

FRIDAY FANFARE - AUGUST 29, 2025

NEWSLETTER

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY.

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Dr. Chris Combest, Assistant Director - chris.combest@mtsu.edu



It's here; the first week of the semester. Once more, the sounds of life have returned to our School of Music with remarkable energy. Each morning the building seems to awaken as doors open, instruments warm up, and voices carry through the halls. Classrooms are alive again with discussions, the front office hums with visitors throughout the day, practice rooms echo with audition preparation, and faculty can be heard teaching, advising, and inspiring in every corner. It has been a week of firsts for many: first classes, first lessons, first auditions, and first moments with new colleagues. Each sound and moment signals beginnings that will grow into lasting experiences.

Alongside the music, I've been reminded of the importance of relationships in our work. Conversations in the hallways, encouragement exchanged before an audition, and the quiet mentoring that happens in lessons are what turn this building into a community. These connections give us strength in challenges, multiply the joy of successes, and make the School of Music a place where we belong to one another as much as to the art we study.

I'm also excited to begin my new role as Assistant Director in the School of Music, focusing on faculty growth and the student experience. In this position, I will be working to support pre-tenure faculty, lead initiatives that strengthen student wellness, and create opportunities for professional development, and share the story of the School of Music through our Social Media channels. It's a privilege to serve in this way, and I look forward to partnering with colleagues and students as we build on the great start with our new Director, Dr. Snodgrass.

Thank you, one and all, for bringing both your artistry and your presence into this new semester!

DIRECTOR'S ADVISORY BOX

Want to share an event coming up? Want everyone to know you released a new recording?

Was your proposal accepted to a national conference and you want everyone to know but do not want to be "that" person? Have a concern about the SOM that you want to share? Do you want to give a shout out to someone in the hall who made your recital go smooth?

This is your one stop shop to share everything:

[Director's Advisory Box](#)

CONVOCATION 2025

Yesterday, the School of Music opened the year with its first Convocation in Hinton Hall, where students, faculty, and staff gathered to hear upcoming goals and procedures. Performances included **Dr. Deanna Little and the MTSU Flute Ensemble, Justin Averill (tuba) with Joseph Walker (piano), Keith Sorrels (oboe) with Gyuhee Kim (piano), Dr. Mei Han** with a performer from the Center for Chinese Music and Culture, and the MTSU Jazz Combo. We also acknowledge the misspelling of **Dr. Eunbyol Ko's** name in the presentation and congratulate all performers. Most of all, congratulations to our students, faculty, and staff for a strong and spirited start to the semester.

STAFF FEATURE: ANGELA SATTERFIELD

Angela is a welcoming presence in the School of Music. She coordinates admission applications, greets visitors, and provides guidance to prospective and current students. Many know her as the warm voice on the phone when they call, and all appreciate the positivity and care she shares with students. Angela also supports events and activities, ensuring they run smoothly, and keeps our community organized by managing lockers and keys. Angela has been married for 27 years to Evan, a Nashville firefighter/paramedic, and they both graduated from MTSU. They have a son who is a senior at Sewanee, a daughter who is a Senior at UTC, and a son who is a senior at Blackman high school, and a Swiss mountain dog they affectionately call Bubs.



ENSEMBLE OF THE WEEK!

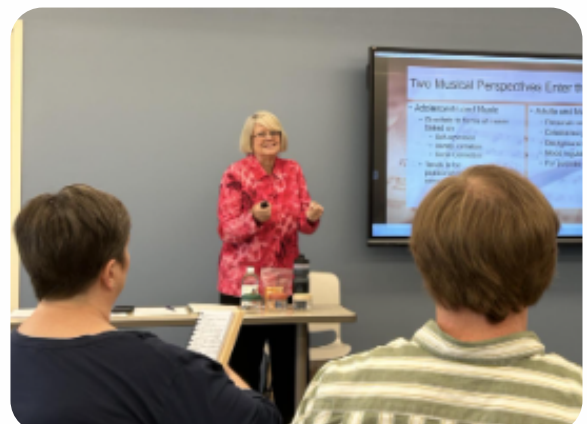
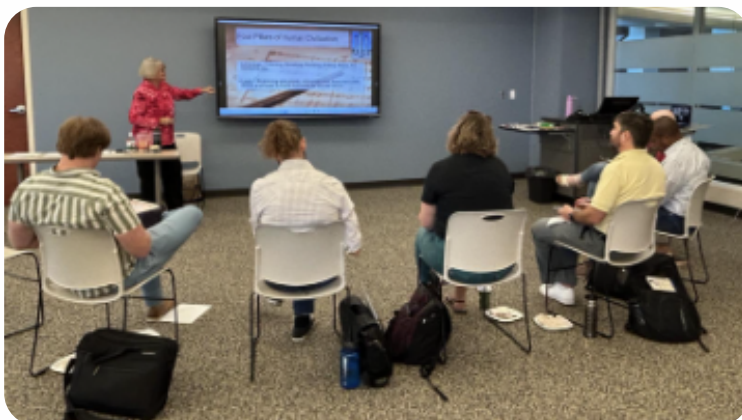
MTSU Percussion Ensembles

From salsa grooves and steel pan rhythms to dynamic drumline performances, the MTSU Percussion Ensembles showcase the energy and versatility of our students. Highlights this year include a recording session of "It's All Good," a Silent Film Night, and the annual Percussion Ensemble Showcase with local schools.



FACULTY NEWS

On Friday, August 22, our Introduction to Music faculty gathered for an in-service at Walker Library's Center for Teaching and Mentoring, led by director Dr. Jennifer Vannatta-Hall. We were joined by facilitator Glenda Goodin, a former MTSU student and faculty member, who guided thoughtful discussions on music, teaching, and connection.





Congratulations to Dr. Jamila L. McWhirter for her recent presentation at the Tennessee American Choral Directors Association State Conference! Her session, "Vocal Health 101: Daily Vocal Routine for Career Longevity", guided choral directors back to the essentials of daily voice care and encouraged making self-care a priority. Participants actively engaged in vocal exercises designed to build mindful, sustainable habits. Dr. McWhirter also shared this important session with Wilson County choral directors during their professional development. In addition to her role as Professor of Choral Music Education and Director of Graduate Studies at the MTSU School of Music, Dr. McWhirter is a widely respected conductor, researcher, author, and clinician. Her influence reaches nationally and internationally, from guest conducting at Carnegie Hall to publishing in leading journals, and through her book *A Creative Duet: Mentoring Strategies for Emerging Music Educators* (Oxford University Press).

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

The MTSU Clarinet Studio was proudly represented this past July at the International Clarinet Association's annual ClarinetFest in Fort Worth, TX! In addition to Dr. Todd Waldecker's performance of Márquez's Danzón No. 2 for solo clarinet and piano, three of our outstanding alumni made remarkable contributions:

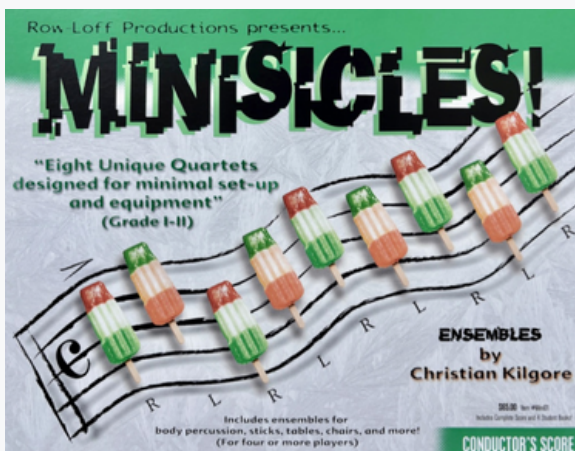
Photo 1

Dr. Rosemary Engelstad, Associate Professor of Clarinet at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, presented several programs featuring new solo and duet works with electronic techniques.

Dr. Jackie McIlwain, Associate Professor of Clarinet at the University of Southern Mississippi, performed a duet recital and shared multiple presentations on her new co-authored book, *Body Mapping for the Clarinetist* (<https://giamusic.com/resource/body-mapping-for-the-clarinetist-book-10807>).

Photo 2

Dr. Jessica Harrie, Executive Director of the International Clarinet Association, coordinated and oversaw all aspects of the convention's logistics.



MTSU Graduate Percussion Student Christian Kilgore (MM Performance '25) has just released MINISICLES!—a new collection of quartets designed for 4 or more players. These eight unique works call for minimal setup and creative instrumentation, making them accessible and fun for a wide range of ensembles. Check it out here: <https://rowloff.com/product/minisicles/>

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS



Congratulations to Jarran Armstrong (B.A. Music Industry, '24), who has quickly launched a thriving career in professional performance. Shortly after graduating, Jarran joined the Avatar: The Last Airbender Live in Concert tour, performing on both keyboard and pipa (a Chinese lute he learned through the MTSU Chinese Music Ensemble). In 2024 alone, he played in 128 concerts nationwide.

His journey didn't stop there—he was later invited to perform with the orchestra for Naruto in Concert, and is now preparing to return to the road with Avatar once again. Beyond performance, Jarran recently completed a commissioned work for bassoon and sheng, set to premiere in Costa Rica next year.

Jarran's story is a powerful example of where passion, training, and opportunity can lead—and how MTSU programs open doors to unique and exciting career paths.

Congratulations to Justin Averill, senior Music Industry student, on being named the first recipient of the Jim and Jamie Self Endowed Tuba Scholarship! The scholarship supports outstanding tuba students pursuing studies in tuba at the MTSU School of Music and is given in honor of the Selfs' dear friend, Dr. Chris Combest (pictured on the right), for his long career as a teacher, performer, and leader in the tuba/euphonium world.



Congratulations to Olivia Suggs, junior vocal music education major, who sang in the Tennessee American Choral Directors Association Collegiate Choir this summer under the direction of Dr. Jason Max Ferdinand! Olivia participated as a member of the MTSU ACDA Collegiate Chapter, and you can too. This Fall, join us for the joint Kick-Off with MTSU ACDA Collegiate and MTSU CNAfME (Collegiate National Association for Music Education). Interested? Reach out to Dr. McWhirter, Faculty Advisor, at Jamila.mcwhirter@mtsu.edu for details on how to get involved this year.

PARKING IMPACT

Friday, August 30

- Tailgating APSU Alumni Engagement | 7:00 am – 8:00 pm | Livestock Lot, 10 spaces
- MTSU Football | 7:00 am – 8:00 pm | Smith, Division, Faulkinberry, Fire Lane, Greenland, Hall of Fame, Holmes, Middle TN, Nursing, Jones Lots, All spaces

Thursday, September 5

- Volleyball | 1:30 pm – 10:00 pm | Greenland Lot, All spaces
- PCA Football Game | 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm | Greenland Lot, All spaces
-

September 5–7

- Panhellenic Sorority Recruitment | 12:00 pm – 9:00 pm | Greek Row, Front of houses

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, September 1st

5:30pm: Phi Mu Alpha Rush Sinfonia Rush Event

Tuesday, September 2nd

Walker Library Orientations Begin (see below)

5:00pm: Phi Mu Alpha Rush Event

Saturday, September 6th

11th and 12th Strings Grade Midstate Clinics (see right)

Monday, September 8th

5:30pm: Opera Lovers Meeting

6:00pm: Oboe Faculty Recital Keith Sorrels/Gyuhee Kim



11th and 12th Grade Mid-State Audition Prep Clinics

Saturday, September 6
 2:30 - 3:50 pm -- Violin
 3:00 - 4:20 pm -- Cello
 4:00 - 5:20 pm -- Viola

Led by MTSU String Faculty
 Dr. Andrea Dawson, violin and viola
 Dr. Bryan Hayslett, cello

Free for students who reserve a spot by 5:00 pm on September 4
 Cost for walk-ins: \$25

To register:
 Send e-mail to info@dowstreetmusic.org
 • include student full name
 • parent contact e-mail
 • instrument

Location: 1272 Dow Street



LIBRARY ORIENTATION

DATES
 TUES, SEPT 2
 WED, SEPT 3
 THURS, SEPT 4
 FRI, SEPT 5

TIME
 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
 (counts as one recital attendance)

LIBRARY ROOM 272

ATTEND ONE OF THE ABOVE SESSIONS

Faculty Recital

Dr. Keith Sorrels, oboe
Gyuhee Kim, piano

Music by
 York Bowen
 Althea Talbot-Howard
 Kevin Day
 Benjamin Britten

6pm, Monday, September 8, Hinton Music Hall

MTSU KEYBOARD ARTIST SERIES

ADAM CLARK PLAYS RACH 3

in a new arrangement for piano and string quintet

Friday, Sept. 12, 6 p.m.
Hinton Music Hall

Free and open to the public
 Featuring Andrea Dawson, Emily Walsh, Katja Yeager, Bryan Hayslett, and Tiffany Freeman

PROGRAM
 Bach: Piano Concerto in D Major
 Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor (arr. Sahun Hong)

STEINWAY PIANO GALLERY WASHVILLE

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Ascend MTSU Arts ARTS+MUSIC+THEATRE ENRICH YOUR LIFE College of Health & Behavioral Sciences I AM TRUE BLUE

The FRIDAY FANFARE is a weekly newsletter by the MTSU School of Music edited by Dr. Chris Combest - chris.combest@mtsu.edu

Want to see your event, faculty, student or alumni news featured? Submit it to the [Director's Advisory Box](#)
 To learn more about our programs and events at the School of Music, please visit music.mtsu.edu.