

## **PROVIDING RESOURCES TO IOWA'S JAZZ EDUCATORS**

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## **WHAT'S INSIDE**

- All-State Jazz Band Director Biographies
- Meet JEI's President-Elect
- Reminders

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**Kelli Swehla**

Dear Jazz Educators of Iowa,

Welcome to your first newsletter from JEI this school-year! My sincerest apologies for the delay. (I know you were all really waiting for it to come! ) Recently, JEI became a Google-based organization. This may not seem like a big deal, but it really is! It's taken a long time to make this happen including obtaining a letter from the IRS, proving our non-profit status, and a lot of legwork by our website magician, Mr. Michael Prichard.

We are now able to transition more freely as leaders take the reigns or pass them on, and we can do things like utilize Google-meet! We now have some fun email addresses that I wanted to share with you. Please utilize these email addresses and know that you can bookmark them for years to come:

President (Kelli Swehla): [president@jeiowa.org](mailto:president@jeiowa.org)

Secretary (Jennifer Tiede): [secretary@jeiowa.org](mailto:secretary@jeiowa.org)

Treasurer (Jeff Robilliard): [treasurer@jeiowa.org](mailto:treasurer@jeiowa.org)

Media (Elizabeth Hand): [media@jeiowa.org](mailto:media@jeiowa.org)

Webmaster (Michael Prichard): [webmaster@jeiowa.org](mailto:webmaster@jeiowa.org)

Included in this first newsletter are biographies on our All-State Jazz Band directors and our President-Elect, Chris Strohmaier of Waukee Northwest High School. Our new practice will be to issue a shorter, monthly newsletter with topics of relevance and reminders for what's coming up.

Finally, I wish you all well on preparations for your jazz bands and jazz choirs this year! Please refer to the links section below for a list of clinicians willing to help and to see previous newsletters with great articles.

Sincerely,

Kelli Swehla

# 2024 ALL-STATE JAZZ DIRECTORS



1A/2A

## DEAN SORENSON

**Dean Sorenson** is Associate Professor and Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Minnesota as well as a prolific and highly sought-after composer, arranger, trombonist, educator, and clinician. Dean's latest recording project is **COLORS OF THE SOUL**, an album of original music for sextet. His most recent publications include **THE TOTAL JAZZ THEORY WORKBOOK**, **EXCELLENCE IN JAZZ PEDAGOGY**, and **FIRST PLACE FOR JAZZ**, a new and innovative method for beginning jazz players. He is the co-author of the **STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE JAZZ ENSEMBLE METHOD** and **ADVANCED JAZZ ENSEMBLE METHOD**, an innovative and comprehensive series for middle school and high school jazz ensembles published by the Neil A. Kjos Music Company. He is also the author of **JAZZ COMBO SESSION** and **FIRST JAZZ PERFORMANCE**, also under the Standard of Excellence banner. He is frequently featured at festivals and conventions around the country and abroad. He also maintains a full schedule of concert and recording dates as a Yamaha performing artist.

Mr. Sorenson has composed and arranged for numerous ensembles including the Glenn Miller Orchestra, the Airmen of Note, and the Minnesota Orchestra. He is active as a commissioned composer and arranger for jazz ensemble, symphony orchestra, concert band, and chamber ensembles, and has also written several sacred choral pieces. For more information, please visit [www.deansorensonmusic.com](http://www.deansorensonmusic.com).



3A

## MICHELE FERNÁNDEZ

**Michele Fernández** is an active clinician/guest conductor, composer and performer. Her original works for jazz and wind ensemble are available through Hal Leonard, Excelcia/Kendor, Doug Beach, JW Pepper, Print Music Source/Jazz Zone, and Michele Fernández/GiraSoul Music. Her works have been performed (as well as clinics presented) at Midwest, CBDNA, JEN, IAJE, various MEA's All-State/Regional bands. Michele serves ensembles of all ages across the country through virtual or in-person clinics and Artist-in-Residence events. She recently retired from teaching after 30 years, where her Miami Senior High ensembles earned top honors and gained international acclaim despite being a Title One school with practically no resources. Her groups have been selected for appearances at the Midwest Clinic (Chicago '93 & '98), IAJE (Boston '94, NY '97), Montreux Jazz Fest (Switzerland '96), FMEA and national publications. Michele has featured on "CBS Sunday Morning", Band Director's Guide and Downbeat Magazine. She has also taught SPED, ESOL, HS English and Chemistry. Before focusing on writing, she served as an oboist in the Miami area, and spent several years as a rhythm section member of a busy local Afro-Latin/Jazz ensemble. As a clinician/composer: Michele views writing and clinics as an opportunity to discuss important aspects of life while also focusing on the art form of performance, and in so doing, to help others gain more self-confidence and an increased awareness of compassion for others that will lead to success in all areas of life.



4A

## COLLEEN CLARK

Founder and Artistic Director of the University of South Carolina's Jazz Girls Day, Dr. Colleen Clark is an Assistant Professor of Jazz at the University of South Carolina where she teaches her drumset studio, jazz history and research courses, coordinates and coaches small ensembles, and conducts Swing Shift Big Band.

Clark can be heard playing on Michael Dease's "The Other Shoe: The Music of Gregg Hill" (Origin), Allegra Levy's "Lose My Number: The Music of John McNeil" (SteepleChase), and upcoming releases by Michael Dease and Matt White. Clark was invited by the ASCAP Foundation to lead her band, the Colleen Clark Collective, at the Kennedy Center. Her latest project, "CC + The Adelitas" performed to a packed house at the 2023 Jazz Education Network Conference and will be recording their debut album with 2x GRAMMY Award winning drummer and producer, Quentin E. Baxter serving as co-producer.

Clark is author of the frequently accessed (3,000+) dissertation: "The Evolution of the Ride Cymbal Pattern from 1917 to 1941: An Historical and Critical Analysis." Dr. Clark is the only woman and drummer to earn a doctoral degree in jazz from the University of North Texas. Clark endorses: Zildjian, Vic Firth, REMO and Mono.

# MEET JEI'S PRESIDENT ELECT



## CHRIS STROHMAIER

**Mr. Chris Strohmaier** is the founding director of the Waukee Northwest High School band program. In addition to overseeing the day-to-day operations of the program, Mr. Strohmaier directs the Northwest Wind Symphony, the Northwest Jazz Orchestra, and oversees numerous chamber ensembles. Prior to moving across town, Mr. Strohmaier taught for six years at Waukee High School where he directed the award-winning Waukee Warrior Regiment and nationally recognized Waukee Jazz One. In addition to numerous state-level honors, bands under Mr. Strohmaier's direction have appeared in the Rose Parade (2022) and been recognized by DownBeat Magazine as outstanding national ensembles (2018, 2019, 2020, 2022).

Mr. Strohmaier is a past-president of the Iowa Bandmasters Association, South-Central district of IBA and is the president-elect of Jazz Educators of Iowa. He has written articles for both the Teaching Music Through Performance in Band and the Teaching Music Through Performance in Jazz book series published by GIA Publications. An active trumpet player, Mr. Strohmaier is a member of the Des Moines Big Band, the Nate Sparks Big Band, and the Metropolitan Brass Quintet. Mr. Strohmaier holds degrees from Drake University and Boston University, and lives in Johnston with his lovely wife Phaedra.

# REMINDERS



Invite Your Friends To Become Members of JEI!



Upload All-State Jazz Etudes By March 1st, 2024

# QUICK LINKS

Past Newsletters

Clinicians

Resources



Stay up-to-date with current activities and future events by following us on your favorite social media channels.



## CONTACT US

President | [president@jeiowa.org](mailto:president@jeiowa.org)

Secretary | [secretary@jeiowa.org](mailto:secretary@jeiowa.org)

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