

# Forward Together and Stronger



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**G**reetings and salutations! I hope everyone has settled and adjusted into the school year, wherever you may be in the music community. We are swiftly approaching the holidays and I know everyone is preparing for the mass quantities of *Sleigh Ride*. Whether it is a physical concert or virtual concert, I wish you all the happiest of holidays to you, your loved ones, and your students.

The NYSSMA® All-State/Winter Conference is next on the agenda. As you may know, NYSSMA® will not be hosting an in-person conference. However, there will still be virtual sessions offered. The collegiate sessions will consist of a virtual meet-the-state-executive-board event, as well as a student teaching panel. The times and details for each of these sessions will be shared with the membership when the virtual conference schedule is released.

## A strange new world

As I write this article, I constantly think to myself, "What will the membership want to read?" or, "What important information do I want to share this month?" This has honestly been my struggle during this current school year, as it has been for most of the membership. We all find ourselves in a very challenging world, in a challenging profession, and using challenging media for educational purposes.

Music traditionally was a physical concept that brought small and large groups of people together. Music was never meant to be a virtual concept -- or so they thought. As future and current educators, we have come a

long way since March of 2020. This is a year we will all look back on and remember the hardships we endured in order to maintain our classroom environments. It is definitely harder to do ice breakers over Zoom than it is in the classroom.

Though it seems like there are more negatives than positives, we as a community have bonded together in a way I never knew was possible. NYSSMA® has done everything in its power to keep the membership updated with any event cancellations or changes. I am very thankful to be a

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member of such a close and supportive community, especially after this eventful 2020 year.

## We continue learning

As we reach the conclusion of semester one of the 2020-2021 school year, I would like to take a look back on what we have learned as educators. Since the beginning of this rough process, we have utilized various virtual platforms to continue the performance factor of ensemble-based classwork. We have become much more advanced in our fields just by solely using Smartmusic, GoReact, Google Classroom, and even Zoom. We have taken these traditional music classroom values and transitioned into completely remote or flipped classrooms.

The times are changing, and we

will not let a pandemic discourage us as music educators. The road has been hard, but since March of 2020 the practices of the methods we have chosen have grown stronger. A wise educator once taught me that perfect practice makes perfect, and who would have thought that could ever apply to completely remote education in a music classroom?

Just through our virtual Zoom lessons, meetings, and interactions, here are some things we have collectively learned: sound quality is constantly updating to accommodate music-based classes; sharing your screen and your audio are now possibilities on the same device, and, lastly, that students can change their name to "Reconnecting..." and turn off their video to avoid participation.

Now that the trials are through, we can put these semesters and quarters behind us. This will help us look forward toward a brighter future, even though we all should probably turn down the brightness on our screens.

With all jokes aside, I hope to see you, the membership, at the virtual sessions for the NYSSMA® All-State/Winter Conference in December. Though it is another virtual setting, I am looking forward to our paths crossing and continuing to succeed during this time. It has been a pleasure working with many educators around New York this past 2020 year. It has been a wild ride, but we were all in it together. Again, I wish you a happy and, especially, healthy beginning of 2021. See you in the New Year and best wishes for the remainder of 2020. ||