

# TECHNOLOGY, MUSICIANSHIP AND THE POWER OF STUDENT VOICE

*Recognizing powerful links through big-picture thinking*

Music education has always been shaped by the tools musicians use to listen, create, rehearse, and communicate. From manuscript paper to tuning devices, from rehearsal strategies to recording equipment, technology has never been separated from musicianship; it has simply evolved alongside it.

As I begin my role as Technology Review Editor for *School Music News*, I am excited to explore how today's music technologies can support student voice, musical understanding, and authentic engagement, while also continuing to honor the traditions and values that define strong music programs.

## Expanding student agency

At its best, music technology is not about mastering software or chasing trends. It is about helping students think, listen, and create as musicians.

One of the most powerful contributions of music technology is the way it expands student agency. When students compose, arrange, record, or produce music, they are required to

make intentional musical decisions. They choose sounds, structure ideas, revise drafts, respond to feedback, and reflect on their work.

Technology also broadens the entry points into music-making. Some students connect most naturally through performance, while others find their

***Music technology has the unique ability to connect different areas of a department***

voice through composition, sound design, or production. Music technology allows these pathways to coexist within the same program, ensuring that more students can engage meaningfully with music while developing artistic literacy.

Rather than existing as a separate track, music technology has the unique ability to connect different areas of a

department. Recording tools support reflective practice in ensembles; composition and arranging reinforce theory, literacy, and form; and production projects strengthen listening skills, collaboration, and problem solving.

## Enhancing learning

Music technology also challenges us to reconsider how we assess learning. Audio recordings, project files, and iterative drafts provide opportunities to document process, not just performance. Students can hear their own growth over time, evaluate their work using clear criteria, and apply feedback in meaningful ways.

Another strength of music technology is its ability to support authentic creative work. When students engage in real-world musical tasks like recording, producing, composing, or arranging, they participate in processes that mirror those used by working musicians. This authenticity increases engagement and helps students understand music as a living, evolving art form.



Start or renew your chapter today!  
Join the only national music honor society for students in grades 6-12.

"Tri-M means a society of people who want to make the world better with music."

—Jordan P., Tri-M chapter president

Tri-M@nafme.org | nafme.org/Tri-M