

**Beginning Band and Strings:
Your Situation May Be Different but Your Questions Should Be the Same
Thursday, December 21, 2023 - 1:00 – 2:00 pm - Room W 185**

Clinic Synopsis:

This session is a panel discussion with four veteran teachers (two band and two orchestra) and a respected music dealer focusing on questions, issues and topics every beginning band and string teacher should address while planning for and delivering beginning band and string instruction.

Clinic Topics

- When to start beginners*
- Planning for recruitment*
- Instruments and materials*
- Goal setting*
- Communication with administration, parents and classroom teachers*
- Student tryouts and instrument selection*
- Assessment, enrichment and remediation*
- What to do when a student wants to quit*
- Defining success with beginners*

Clinic Format

Panelists have been asked to keep their responses succinct. Clinic attendees are encouraged to take notes and should feel free to email any of the panelists should they want to ask a particular question or want additional information or clarification on an answer provided.

Dr. Charles T. Menghini – cmenghini@icloud.com

George Quinlan, Jr. – gqjr@qandf.com

Erin Cole Steele – erincolesteele@gmail.com

Connie Bimm – cbimm@mtcademy.org

Amy Lestina Tonaki – atonaki@syc427.org

Ken Tonaki – ktonaki@syc427.org

Special thanks to Hal Leonard, publisher of the Essential Elements for Strings and Essential Elements for Band method book series for their support of this clinic.

Charles Menghini

DR. CHARLES T. MENGHINI is President Emeritus of VanderCook College of Music in Chicago. Menghini served as Professor of Music and Director of Bands from 1994 – 2017. Prior to his appointment at VanderCook, he spent 18 years as a high school band director in Missouri and Kansas where his bands earned national acclaim. Charlie is co-author of the Essential Elements Band Method published by Hal Leonard and serves as an Educational Member of the Music Achievement Council for NAMM. Menghini is active as a speaker, clinician and conductor around the nation. He frequently presents at state and national music education conferences, works with teachers and school districts in a variety of forums and continues to write for professional magazines and journals. In 2019, Menghini was awarded the Medal of Honor from the Midwest Clinic for his life's work as a band director, teacher and educator.

George Quinlan, Jr.

George Quinlan, Jr. currently serves as President & CEO of Quinlan & Fabish Music Company, a regional chain of nine school retail stores serving schools in the Chicagoland, Indiana and SW Michigan. A trombonist and bass player, he graduated from the University of Miami and began his career with brief stints at The Selmer Company and at G. Leblanc Corp. before joining his family business in 1979.

He currently serves as treasurer for The Midwest Clinic, Past President of NASMD-National Association of School Music Dealers, Chairman of the VanderCook College of Music Board of Trustees, as a member of the Music Achievement Council, and Artspeaks204 a grass roots arts advocacy group in suburban Chicago. He has served two terms on the board of directors for NAMM-National Association of Music Merchants, the South Shore Brass Band, and served as President of NASMD-National Association of School Music Dealers.

In 2013, he and his father were recognized with the Don Johnson Music Industry Service award and Q&F was recognized as 2014 Retailer of the Year by Music, Inc. magazine. Quinlan & Fabish Music Co. has been recognized as one of the leading school music retailers in the United States. Q&F has made participation in band and orchestra easier for parents, students, and teachers as a trusted partner in Music Education since 1959.

Erin Cole Steele

Erin Cole Steele is the Director of the Division of Education and a Senior Clinician for Conn Selmer. She was the Band Director at Tapp Middle School in Cobb County, Georgia (1995-2017) where she was named Teacher of the Year. The Tapp Band received numerous accolades, including performing at the 58th Midwest Clinic. Erin commissioned four works, including Robert W. Smith's The Great Locomotive Chase, Frank Ticheli's Simple Gifts-Four Shaker Songs, Samuel R. Hazo's Ascend, and in the consortium commissioning Eric Whitacre's The Seal Lullaby. Erin is a contributing editor for Hal Leonard's Essential Elements for Band. She has

Special thanks to Hal Leonard, publisher of the Essential Elements for Strings and Essential Elements for Band method book series for their support of this clinic.

written for three editions of the GIA publication *Teaching Music Through Performance* and has contributed a chapter to *Rehearsing the Middle School Band* by Stephen Meyer. Erin is a conductor and speaker and has presented at the Midwest Clinic as well as state and international conferences. She has served as the conductor for All-State and regional honor bands, appearing in over 30 states. Erin served as the conductor for Youth Bands of Atlanta, 2011-2017. She was the founder and administrator of the Cobb County Summer Band Camp, Georgia. She has served as a clinician for the Music for All Summer Symposium and is currently the Executive Director for The Conn Selmer Institute. Her professional affiliations include Phi Beta Mu, Sigma Alpha Iota, and the National Band Association from whom she was awarded the Citation of Excellence in 2015, 2008, and 2003.

Connie Bimm

Connie Bimm attended Western Illinois University from 1975 – 1978, graduating with a Bachelor of Music Education degree. She is a graduate of Farmington East High School in Farmington, Illinois.

Mrs. Bimm has been teaching band in various situations since 1979. Her teaching career began as fee-based itinerant band director in 5 south suburban elementary Catholic schools, traveling to a different school each day. After a brief hiatus to be at home with her children, Mrs. Bimm took on a part-time position at a neighborhood Lutheran school as its orchestra director. That group eventually turned into a flourishing band program which continued to grow for the duration of her 25 years there. At its largest, the band program included 69% of the 4th through 8th grade students. Eventually a full-time teacher, Mrs. Bimm also took on the job of teaching general music and directed many, many Christmas and musical programs along with band performances. During 9 years of teaching part-time at the Lutheran school, Mrs. Bimm also taught a part-time fee-based band program at a nearby Catholic elementary school.

Since January of 2012, Mrs. Bimm has been teaching fee-based band at Mother Teresa Catholic Academy in nearby Crete, Illinois. Although she started out as part-time band only, Mrs. Bimm's part-time duties grew to include BOTH art and general music classes, as well as continuing to run the band program. After 6 years, the position was finally considered full-time. Mrs. Bimm sees each of the students in the PreK-8 school twice a week for Fine Arts, directs Christmas and musical programs, and continues to grow the band program at MTCA.

Amy Lestina Tonaki

Amy Lestina Tonaki is in her 19th year of teaching orchestra in the Sycamore School District in Sycamore, IL. Alongside her husband and colleague, Ken Tonaki, they jointly teach students in grades 4 to 12. Mrs. Tonaki assumes the role as the middle school orchestra director, while Mr. Tonaki is the high school orchestra director. At the elementary level, they teach their specialty instruments with Mrs. Tonaki providing cello and bass lessons and Mr. Tonaki providing violin

Special thanks to Hal Leonard, publisher of the *Essential Elements for Strings* and *Essential Elements for Band* method book series for their support of this clinic.

and viola lessons across all five elementary schools within the district. In 2006, Mrs. Tonaki started an extracurricular ensemble, the Sycamore Jazz Strings. This innovative ensemble, combining middle school and high school orchestra students, provides students the opportunity to explore and perform alternative styles of music. In 2016, members of the Sycamore Middle School Orchestras served as a clinic/demonstration orchestra at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago. Mrs. Tonaki holds a bachelor's degree in music education from Augustana College and a master's in music from Northern Illinois University. She is a member of MENC and ASTA/NSOA. Mrs. Tonaki is active as a guest conductor, clinician and adjudicator around the state of Illinois. Amy Lestina Tonaki enjoys playing the cello in the local community orchestra, Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra. In her spare time, Mrs. Tonaki enjoys reading, yoga, traveling, cuddling with her two cats, Sebastian and Kiki, and playing music with her family: husband Ken (violinist), son Evan (cellist), daughter Mia (violinist).

Ken Tonaki

Ken Tonaki has taught 4-12 orchestras in the Sycamore (IL) Community School District for the entirety of his 28-year career. His high school orchestras have performed at the IL-MEA All-State Convention, the University of Illinois Orchestra and Chamber Symposiums and the Northern Illinois University Orchestral and Chamber Festivals. He has served as a Guest Conductor for youth music camps at the University of Illinois and University of Wyoming along with many orchestra honor festivals in the greater Chicagoland/NW Indiana area in addition to his regular teaching duties he has faithfully served the IL-Music Educators Association. He currently serves as the High School Orchestra Representative in the NW Illinois region. He has also conducted the District 1 & 6 ILMEA Junior Festival Orchestras. With drum corps and marching band experience, Ken has also acted in the role as a marching instructor for several bands in the northern Illinois area in the 1990's to early 2000's. Most notably he was an instructor for the Prospect HS marching band and served as the marching caption head for the Northern Illinois University "Huskie Marching Band." Ken also wrote drill for Sycamore HS Marching Band. In addition to his teaching duties, Ken plays violin with the Kishwaukee Symphony Community Orchestra and other community functions. He is married to Amy Lestina Tonaki, who is Sycamore Middle School Orchestra Director. They have two children, Evan 14, and Mia 12. Ken Tonaki earned his bachelor's and master's degree in music education from Northern Illinois University. He is an active member of the Illinois Music Educators Association, American String Teachers Association and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia.

Additional resources for Beginning Band and Strings recruitment and retention can be found by searching Music Achievement Council materials, or visiting the Music Achievement Council website at www.nammfoundation.org/educator-resources/music-achievement-council.

Special thanks to Hal Leonard, publisher of the Essential Elements for Strings and Essential Elements for Band method book series for their support of this clinic.