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## EDITOR'S PAGE

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# THE END IS THE BEGINNING

*Exploring seasonal segues, possibilities and the rhythmic flow of summer*

As paradoxical as it may seem, the concept of closing makes for the ideal opening. Every ending is a beginning, and this time of year perfectly illustrates that point. Music from the past concert cycle is being filed away while new pieces are being ordered. Commencement ensembles are sounding off on a year's closing while marching bands are marking the next one's arrival with the first steps for the coming season. Reflection is written into every "last" while hope and possibility spring eternal for the "firsts" right around the bend. Yes, school's out for summer, as Alice Cooper joyfully reminds us. But it's not really *over*. What follows is one segue leading to another and another and another, ad infinitum, as neither music education nor life in motion work with hard stops. So, close the classroom door on your way out, but open your mind to what might be needed and waiting to bring you back as a better, wiser version of yourself.

Summer offers us the rare opportunity to not only recharge, but also to reflect and reconnect with what brought us to the profession in the first place. Some sit within the ranks of community bands, orchestras, or choirs under the stars, joining with musicians from all walks of life who share a belief in the power of collaborative energy. Others meld a passion for performance with travel, leading youth ensembles through Europe or playing abroad themselves. Acoustic adherents and the bar band faithful gear up for a busy season on home turf by the water. And the wedding band set gets going for high season, ramping up to an even busier fall.

Of course, some might not take to the stage, preferring or needing to channel their love of music in a different direction and trading one classroom or teaching gig for another. Maybe there's that online course you've been waiting to enroll in for enrichment and growth or that graduate

work you've been putting off until July when you have breathing room to truly embrace what's being taught. Perhaps there's that conference you want to attend, tied directly to your deepest interests. And let's not forget the music camps! Maybe your school hosts one, where you play a pivotal role with lessons or logistics, or there's one near or far that draws you in as a seasonal educator or administrator.

## ***There's a completely different energy between school years.***

If you've made it this far, you might be nodding in the affirmative, seeing your past, present or future self in these scenarios. But if you don't, you're rolling your eyes at these wholesome and pragmatic pathways, and you'd much rather spend your summer months far, far away from anything related to the job, there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. In fact, it might be the perfect prescription for revitalization. Use the time to be with your family. Go catch up with the friends that you never seem to see during the school-year grind. Hit the beach on a Tuesday. Read that book that's been beckoning for months. Stay up late to binge watch a new series or see that much-talked-about movie. Take the vacation that you've been dreaming about. And buy the concert ticket that's been calling to you. You can embrace the music in the air, guilt free, without responsibility for creating or directing it. You've earned that, and more, with your efforts in the last 10 months.

Reading the previous portion of this column to my wife/colleague in late April, in the midst of a marathon week that included hosting a NYSSMA® solo and ensemble festival, traveling for a high school jazz band clinic and performance at The Jazz Loft, our annual Tri-M recital, a student-parent meeting for an upcoming Disney World trip, the quarterly musicians-helping-musicians meeting of high school and elementary players, our 5th Grade Band Parent Night, and an in-house visit/clinic/concert from a South African jazz icon and Jazz at Lincoln Center artists, I asked her what she might add to this discussion as her favorite part of summer. Responding with characteristic wisdom, concision and good timing, she cited a mellower pace and slower mornings.

Perceptive and pointed, that answer spells out what we can all appreciate: there's a completely different energy at play in this liminal space between school years. Whether you're relaxing, working, learning, branching out, or dealing with a combination of all four areas in different proportions, there's no denying that summer's flow is unique. I feel it and I know you do, too. No matter how you choose to spend this time, just know that it's the right way to go. So, let's begin... ||

*"Just imagine how much cooler I'll be in summer"*

Kristen Anderson-Lopez and  
Robert Lopez (lyric from *In Summer*)

*"All summer long, we sang a song, and then we strolled that golden sand"*

Johnny Mercer (lyric from  
*The Summer Wind*)

*"The summer smoothes the restless sky"*

Alan and Marilyn Bergman (lyric from  
*The Summer Knows*)