



2026 CMDA Research Expo Faculty Lightning Talks

(Provost's Fund for Innovative Research grant winner project highlights are on the ORED website under 2025-26 winners.)

Rockford Sansom (Theatre faculty)

The Elocutionists Son: LBJ and the Evolution of 20th-Century Public Voice

Moody Research Grant, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library

This project examines how voice training shaped the development of modern American political speech, using Lyndon B. Johnson as a case study. Raised by a trained elocutionist yet known for his highly adaptive and strategic speaking style, Johnson embodies a pivotal shift from 19th-century formal oratory to the more conversational, audience-centered rhetoric of the postwar era. Situating LBJ within the broader history of voice pedagogy, this project illuminates how evolving practices of vocal training influenced political leadership and transformed American civic speech in the twentieth century.

Faculty and Student (Poster & Display) Abstracts

11:30-12:30 Faculty & Student Research Posters and Interactive Demonstrations

David Dockan (Music faculty) & **Rachael Sanguinetti** (Immaculata University)

Repertoire/Genre Selection in Modern Band Classrooms

There remains a persistent gap between the music students enjoy outside the classroom and the genres privileged in school music education programs (Adorno, 2025; Ripani, 2022). As K-12 educators attempt to include more student identities in the classroom, Lind and McKoy (2023) offered a framework of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). In CRP, students' cultural knowledge and practices are seen as assets for rigorous learning (Gay, 2002). Music education scholars have previously discussed MB as a vehicle for culturally responsive learning by teachers being responsive to their students' musical preferences, identities, and cultures (Music Will, n.d.; Powell, 2021; Powell, 2023). However, music education scholars suggested more investigation into the repertoire taught and how the repertoire is selected is warranted (Knapp et al., 2022). The purpose of this study is to explore the chosen genres and repertoire selection processing K-12 Modern Band settings.

Jesse Allison (Music faculty), **Brendan Harmon** (Arts & Design faculty) & **Carlos Roman**
(Music graduate student)

Welikia Soundscape Engine

We present the Welikia Soundscape Engine, an interdisciplinary project for generating immersive soundscapes from historical ecological data of the New York Botanical Garden's Welikia Project. This dataset reconstructs New York City's ecosystems in the early 17th century. Grounded in ecoacoustics and object-based audio, the methodology incorporates field recordings captured in proxy ecosystems that approximate the ecological communities of the New York region four centuries ago. These recordings form soundbeds that represent localized interactions between biotic and abiotic elements, such as site-specific species vocalizations, weather elements, and temporal cycles. A custom Max/MSP engine organizes these elements through an ontology and annotated sound database to generate spatialized soundscapes from stereo to ambisonics. The project offers a method to reconstruct past environments by translating geospatial and ecological information into dynamic auditory environments.

Xiaoyuan Cao (Music graduate student)

Teaching Idioms through *Excursions*: Pedagogical Approaches for Piano Students

This presentation explores pedagogical approaches to teaching musical idioms through Samuel Barber's *Excursions*, Op.20. It was composed in between 1942- 1944, the four piano pieces incorporate elements drawn from American vernacular traditions, including boogie-woogie, blues, folk-tunes, and Afro-Caribbean rhythmic influences. This poster will highlight some characteristics rhythmic patterns, harmonies, and textural features that reflect the vernacular style. Although this work is frequently performed, I hope it could be viewed as a valuable pedagogy tool for developing stylistic awareness of contemporary piano music.

Mickey Hogan (Music undergraduate student)

"Darling of LSU" (1935): Huey Long, Castro Carazo, and the lost songs of LSU

This poster examines "Darling of L.S.U." by Huey P. Long and Castro Carazo and contextualizes it within the broader culture and history of Louisiana State University. Despite its relevance to a well-known pageant, the piece has received little attention, leaving a gap in LSU's documented musical traditions. Using archival materials at the Hill Memorial Library, Gumbo yearbooks, commercial recordings, and interviews, this study reconstructs the song's origins, circulation, and cultural relevance. The poster presentation will detail historical events, like tracing the work's emergence alongside Long's intervention in LSU's band program in 1930, the establishment of Long and Carazo's collaborative writing process, the "Darling of L.S.U." pageant in 1935, and the song's role in the Christmas Gumbo Ball. I will also compare the locally published New Orleans edition with the M. Witmark & Sons New York publication, revealing revisions that reflect differing commercial and cultural priorities.

Mickey Hogan

Exploring the French School of Flute Playing from 1860 to the Present: An informed Performance of Pierre Sancan's *Sonatine* (1946)

This is a presentation on my performance of Pierre Sancan's *Sonatine*, which consists of an academically informed interpretation, drawing on a list of sources associated with the "French school of flute playing." Through the lens of historical and modern methods, accounts of performances, books by flutists, recordings, and lessons, I have synthesized a list of pedagogical concepts as observed in the French school, including tone production, concept of sound, articulation, vibrato, and nuance. I have applied this list of concepts to my interpretation, not to claim it is the "correct" way to perform, but to describe and demonstrate how foreign national concepts can inform the performance of music written by composers from that region. This fifteen-minute presentation will consist of a description of the approach to playing, along with a PowerPoint slide with musical examples from the score. With these examples still visible, I will play a recording of my performance of Sancan's *Sonatine*.

Kyla Kazuschyk (Theatre faculty)

Reimagining History through Queer Identity in *The Courtship of Winifred Edwards*

Through my work as costume designer and technician on the play *The Courtship of Winifred Edwards*, I collaborated with the director, design team, and performers, to reimagine a Victorian world where queer identities are accepted and normalized in society. My research into silhouettes and details of historical clothing informed the creative choices we made with colors and textures to convey the characters and tell a new story.

Brandon LaFleur (Music graduate student)

Exploring Isomorphous Keyboards

The standard 12-EDO keyboard layout is an omnipresent visualization strategy for musicians trained and untrained alike. The layout of the keyboard has deep roots in Western music history, and features implicit biases that have shaped creative engagement with musical material. The standard keyboard implicitly favors the C diatonic and F# pentatonic collections, simply due to its layout. In 1863, early psychoacoustician Hermann von Helmholtz suggested a variety of what are now called Isomorphous Keyboard layouts, that preserve intervallic shapes in all keys, much like the generalized Tonnetz. I have developed software that allows exploration of various isomorphous keyboard layouts, including several of these layouts. Further expansion of this work could permit different temperaments like 31-EDO, 53-EDO, Bohlen-Pierce (13-EDT) etc. and even Just Intonation systems. Experimentation with alternative keyboard layouts might allow musicians to reshape their musical instincts.

Jinnan Liu (Music graduate student)

Visual Gateways to Piano Music: Measuring the Promotional Impact of Visual Carriers on Contemporary Piano Compositions

This study looked at how different short-video formats shape audience responses to contemporary piano music on Douyin. There were five pieces analysed in three formats: story scene, piano performance, and score-only. Using a Python crawler, the public engagement data and comment threads were collected, then patterns in audience response were examined. Across the five pieces, story-scene and performance videos received more likes and comments than score-only videos. The format also shaped the discussion of viewers: story-scene videos more often prompted comments about personal memories and life experiences, performance videos led to more music-focused discussion, and score-only videos more often drew requests for sheet music, tutorials, and other learning resources. These findings suggest that visual format matters not only for visibility, but also for how audiences connect with and learn from piano music.

Jinnan Liu

Effects of Peer Tutoring Training Duration and Group Piano Level on Harmonization and Transposition Achievement and Student Perceptions in Undergraduate Non-Keyboard Music Students

This study examined how peer tutoring training duration and group piano level relate to undergraduate non-keyboard music students' achievement in harmonization and transposition, as well as their attitudes and confidence toward learning these skills. Participants were students enrolled in Group Piano II and Group Piano IV at a large U.S. university. Using a quasi-experimental design, students received either a 2-day or a 4-day peer tutoring training focused on sequencing instruction and feedback before participating in reciprocal peer tutoring activities. Results showed that students in the 4-day training condition performed better on both harmonization and transposition posttests than students in the 2-day condition. Piano level was significant for harmonization but not transposition. Students' ratings of peer tutoring were positive. The findings suggest that structured peer tutoring training can support functional keyboard learning in group piano settings.

Justin Tarver (Music graduate student)

The Effects of Music Performance Anxiety within Pre-collegiate Students

Music performance anxiety can lead to a variety of physical and psychological symptoms that can hinder pre-collegiate students in performance situations such as competitions, festivals, rehearsals, master classes, recitals and private lessons. This literature review will highlight those symptoms and what can happen to the students who experience them. Experienced teachers have created many strategies to combat music performance anxiety that address specific issues that it presents. The other half of this presentation will also highlight those developed strategies found in the research literature.

Sarah Walton (Theatre, undergraduate student)

An Interview with Vampirism—An Analysis of the Queer Experience through Vampire Narrative

Vampire Narratives, since their inception, have been Queer. Vampires have been shifting through the Past Centuries with society and views of Queerness. Existing as creatures outside of the views and expectations of the modern world, their experiences, ideas, and behaviors are going to mimic and share themes with Queer Humans. Vampires can never be normal, and they have always, in some way, mirrored the existence of Queer Persons. In my research, I focused on two areas. Queer Kinship and Performativity. Vampire covens and families in media are shaped not by blood but by emotional bonds and culture, very similar to the way the queer community connects to one another. When talking about performativity, vampires in media often have a specific way of presenting to their communities and within society, for culture and safety reasons. Since the beginning of Vampires in the written cannon, they have a queer tint to them, and looking at these stories can tell us how society sees Queerness.

Sarah Walton

Creation Narratives of Embodiment and Monstrosity

In the western canon of storytelling, there are very few stories that stand the test of time, and even fewer become well known cultural stable retold for centuries. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is one of those evergreen stories. Currently there are hundreds of screen adaptations inspired and shaped by the story of Victor Frankenstein and the Creature. There are many reasons for this, the universality, beauty, and compelling nature of the story, but for a lot of people today, especially those in marginalized communities, this story speaks to them and their experience. Frankenstein is not just a story about a man's attempt to create life, but an examination of what makes us human.

Sarah Walton

Societal Decay, Aesthetics, and History: What Makes Louisiana Gothic

Living in Louisiana, there is a sting of curiosity and intrigue when it comes to the state's darker side. Legends and images of ghosts, curses, and vampires, all common threads woven into the lore and cultural understanding of Louisiana. In the imaginations of many, Louisiana is home to the supernatural, strange, and haunting; the Southern Gothic aesthetic. The swampy and dark setting, the stories of creatures unnatural and dark, all come to create the horror aesthetic the state is known for. The creation of this aesthetic comes from the landscape and architecture of Louisiana. A major part of the inspiration for so many gothic stories is a concept called Social Decay; this is a way to describe a society that is falling apart, infrastructure is poor, quality of life is down, and there is a sense that the morality of the group is failing.

Yitong Wu (Music graduate student)

Beethoven's *Piano Sonata Op. 27, No. 1, Andante*: Combining Ternary Form and Fantasia Style

This research explores how Beethoven fuses ternary form and fantasia in the first movement of his Piano Sonata Op. 27, No. 1. Through contrasts in key, tempo, meter, and dynamics—hallmarks of ternary form— combined with fantasia techniques such as variation, modulation, and invertible counterpoint, Beethoven creates a structure that is both formally coherent and imaginatively free. Analysis of these features demonstrates how this hybrid form enhances expressive depth and stylistic diversity. The findings offer interpretive insights valuable to performers seeking to understand and convey the movement's structural and stylistic nuances.

Skyler Bluemel (Music graduate student)

Perceptions and Practices of Assessment Among Louisiana Secondary Choral Educators

This study examined how secondary choral educators in Louisiana perceive and implement assessment practices, a dimension of music education that has received less attention than assessment in core academic subjects. By adapting a survey originally developed for a 2024 Indiana study by Dr. Benjamin Kambs, the project provided localized insights while enabling future cross-state comparison. The survey, distributed to secondary choir teachers statewide, collected data on educators' beliefs about assessment, their current classroom practices, and the challenges they face in balancing assessment with other responsibilities. Responses were analyzed to identify statewide patterns and trends. Findings suggested participants placed the greatest emphasis on group performance outcomes (concerts, $M = 4.70$) over individual skill assessments ($M = 3.00$), based grades primarily on participation ($M = 5.00$), attendance ($M = 4.20$), and attitude ($M = 4.20$) rather than creative work like composition ($M = 1.90$) or improvisation ($M = 2.00$), and relied more on personal professional judgment ($M = 4.70$) than on state ($M = 2.20$) or national standards ($M = 2.70$) in making assessment decisions. Limitations of the study included a small sample size ($N = 10$) due to response rates (11.2%); the survey was sent to 89 potential participants across the state. In addition to contributing to the expanding body of research on music education assessment in secondary choral settings, this study also joined others in strengthening a foundation for subsequent case studies that extend into both higher education and secondary classroom contexts. The findings provide practical insights for choir directors, administrators, and policymakers seeking to design more meaningful and equitable approaches to evaluation in music classrooms.

Brett Boutwell & Blake Howe (Music faculty)

The Musician in Society

The Musician in Society, a new music textbook from W. W. Norton & Co., is a boundary-breaking collection of independent case studies spanning different eras and continents. The book is organized according to the complementary roles played by different people in the creation and reception of music, with each role represented by one chapter. Rich in detail but compact in length, the book's readings shed light on how musicians play their parts—sonically and socially—in diverse cultural settings. A mosaic built of dozens of colorful tiles, *The Musician in Society* explores how people work together to make music—close at hand and far away, long ago in history and at this very moment.

Kenneth H. Collins (Music graduate student)

Examining Feedback in Collegiate Marching Band Rehearsals: A Self-Study of Feedback Type, Level, and Reflective Practice

Feedback plays a central role in music learning by helping students understand expectations, evaluate their current performance, and make improvements toward musical goals. Hattie and Timperley (2007) defined feedback as information that reduces the gap between current performance and desired performance, and music education research has widely examined feedback in studio and small ensemble settings (Duke, 1999; McPherson & Blackwell, 2024). However, less attention has been given to feedback practices in large ensemble environments such as collegiate marching bands, where instruction is public, time-constrained, and highly performance-driven. In these settings, directors must provide immediate and efficient feedback while maintaining rehearsal flow, which may influence the type and depth of feedback delivered. Understanding feedback in this context is important for ensemble pedagogy and music teacher preparation, particularly for educators who will teach large ensembles in real-world settings. The purpose of this self-study was to examine the verbal feedback I provided during collegiate marching band rehearsals at a Historically Black University (HBCU) and to explore how reflective practice influenced my instructional decision-making. Specifically, the study sought to identify the characteristics of my feedback based on feedback function and feedback level, examine changes across rehearsals, and consider how structured reflection shaped my rehearsal communication through a practitioner-focused design. The results highlight how contextual demands shape feedback practices in large ensemble rehearsals and suggest that feedback in collegiate marching bands may differ from studio-based or small ensemble instruction due to pacing, visibility, and performance expectations.

Nick Erickson (Theatre faculty) & **Maria Kosma** (Kinesiology faculty)

Reasons for Participating in the EDS-HEART Program: Holistic and Performative Within a Supportive Community

Background: Hypermobility Ehlers–Danlos Syndrome (hEDS) results in multiple, complex health-related risks and associated fear of movement (kinesiophobia). Therefore, the purpose of this research study was to examine how a holistic, embodied, and performative movement program (EDS-HEART) can affect body schema, physical and mental health, and lifestyle, which contribute to the joy of movement and physical activity participation among adult women with hEDS. Results: Based on the qualitative analysis, three themes emerged regarding reasons for the joy of the EDS-HEART program: (a) improved body schema: body awareness, confidence, posture, and proprioception; (b) highly motivating program: holistic, embodied, performative, pleasant, and safe; and (c) psychosocial reasons: supportive setting, sense of pleasure and euphoria, and freed from social comparisons and the fear of movement.

Latrice Greene (Music graduate student)

The Rationalization of Literature Selection Processes in American School Music

The purpose of this philosophical inquiry is to examine the process of repertoire selection through the lens of Weber's theory of rationalization. Through this lens, the ideas of calculability, methodical behavior, and reflexivity provide a starting point for a reimagining of how repertoire might be selected for large ensembles.

Faith Hall (Music faculty), **Jason Bowers** (Music faculty), & **Vanessa Burke** (Industrial Organizational Psychology faculty)

A Grounded Theory of Secondary Music Ensemble Directors' Teaching Emotions

The purpose of this grounded theory was to explore the process of emotion management secondary large ensemble directors utilize in their work. Gaining insight into the emotional lives of music teachers can help address issues such as burnout, job satisfaction, and retention, while also enhancing our understanding of student motivation and engagement. Participants were 23 in-service band, choir, and orchestra directors employed at a middle school or high school in the United States. Data collection involved three phases of interviews: (1) unstructured, (2) theme-focused, and (3) member checking. Throughout data collection, we employed constant comparative analysis, followed by axial coding, and focused coding. Finally, we designed a model based on the constructed theory. Findings indicate that participants experience a wide range of emotions, often resulting in identity crisis, reflection, and development of coping mechanisms. Additionally, strong themes around authenticity emerged.

Megara Holmes (Theatre graduate student)

***The Play That Goes Wrong* Costume Design**

Research and design process for LSU's production of *The Play That Goes Wrong*.

Taleya Jordan (Music undergraduate student)

When the Story Changes the Song

This study will investigate how background information about songwriters will influence listeners' perceptions of lyrics. Guided by research on implicit bias in music evaluation, the study will examine whether knowledge of an artist's personal history will alter judgments of lyrical content and perceived trustworthiness. Participants will include 100 undergraduate students from Louisiana State University who will complete an online Qualtrics survey. Respondents will be randomly assigned to one of two conditions: lyrics accompanied by negatively biased artist biographies or lyrics presented with neutral/positive descriptions or no biographies. After reviewing five sets of lyrics, participants will rate each using six Likert-scale items assessing emotional impact, relatability, enjoyment, and perceived harm. It is anticipated that framing artist background will significantly affect listener evaluations, indicating that implicit bias extends beyond genre and race to include personal narratives.

Sarah Nansubuga (Theatre, graduate student)

Song, Dance, and Revolution: Brechtian theatrical tropes in Alex Mukulu's 30 years of Bananas and Asiimwe Deborah Kaawe's Appointment with GOD

This essay engages in a comparative analysis of the selected plays through a Brechtian lens. Harnessing Epic Theatre as a theoretical framework, the study will focus on the Epic Narrator, and the representational and didactic uses of the 'v' effect as tools for inciting an audience towards revolutionary fervor, and ultimately, social change. Although these plays were composed 20 years apart, I argue that their narrative construction and effectiveness relies heavily on Brechtian theatrical techniques to drive an audience towards social activism and civil responsibility. I also argue that while revolution is not a term that is transmutable across time and space, the ideas that 1. social change is possible, and 2. that the seeds of this change can be found within artistic expressions of resistance, are very much alive in both these plays.

Aleigh Papagno (Music graduate student)

Perfect Harmony: Healthy Habits for Music Teachers

Many music teachers have schedules filled with teaching, lesson planning, performing, rehearsing, and more. While such schedules make for dynamic careers, they also leave little time for personal wellness. A study of 496 British music teachers specifically revealed that 70% experienced physical problems that hindered their teaching and performing, and more than 30% experienced performance anxiety and hearing problems (Norton, 2019). The purpose of this poster is to provide music teachers with strategies to protect their physical, mental, and aural health that can be easily integrated into busy schedules. By making small, consistent changes, music teachers can enhance their well-being and sustain long, fulfilling careers.

Qi Zheng (Music graduate student)

Who Stays and Who Leaves? Exploring Elementary-Aged Student Retention and Motivation in Piano

This comparative study explores why some elementary-aged piano students drop out of lessons while others continue learning, focusing on first-year piano students and students in their first three years of general music learning. Drawing on literature about student retention, motivation, and music learning, this poster identifies possible behavioral and motivational patterns related to early withdrawal. Key findings suggest that students at risk of dropping out may show lower motivation and autonomy in music learning. The poster highlights some factors that may support long-term retention: academic integration, social integration, parental support, and mastery learning. It also emphasizes the importance of early identification and practical teaching strategies in fostering intrinsic motivation and retention in young music learners.