 pm	AOA Board Meeting, Forum D (2nd Floor)
7:15-9:30 pm	AVA Board Meeting, Forum F (2nd Floor)

Thursday, January 22

7:00 am-5:00 pm	Conference Registration, Sheraton Forum Registration Desk (Lower Level)
8:00-9:00 am	AMEA Leadership Breakfast, Forum H-I (3rd Floor)
9:00 am-4:30 pm	FAME, Forum E (2nd Floor)
9:15-9:40 am	ELEM/GEN Performance, BJCC Theatre Oak Mountain Melodies, Brooke Gray, Conductor
9:15-10:05 am	AOA Interest Session, Forum D Starting from Scratch: Launching a 9-Week Violin Introduction in General Music Class, Kate Francis, Clinician

Embark on a journey to transform your general music classroom into a vibrant space for violin instruction! This session is designed for the music teacher who is looking to introduce violin to their students, even with no prior string program in place.

Teachers will gain practical strategies and invaluable insights for implementing a 9-week violin unit. Learn how to effectively manage group instruction and develop a sequential curriculum tailored for beginners. Instruments will be available for audience participation (no prior string background needed)

9:15-10:05 am	ABA Performance, Sheraton Birmingham Ballroom Spain Park High School Percussion Ensemble, Richard Adams, Conductor
9:15-10:05 am	AVA/Collegiate Interest Session, Forum G Time For a Tune-Up! Injury Prevention Methods for the Conductor-Educator, Noah Graham, Clinician

During this session I will share current research that has recently been conducted regarding the prevalence of injuries amongst choral directors. We will examine the most common locations of injuries amongst educators (participants will be anonymously polled on injury locations before the research is revealed to compare answers) and presented with common classroom decisions that can lead to injuries (direction of keyboard, moving risers, resetting chairs, etc). Prior to providing various stretches and preventive strategies, I will discuss my own experience with conducting related injury. During my undergraduate degree and my first year of teaching I underwent two surgeries to remove neck and chest muscle, as well as my first rib on each side due to nerve compression that led to pain and limitations in my teaching and instructional methods. During the recovery for these surgeries I was taught many different stretches for the upper body, back, and neck to help with conducting and preventing any further injury. These stretches have been backed by clinical research and can also be found in various musician injury publications. In the final section of the session, I will highlight three areas of the body: the neck, the shoulder, and the back. During a discussion of each muscle group, participants will understand how each muscle assists with conducting, specific injuries that can occur, and be guided through light stretches that can be completed in the comfort of their own classroom prior to starting their day as a way to take care of their body and prevent education/conducting related physical injury.

9:15-10:05 am	ABA Interest Session, Forum A-B What I Wish I Knew: Personal, Professional, and Musical Lessons for New Band Directors, Christian Reyes, Clinician
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Stepping into the role of a band director can be both exciting and overwhelming. This session is designed for young band directors, first-year teachers, and college students preparing to enter the field. We will discuss essential lessons that often go unmentioned in teacher preparation programs—covering personal growth, professional responsibilities, and musical leadership.

A key feature of this session will be insights gathered from seasoned band directors, sharing what they wish they had known before starting their careers. Additionally, attendees will participate in a live poll to identify areas where they feel unprepared, allowing for real-time discussion and problem-solving. Topics will include classroom management, working with administrators and parents, organizing a successful program, and maintaining a work-life balance. Attendees will leave with practical strategies and insights to help them navigate their early years with confidence and success.

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9:50-10:15 am AVA Performance, BJCC Theatre
The Journey Bella Voce, Alicia Mulloy, Conductor

10:30-11:20 am AVA/HED Interest Session, Forum C
Focused Passion: Conducting Gestures that Serve and Inspire, Ian Loeppky, Clinician

As a prelude to the publication of his upcoming book “Foundational Conducting: showing, listening, serving” (Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2026), Ian Loeppky proposes a conducting gesture that is focused on the musical intention of the composer to inspire player and audience member alike. Participants will explore and implement this simple, “less is more” practice; elements of expression (primarily tempo, articulation, and dynamic) are focused in both hands—eschewing self-distracting extraneous movements—to inspire one’s collaborating musicians to serve the music to its utmost. Whether one is used to conducting every day or only occasionally, participants will learn to make the most of their gestures to make the best and most passionate collaborative music possible.

10:30-11:20 am Collegiate Interest Session, Forum G
Let’s Talk About Tech: Strategies for Incorporating Music Technology in the Music Classroom
Shane Colqhoun, Clinician

Participants will explore various tools and platforms, including free digital audio workstations (DAWs) and mobile applications, as well as collaborative composition and recording tools that support student engagement and creativity. The session will also introduce two key instructional frameworks: the SAMR model, which outlines levels of technology integration from substitution to redefinition, and TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge), which emphasizes the thoughtful intersection of content, pedagogy, and technology. Additionally, this session will provide a brief introduction to basic analog equipment and signal flow, which is foundational knowledge critical for all educators.

10:30-11:20 am ABA Interest Session, Forum A-B
A Detailed Approach to Teaching Marching Band: Systems, Skills, and Student Success, Jessica Hood, Clinician

This clinic presents a clear, detailed approach to teaching marching band that prioritizes skill development, student leadership, and musical-visual integration. Drawing from real-world experience, the session outlines how to build a strong foundation through fundamentals, establish systems for consistency, and promote student ownership throughout the season. Intended for both new and experienced educators, this clinic offers flexible solutions that work across a variety of educational contexts, such as, competitive and non-competitive programs, large and small ensembles, and rural or urban school systems. Participants will leave with tools and templates ready to implement in their own programs immediately.

10:30-11:20 am AOA Interest Session, Forum D
Finding Their Voice: Strategies to Help Students Find Their Optimal String Sound, Letitia Jap, Clinician

Once students recognize the individuality of their playing style, they experience a heightened sense of worth and enthusiasm for musical expression and ensemble playing. This session offers a dynamic exploration into empowering string students to discover their own distinctive musical identity. We will talk about practical ways to cultivate students’ acute listening skills to help discover their own interpretation and sound, cover specific exercises designed to encourage authentic interpretation through personalized bowing techniques, and look at different approaches to creating warmth into students’ sound through vibrato – all aspects that will help teachers nurture the fundamental skills necessary for honing students’ individual sound. Gain fresh perspectives and approaches that you can try on your string students to help them find their optimal string sound!

10:30-11:20 am ELEM/GEN Interest Session, Forum J
Solfège and Play – the Kodály Way! Scott Sexton, Clinician

Are you still traumatized from your collegiate ear training courses? Or perhaps you would like to use solfège with your elementary music students and don’t know where to start? Whether you are a novice or expert at solfège, come explore active and enjoyable ways to use solfège as a tool in your elementary music classrooms. This session will mix a bit of the old with the new and will integrate modern and popular music while using older Kodály-based published materials. Attend this session this week and implement the materials into your classroom next week. Wear your comfortable shoes, bring your aural skills, and come ready to move, sing, and play!

10:30 am-5:30 pm Exhibits Open, BJCC East Ballroom & East Meeting Rooms A, B, C

12:00-1:00 pm HED Luncheon, Forum I

12:00-1:00 pm Past Presidents Luncheon, Forum H

1:00 am-1:50 pm ABA Performance, BJCC Theatre
Pelham High School Wind Ensemble, Justin Ward, Conductor

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1:00-1:50 pm AMEA/AOA Interest Session, Forum A-B
Making a Mariachi, Keith Brandenburg, Clinician

In this session, the Pinson Valley Advanced Mariachi will perform as a part of a session on starting and building a mariachi program in Alabama schools. As Alabama's first mariachi program, we will give a brief history of our own program, the steps taken by educators and administration, and the product this program can produce. The students will talk about the importance of mariachi to the local culture and explain why mariachi is something they want to do. Then the presenter will explain and try to show how mariachi is something that can be started by anyone and is necessary to music education in Alabama schools.

1:00-1:50 pm ELEM/GEN Interest Session, Forum J
Creating a Culture of Inclusion in Music Classrooms Ellary Draper, Meredith Devore, and Laura Brown, Clinicians

We know from surveys that most music teachers are teaching students with disabilities in their music classrooms. Elements for creating a culture of inclusion in music classrooms will be presented. A teacher and researchers who recently collaborated on a project where data was collected in inclusive music classrooms to create these elements will share their experiences and examples throughout the presentation.

1:00-1:50 pm AVA/Collegiate Interest Session, Forum G
Inclusive, Responsible and Authentic Choral Programming, Alissa Rowe, Clinician

During this session attendees will study sample programs and discuss a variety of editors and sources for programming ideas that are representative of music beyond the western choral canon. We will listen to a wide variety of works and explore creative ideas for pairings and flow of choral programs. The end of the presentation marks an invitation to discuss the changing trends across the US and abroad. We will share experiences of others innovative programming, reach across the barriers and unite our vision for choral programming.

1:00-1:50 pm HED Interest Session, Forum Theatre
The Art of Effortless Expression: The Alexander Technique in Music Education Jilla Webb, Clinician

Presented by the Sweet Home Alabama Kodály Educators, this session is sure to tickle your ears and ignite some friendly competition! Each bingo game will demonstrate a different approach to assessment and practice of aural skills. You'll leave feeling challenged musically and with a drive full of printable bingo cards to use for your own classes or ensembles— perfect for a sub or those post-concert times.

2:15-3:05 pm ABA Interest Session, Forum A-B
Perception vs Reality: What is Really Happening During the Rehearsal, Matthew Cicero, Clinician

Many times what we perceive is happening during our rehearsals and performances is not the reality. By using the following bullet points: * Interpret What you Hear, * Interpret What they See, *Interpret What they Feel. We will go through several strategies and examples of ways to better improve our teaching techniques in the classroom to achieve our goal performance!

2:15-3:05 pm ABA/Collegiate Interest Session, Forum G
Planning with Purpose: An Organized Approach to Beginning Band Instruction and Program Building
Elizabeth Gibbs and Erin Lyon, Clinicians

From teaching instrument assembly to booking venues, beginning band teachers are met with a unique and extensive list of tasks in their calendar year. In this session, attendees will be guided through monthly checkpoints from the lens of beginning band instruction. Pacing and planning suggestions, program building opportunities, and ideas for benchmark activities will be included to keep first-year band students and teachers motivated and engaged.

We aim to provide an organized approach to instruction while supporting skill sequencing, music literacy, performance preparation and managing the business of beginning band. This session provides practical tools to foster connection, creativity, curriculum alignment and culture building from day one.

2:15-3:05 pm AVA Interest Session, Forum C
Twenty-six Commercial Music Songs and (Un)Arias, Gretchen Windt and Jessie Oliver, Clinicians

Whether you love them, or love to hate them, the 26 Italian Songs & Arias have endured as standard repertoire to build technique for classical Western singing. This relatively comprehensive collection of songs encourages legato, breath coordination, resonance strategies, agility, registration, expression, and more. Meanwhile, the required skills and interests of singers have expanded to include musical theatre, jazz, CCM, commercial music, pop, rock, and more; while teachers of singing are redefining sustainable, functional singing and embracing vocal cross-training. This movement requires a new collection of songs, 26 Commercial Songs and (Un)Arias, to establish fundamental technique for beginning singers. Inspired by the pedagogical functions of the original 26 Italian songs, we have compiled a collection of gender-neutral and transposable songs ranging from musical theatre to folk music to pop ballads and anthems to encourage legato, breath coordination, resonance strategy, agility, registration, expression, and more for beginning singers.

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2:15-3:05 pm ELEM Interest Session, Forum J
The Singing Lane: Voices in Motion, Suzanne Logue, Clinician

Welcome to The Singing Lane, where every young voice finds its place and every rehearsal moves your choir forward. This multi-publisher reading session features vibrant, age-appropriate repertoire for elementary singers—ranging from unison melodies to partner songs and simple two-part harmonies. Whether your students are brand new to ensemble singing or ready to explore partwork, this session offers practical, joyful selections to support vocal growth and musical engagement.

3:30-4:20 pm ABA Performance, BJCC Theatre
Enterprise High School Wind Ensemble, Sean Weiler, Conductor

3:30-4:20 pm Collegiate Interest Session, Forum G
Breaking the Silence: Recognizing, Responding to, and Preventing Harassment, Abuse, and Discrimination in Music Education, Amy Bovin, Clinician

Led by Dr. Amy J. Bovin, this session draws on data gathered from female high school band directors (FHSBDs) over the course of 10 years, four groundbreaking studies, and a total of 2,000+ participants. While representation has improved in recent years, research reveals a disturbing rise in reports of sexual harassment, emotional abuse, and discrimination based on gender, age, and sexual identity. Through national data, deeply personal anonymous testimonies, and Dr. Bovin's own experiences, this session sheds light on what many endure in silence. Attendees will learn how to recognize various forms of workplace mistreatment, respond appropriately when it occurs, and take proactive steps to prevent it within their schools and organizations. Actionable strategies include learning how to advocate for yourself and others, navigating toxic dynamics, reporting incidents safely, and building inclusive, supportive professional communities. Though focused on FHSBDs, the findings and strategies presented are relevant to all educators and leaders committed to fostering safety, respect, and equity in the music education workplace.

3:30-4:20 pm AMEA Interest Session, Forum Theatre
The 2026 Digital Music Showcase, Shane Colqhoun, Clinician

Students will demonstrate proficiency in using digital music production tools (e.g., digital audio workstations DAWs, MIDI instruments, sampling software) to create an original composition that reflects both creative expression and technical skill. Students will analyze and apply key concepts of music technology, including sound design, mixing, and digital arrangement, to enhance the quality and presentation of their musical projects. Students will evaluate and reflect on their creative process, articulating the artistic and technical decisions made during production and how these choices support their intended musical outcomes.

3:30-4:20 pm AOA/HED Interest Session, Forum A-B
Teaching Confidence Through Effective Practice Strategies Letitia Jap, Clinician

String students grappling with confidence issues in their playing is not uncommon. When a student struggles with a passage in a piece, it can significantly impact their confidence. In this session, we will look at two practical and effective practice strategies aimed at bolstering students' confidence in their playing. First, we will go through how to practice various musical passages using different rhythms, groupings, and metronome exercises accurately and effectively. While students are taught to incorporate rhythms, groupings, and metronome work into their practice routines, confidence can still elude them when they are not practicing rhythms, groupings, and using the metronome correctly. Second, we will address the importance of practicing performance, guiding students through exercises to build confidence when playing in front of others. By teaching students to refine their practice strategies to closely mirror performance conditions, we can instill confidence in their playing abilities, ensuring confidence on stage as well. As students practice with the effective practice strategies covered in this session, they will experience an increased confidence in their playing!

3:30-4:20 pm AVA Interest Session, Forum C
Choral Music Reading Session, Alissa Rowe, Clinician

This session presents accessible choral music from both the choral canon and historically excluded repertoire for the beginner and intermediate choir.

3:30-4:20 pm ELEM/GEN Interest Session, Forum J
Passages Through History: An Orff Approach to Teaching About the RMS Titanic, Scott Sexton, Clinician

Although the Titanic sank over one-hundred years ago, it remains one of the most iconic events in maritime history. This session will explore interactive ways to incorporate Orff-based music activities from this historical period into your music curricula (including Alabama folk songs about the Titanic). Participants will uncover historical facts about the Titanic through singing, dancing, and creating as we sample musical activities related to the Titanic. Developed using history education resources for young children, this unit will also incorporate music from the Music for Children volumes. Let's teach history through the Schulwerk as we revisit the RMS Titanic!

4:30-5:30 pm Exclusive Exhibit Time, BJCC East Ballroom & East Meeting Rooms A, B, C

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- 5:30-7:00 pm ELEM/GEN Board Meeting, Forum J
- 7:00-7:25 pm AVA Performance, BJCC Theatre
Paul W. Bryant High School Singers, Hilien Wilson, Conductor
- 7:00-7:50 pm ELEM/GEN Interest Session, Forum J
BINGO! Test Your Aural Skills, Sadie Wall, Clinician

Presented by the Sweet Home Alabama Kodály Educators, this session is sure to tickle your ears and ignite some friendly competition! Each bingo game will demonstrate a different approach to assessment and practice of aural skills. You'll leave feeling challenged musically and with a drive full of printable bingo cards to use for your own classes or ensembles— perfect for a sub or those post-concert times.

- 7:00-7:50 pm ABA Performance, Sheraton, Birmingham Ballroom
Hoover First Edition Jazz Ensemble, Sallie Vines White, Conductor
- 7:35-8:00 pm AVA Performance, BJCC Theatre
Tuscaloosa County High Mixed Choir, Ginny Coleman, Conductor
- 8:30-9:30 PM ABA/AVA Performance, BJCC Theatre
Auburn University Symphonic Winds and Chamber Choir, Dr. Rick Good and Dr. William Powell, Conductors

Friday, January 23

- 7:30 am-1:00 pm Conference Registration, Sheraton Forum Registration Desk (Lower Level)
- 8:00-8:50 am ABA Business Meeting, Forum A-B
- 8:00-8:50 am AVA Interest Session, Forum C
Beyond Name Games: Icebreakers That Build Musical Risk-Takers & Stronger Choirs, Alicia Mulloy, Clinician

This session will show how simple, engaging activities can serve a deeper purpose in the choral classroom—building a culture where students thrive musically, socially, and emotionally. Dr. Alicia Moreno Mulloy, a middle school choral director with over 16 years of experience, will share how she uses interactive games not just for fun, but as intentional tools to strengthen classroom management, musical skills, and student relationships. All activities contribute to a strong classroom culture—one where students feel safe, supported, and inspired to take risks and grow. Attendees will walk away with practical, adaptable ideas and strategies they can use immediately, along with insight into why these playful moments matter so much in shaping a choir's sound and spirit.

- 8:00-8:50 am AOA Interest Session, Forum D
Rehearsal Strategies for a Changing World, Angela Ammerman, Clinician

Teachers will practice rehearsal techniques to increase engagement. Participants will develop custom-tailored rehearsal strategies to reach their students.

- 8:00-8:50 am ELEM/GEN Interest Session, Forum J
Something From Nothing: How Improvisation Instruction Can Empower Your Students' Ears On The Road To Richer Music Literacy, Andrew Mills, Clinician

The artistic processes of the NCAS standards are Create, Perform, and Respond. Ensemble directors are GREAT at teaching the Perform and Respond processes, yet many neglect the Create component. According to Music Learning Theory, creative activities like improvisation employ many of the same cognitive processes as reading and performing from music notation. Research suggests that, outside of the jazz band context, music educators often lack experiences in improvising and teaching improvisation. Using Music Learning Theory and the Developing Musicianship Through Improvisation (Azzara, 2006) methodology as a framework, the goal of this workshop is to equip teachers with research-based techniques in teaching improvisation that can be tied directly to music literacy sequencing and instruction in the general music and choral classroom. In this workshop, educators will gain an understanding of the current research on improvisation instruction and where such instruction can fit into the curriculum in addition to basic teaching techniques that can be easily applied to the general music classroom and/or choral rehearsal.

- 8:00-8:50 am HED Interest Session, Forum E
Stop Doing Everything: A leadership Program That Works For You, Christopher Schletter, Clinician

This session helps participants develop a student service leadership program that works for their needs and the needs of their program. Aimed at secondary and collegiate level organizations, we will define service leadership, the process for choosing service leaders, service

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leadership program maintenance, and the many ways service leadership can help you and your program. Come explore a fresh look at service leadership and begin to expand your program's potential.

8:00-8:50 am Collegiate Interest Session, Forum G
TikTok Did It! Engaging the Active Student Mind; Tools For Success! Danielle Todd, Clinician

Students in classrooms today have the world at their fingertips and are accustomed to the short nature of social media videos and constant entertainment. As such, engaging their minds for the expanded periods of time required to learn musical concepts can be a challenge especially in the full ensemble setting. The purpose of the session is to explore various approaches that will keep students engaged while also allowing teachers to meet their musical goals with an emphasis on adjusting what we know to work to meet the needs of our current students.

8:30 am-5:00 pm Exhibits Open, BJCC East Ballroom & East Meeting Rooms A, B, C

9:00-9:25 am ELEM/GEN Interest Session, Forum J
Informances: Everything You Need for an Interactive Music Class, Matthew and Sadie Wall, Clinicians

Do you ever wish your colleagues and students' families could glimpse what you do? This is your chance! A developmentally appropriate way for young children to perform and a community-building time for older students, informances welcome families into your space and can serve a bundle of purposes: advocacy, interaction, fun, education. We will share what has worked for us and how to tweak things to suit your own program.

9:00-9:50 am AVA General Membership Meeting, Forum C

9:00-9:50 am AOA Interest Session, Forum D
The Goldfish and THAT Student: Classroom Management 101, Angela Ammerman, Clinician

Participants will not only learn classroom management strategies, they will actually practice them! The educators in this session will get to take turns role-playing disruptive students and then also addressing them with the strategies recommended in the presentation. Participants will all learn a song and will even practice adding extensions for advanced learners.

9:00-9:50 am ABA/Collegiate/HED Interest Session, Forum A-B
Field Tested, Stage Approved: Music Ensemble Across the Seasons
Kevin Welborn and Dr. Ryan Kilgore, Clinicians

Marching band and concert band often feel worlds apart, but the best programs know that excellence on the stage feeds excellence on the field—and vice versa. Join Kevin Welborn and Dr. Ryan Kilgore as they explore ensemble techniques that transfer seamlessly between both arenas. Drawing on their experience with running music ensemble for The Bluecoats Drum and Bugle Corps as well as high school and collegiate music programs, this session dives into strategies for teaching field timing, balance, blend, and ensemble communication that not only elevate performance but strengthen musicianship year-round. Whether you're standing on turf or hardwood, music ensemble is music ensemble.

9:10-10:00 am ABA Performance, Sheraton Birmingham Ballroom
Dauphin Jr. High School Symphonic Band, Daniel Justin Compton, Conductor

10:15 am-12:00 pm AMEA General Session, BJCC Theatre
AMEA Business Meeting, Phil Wilson, Presiding
Featured Performance: Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Carlos Izcaray, Conductor

12:00-1:30 pm Phi Beta Mu Luncheon, Forum H-I

12:00-1:30 pm Collegiate Luncheon, Sheraton Birmingham Ballroom

1:30-2:20 pm AVA Interest Session, Forum C
More than Right Notes: Rethinking Choral Intonation, Scott AuCoin, Clinician

Poor intonation can be a daunting challenge for any conductor. While common in the choral ensemble, its root cause is often difficult to pinpoint and address effectively. This is because poor intonation is usually a symptom of deeper concerns. This session explores how tuning issues often stem from underlying aspects of choral singing such as vocal technique and aural skills. By shifting the focus from trying to fix pitch errors directly to strengthening foundational choral skills, conductors can cultivate more consistent and accurate tuning. Attendees will gain a clearer understanding of where intonation problems originate and leave with practical strategies to support better intonation in their ensembles through intentional teaching. This session is designed to help choral educators shift from reactive to proactive when it comes to intonation because singing in tune is more than just singing the right notes.

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1:30-2:20 pm Collegiate Interest Session, Forum G
Building Community within the Ensemble, Christopher Loftin, Clinician

In “Building Community within the Ensemble”, preservice educators will reflect on their ensemble cultures and discuss their ideal program culture. Participants will engage in activities that promote an environment of inclusion and student empowerment. The presenter will discuss successes and growth opportunities from his 19 years as a Music Educator.

1:30-2:20 pm ABA/HED Interest Session, Forum A-B
From College to the Classroom: Connecting the Dots for Success! Danielle Todd and David Caddell, Clinicians

College students spend years engaged in a variety of opportunities to learn and explore themselves musically, develop teaching skills, and gain knowledge that will help them in their future classrooms. However, courses offered years apart and as stand alone learning opportunities often lack the connection required to demonstrate a clear picture of success. The purpose of this session is to help preservice teachers recognize and make connections between what they are learning and completing in college courses with what they will do and implement in their future classrooms. Connecting the dots for success!

2:30-3:45 pm AMEA Research Poster Session, BJCC East Ballroom Foyer

2:45-3:35 pm ABA Performance, BJCC Theatre
Oak Mountain High School Wind Ensemble, Kevin Ownby, Conductor

2:45-3:35 pm AOA Interest Session, Forum D
¡Instrumentos Arriba! Recruiting & Retaining English Language Learners, Angela Ammerman, Clinician

This session will provide innovative teaching strategies to allow participants to build stronger relationships with their community and students. Participants will learn how to reach out to an increasingly diverse population and how to achieve success in spite of significant barriers. These experiences will result in stronger programs, better music, and an empowered body of musicians.

2:45-3:35 pm Collegiate/HED Interest Session, Forum G
From the Principal’s Office to the Stage: Building Support for Arts in Schools, Tim Cox, Clinician

Arts educators have a unique opportunity to make their programs a bright spot in both the school and the broader community — but that success is rarely achieved alone. Building a strong, positive relationship with school administrators is essential. Over my 30 years as a band director, I’ve learned that when you invest in those relationships, you gain more than just approval — you gain allies. In this session, I’ll share practical strategies that have helped me earn trust, create shared goals, and elevate the role of the arts within the school’s culture. By cultivating strong partnerships with school and community leaders, not only can your program thrive — you’ll find greater satisfaction and sustainability in your career as well.

2:45-3:35 pm AMEA Interest Session, Forum E
Retiring with a Purpose, Joey Harbison, Clinician

A panel of four clinicians will discuss through their experiences ways to retire while staying active in music education.

2:45-3:35 pm AVA Interest Session, Forum C
Sequenced Choral Warm-Ups United with Movement, Alissa Rowe, Clinician

What is the natural and logical sequence of the choral warm-up? Are our students focused on various skills during the warm-up? Are the warm-ups tied to the repertoire? This session encourages thoughtful sequencing of the choral warm-up through a series of exercises that engage the body, breath, mind and collaborative team at hand. The warm-ups will address individual vocal issues such as alignment, breath, onset, diction, tone quality, resonance, range and agility. The session also addresses group listening exercises, intonation, dynamics, articulation, and rhythmic accuracy. Too often music educators are overwhelmed with the daily (and nightly) duties of our teaching and the music making becomes secondary. As a result, the choral warm-up is often forgotten or highly diminished in content. This session encourages interactive, thoughtful, and educational warm-ups to re-engage the beginning of your choral rehearsal.

2:45-3:35 pm ABA & ELEM/GEN Interest Session, Forum A-B
Designing Harmony: Leveraging Canva for Music Education, Advocacy, and Classroom Engagement
Haley Staff, Clinician

In today’s visually driven world, strong design and communication skills are essential for effective music educators. This session explores how Canva, a free and intuitive graphic design platform, can be used to elevate instruction, program visibility, and advocacy in the music classroom and community. Attendees will gain hands-on strategies for creating polished promotional materials, engaging social media content, and professional communications that advocate for their programs and foster strong school-community partnerships. Participants will leave with a collection of customizable templates, classroom examples, and design best practices that can be implemented immediately. This session

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emphasizes clarity, creativity, and real-world classroom application, equipping music educators to amplify their impact both on the podium and in the community.

4:00-4:50 pm ELEM/GEN Interest Session, Forum J
Move Your Body: 1, 2, Step, Lesley Dennis, Clinician

4:00-4:50 pm AVA Interest Session, Forum C
In the Middle Lane, Suzanne Logue, Clinician

Take the middle lane and explore a thoughtfully curated selection of choral repertoire designed for the developing middle school voice. This multi-publisher reading session highlights accessible, engaging literature—from unison to two- and three-part mixed—ideal for the flexible and ever-changing nature of the middle-grades ensemble. Whether you're guiding young singers through their first harmonies or balancing changing voices, this session offers practical programming solutions, teachable moments, and musical gems to keep your choir moving forward together.

4:00-4:50 pm ABA Interest Session, Forum A-B
Rehearsal Efficiency through Programming, Cody Ray, Clinician

Programming lies at the core of our curriculum. Through thoughtful programming, we not only determine what is pedagogically important for our students, but we also shape the efficiency and effectiveness of our rehearsals. This presentation will provide participants with practical tools and strategies for selecting repertoire that aligns with the specific needs of their ensembles. Together, we will develop a programming philosophy and apply it to the exploration of appropriate and meaningful literature. Additionally, we will highlight valuable resources that support both educators and students in laying a strong foundation before the rehearsal process begins.

4:00-5:00 pm HED Student/Faculty Showcase Recital, Sheraton Birmingham Ballroom

4:00-5:00 pm AOA Membership Meeting, Forum D

7:00-9:30 pm AMEA General Session, BJCC Theatre
AMEA Awards
Alabama All-State Elementary Choir, Scott Sexton, Conductor
AVA High School Honors Choir, Valerie Harris, Conductor

8:00-8:50 pm ABA Performance, Sheraton Birmingham Ballroom
Thompson High School Jazz Ensemble, Graham Bennett, Conductor

Saturday, January 24

8:00-10:00 am Conference Registration, Sheraton Forum Registration Desk (Lower Level)

8:00-8:50 am AOA Interest Session, Forum D
You Can't Teach Empty Chairs: Recruiting and Retention for String Programs Angela Ammerman, Clinician

This highly interactive session will provide teachers with the opportunity to learn recruitment and retention strategies from highly successful educators with programs that have experienced significant growth in a short period of time. Participants will craft a custom-tailored growth plan with specific feedback from colleagues and presenters during the session. Participants will also brainstorm recruitment strategies for their unique teaching situation with their colleagues.

8:00-8:50 am ELEM/GEN Interest Session, Forum J
From Notes to Nuance: Developing Choral Artistry in Young Singers, Lisa Latham and Meredith Devore, Clinicians

Our session will equip music educators with tools to grow the caliber of their young treble choirs. We will lead warm ups and vocal skill building techniques with the use of demonstration singers; discuss how to choose appropriate literature for younger choirs, including considerations for range, expression, and part-singing; demonstrate techniques for teaching harmony; and share strategies for teaching beginners gained from years of leading public school, church and community choirs at the elementary and middle level. We want teachers to leave feeling empowered with new techniques, rounds, and literature to enhance their teaching at their next rehearsal.

8:00-8:50 am AVA Interest Session, Forum C
Spirituals, Ethnic Anthems, and Gospel Music: Is There a Difference? William and Rosephanye Powell, Clinicians

Concert spirituals, anthems, and gospel music are distinct styles of sacred choral songs by African American composers influenced by Western European classical music. These songs, performed on concert stages and in religious venues, have transcended race and cultures, being sung

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by diverse choral groups globally. While African American spirituals, anthems, and gospel music are unique, they share musical characteristics, leading to the incorrect interchangeable use of terms and mislabeling. This miscategorization overlooks contributions to the classical music tradition and leads to inappropriate performance practices. This session aims to provide general characteristics of concert spirituals, gospel, and ethnic anthems to assist in categorizing and performing these songs more appropriately. The characteristics are not exhaustive, as spiritual arrangements and gospel music are dynamic and ever-changing, with exceptions and hybrids based on the composer's background and influences.

8:00-8:50 am Collegiate Interest Session, Forum G
A Fresh Perspective: Building a Band, a Culture, and a Conductor, Jackson Tucker, Clinician

A band program is about more than just instruments and music—it's about building community, identity, and confidence for students and educators alike. As a new director leading a newly established program, Jackson Tucker offers an authentic look at the early days of program creation, including successes, setbacks, and lessons learned. This session is designed to be relevant not only to new educators launching their first program but also to veteran directors rebuilding or revitalizing existing ensembles. Experienced educators will find value in reflecting on how fresh perspectives can inspire program growth, leadership development, and creative problem-solving regardless of career stage.

8:00-8:50 am ABA General Business Meeting, Forum A-B

9:15-9:40 am AVA Performance, BJCC Theatre
Grissom High School Chamber Choir Tucker Ratcliff, Conductor

9:15-10:05 am ELEM/GEN Interest Session, Forum J
Exploring Beyond the Notes, Lesley Dennis, Clinician

Looking for new ideas to engage your students in active listening? Join us for a hands-on session where we will delve into innovative methods for fostering critical thinking using diverse musical genres. You will leave this session with tools you can immediately implement in your classroom.

9:15-10:05 am Collegiate Interest Session, Forum G
How The Sausage Gets Made: Understanding How Policy Impacts Music Education, Rob Lyda, Clinician

Today's educational and political landscape demands more than citing correlational studies that highlight the benefits of music education. The music education ecosystem must articulate a clear, collective vision aimed at influencing and shaping local, state, and federal policies to ensure all students have access to sequential music education. In addition, to effectively advocate music educators must understand the education ecosystem and how policy impacts education funding. This session will explore the advocacy efforts of the music education profession to date, guide participants in examining their individual and shared beliefs, collaboratively develop realistic policy goals to advance the profession, and identify strategies for building and sustaining collective partnerships that drive mutually beneficial change.

9:15-10:05 am ABA/HED Interest Session, Forum AB
Inflate to Elevate: How Balloons Can Improve Your Band's Performance, Cara Morantz, Clinician

This session will focus on using balloons as a breathing tool with wind players in order to improve tone quality, steady and supportive air, intonation, attack/release, balance, dynamic contrast, and overall musicianship. This kinesthetic approach is more effective than direct instruction because students learn HOW TO produce the desired sound, and has worked with musicians of all ages. Clinician will walk participants through clear steps for implementation and show examples of how this one simple and affordable breathing tool can audibly improve ensemble performance skills when applied to fundamentals and repertoire.

9:15-10:05 am AMEA Interest Session, Forum C
Better Band Before The Bell: Small Ideas With Big Results, Jason Varga, Clinician

Unlock the full potential of your band program before your rehearsal even starts. This session offers practical, time-efficient strategies to maximize rehearsals, engage students, and boost performance outcomes. Discover how minor adjustments can lead to major improvements.

9:50-10:15 am AVA Performance, BJCC Theatre
Alabama School of Fine Arts Choir, Cathy B. Spence, Conductor

10:30-11:20 am AVA Interest Session, Forum C
Identifying, Understanding, and Refocusing (Un)Diagnosed Neurodivergence in the Music Classroom or Studio
Shellie Beeman and Allyson West, Clinicians

In the full, fast-paced learning environment of the music classroom, it is easy to label students with phrases such as: "Can't Learn Music or Technique," "Undisciplined," "Unruly," "Lack of Musical Intelligence," "Slow Learner," etc. However, brain research has shown that traditional learning models for the "neurotypical" music student have caused breakdowns in the neural pathways of "nontraditional" learners, now today as "Neurodivergent." We identify these learners by terms such as ADHD, ADD, Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Autism, and other Learning/

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Processing Disorders. This session will provide a foundation on identifying ADHD, understanding how it affects music learning, and applying effective instructional tools to help these students become successful musicians.

10:30-11:20 am ELEM/GEN Interest Session, Forum J
They're All Readin' Fine: Music Literacy for Ages 7 to 9, Scott Sexton, Clinician

Our youngest music students can read music, too! This session will explore songs, games, and music reading resources that can be used in most second and third grade music classrooms. Learn how to incorporate more fun and interactive music literacy lessons into your existing music curricula. Music concepts such as quarter, eighth, sixteenth notes, mi-re-do, and pentatonic scales will be included through mini lesson demonstrations. Whether you want to try something new in your classroom or add to your existing music curricula, come join us and let's create some engaging music literacy opportunities for our students!

10:30-11:20 am AMEA Interest Session, Forum AB
Band-Aid Solutions: Fixing Those Young Band Blunders, Jason Varga, Clinician

Every young band faces common pitfalls—but small, strategic fixes can lead to big improvements! This session will provide quick, effective solutions for tone production, rhythm, intonation, and ensemble balance, helping your students sound better, faster. Perfect for directors looking to troubleshoot typical beginner challenges with confidence!

10:45-1:45 pm ABA Concert Session, BJCC Theatre
All-State Jazz Bands
 All-State Middle School Jazz Band, Craig Cagle, Clinician
 All-State Bronze Jazz Band, Earnest Echols, Clinician
 All-State Silver Jazz Band, Roderick Paulin, Clinician
 All-State Gold Jazz Band, Steve Torok, Clinician

1:00-3:00 pm AVA Adjudicator Training, Forum C

1:00-3:00 pm AMEA Governing Board Meeting, Forum E
Phil Wilson, Presiding