

Collaborative Composition in Ensembles: a template that works!



Click here for a link to the updated google slides:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1dj69sloiY7LpE_Jbxz9xilcears0WHsSNPNnqhdeZ4o/edit?usp=sharing

Timothy Weed, Clifton MS Monrovia
Michael Lee, Azusa Pacific University
Alexander Koops, Azusa Pacific University
February 2, 2024 at 12:00 PM
CASMEC, Sacramento, CA

Overview

- Research Background (Koops)
- Student composition at Clifton MS and APU (Weed and Koops)
 - Composition activities
- Work with guest composer Michael Lee
 - Guiding principles
 - Assembly/form
- Performance
- Discussion



Presenters Backgrounds in Composition

Click here for a link to the updated google slides:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1dj69sloiY7LpE_Jbxz9xilcears0WHsSNPNnqhdeZ4o/edit?usp=sharing



Coops Composition work....

2007-2009 Dissertation work with composing in middle school band. This led to more writing and researching, exploring, and teaching in that area and I regularly visit K-12 schools as a guest to teach composition lessons...

Publications:

[Composition Concepts for Band and Orchestra](#) by A. Coops and J. Whitener

[Composing our Future](#) Chapter 8. Facilitating Composition in Instrumental Settings, A. Coops

Editorial work for: [Musicianship: Composing in Band and Orchestra](#)

2024: *Oxford Handbook of Music Composition Pedagogy*: On the journey to include music composing

Past Presentations:

[Coops \(CASMEC 2019\) Creative Warm Ups for Instrumental Ensembles: Get your students improvising & composing!](#)

[Kooops \(CASMEC 2019\) Great Band and Orchestra Repertoire that Bridges to Student Composition](#)

[Coops. Student-Centered Learning: Creating in Music Ensembles TCAP Courageous Creativity Conference 2019](#)

Resources List

[Coops Suggested resources for music teachers incorporating composition](#)



Above: CASMEC connection with Julie Bounds (now teaches in Oregon)

Below: guest composer Bill Connor-special composition event in 2019 with 5 collaborating ensembles



Tim Weed

Middle School music teacher. Teaching band, orchestra and choir at Clifton Middle School in Monrovia CA since 2020.

I have a string playing background with an interest in jazz and improvising. I have some modest experience with arranging and composing.

My interest is in learning about how I can better teach for, creativity, and individual musical expression and also diversify my teaching for different learners in the classroom.

Michael Lee

Michael A. Lee, MM, is a keyboardist and composer living in the Los Angeles area. He has toured and recorded with Grammy-winning and Platinum-selling pop artists, composed music for number-one box office films and Emmy-winning TV shows, and has collaborated with renowned concert composers including Phillip Glass and the Judith Weir, CBE, Master of The Queen's Music. Currently serving as Professor of Music Technology at Azusa Pacific University, Lee teaches courses in composition, music technology, and ethics.

Lee studied composition at both Berklee College of Music and Azusa Pacific University. After completing his undergraduate studies, he went on to complete graduate degrees in theology from Biola University and commercial music from Cal State Los Angeles.

As a keyboardist, Lee has played and recorded with several artists, including David Foster, Melissa Etheridge, Howie D of the Backstreet Boys, Queen Latifah, Meredith Brooks, Sheryl Crow, Ingrid Michaelson, Ray Parker Jr., Dave Koz, Avalon, BeBe Winans, and others. He has written music for and played keyboards on several TV shows, including The Little Mermaid Live (ABC), Perfect Harmony (NBC), Dancing with the Stars (ABC), The Mentalist (CBS), Millionaire Matchmaker (Bravo), The Amazing Race (CBS), She Spies (CBS), The Tonight Show with Jay Leno (NBC), and Melrose Place (CW). His commercial clients include Nike, Sonic Drive-In, Farmer's Insurance, Pioneer Electronics, Pandora, Excedrin, and Extended Stay America.

As a composer of concert music, Lee has received several commissions for regional ensembles, including works written for the Roger Wagner Choral Foundation, works performed at the American Choral Directors Association annual conference, and the inaugural anthem for opening of the Los Angeles High School for the Performing Arts. In 2014, he was the inaugural Composer in Residence at William Jessup University. In 2009, Lee was commissioned by artist Richard Grossman to design and build a multi-car moving electronic keyboard instrument, called the Carillon, built to perform a new work by Philip Glass. In 2018, Lee's orchestration of the opera "The Vanishing Bridegroom" by Master of The Queen's Music Judith Weir premiered in London, receiving rave reviews.

Lee lives just outside of Los Angeles with his wife, Gretchen, and their two children. His daughter Sophia plays the cello and can sing any Beatles song from memory, and his son Josiah is the loudest drummer in the neighborhood.

Quick show of hands: who is in the room?

Elementary teachers?

MS?

HS?

College students?

Professors?

Band?

Orchestra?

Choir?

Meet your neighbor. Share one idea or experience you have had with teaching composition and/or 1 thing you are really hoping to learn today



Research & Background (Koops)

2007-2009 Dissertation work with composing in middle school band. This led to more writing and researching, exploring, and teaching in that area and I regularly visit K-12 schools as a guest to teach composition lessons...

Publications:

[Composition Concepts for Band and Orchestra](#) by A. Koops and J. Whitener

- Guest Composer Bill Connor special projects
 - From the mountains to the Seas
 - Student Composition Concert

FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE SEAS
COMMUNITY CONCERT:

Featuring:
Bill Conner, composer and conductor
APU Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band and Bel Canto Choir
Citrus College Wind Symphony
Azusa Conservatory Choir
Azusa Renaissance Youth Theater Program
Ramona, Goddard, Sandberg, Slauson Middle Schools

November 9, 2014 - 4:00pm
Haugh Auditorium
No tickets required

Directors, Alexander Koops,
John Burdett, Bill Hoehne, David Hughes,
Charles Horton, Caitlin Shaw,
Jade Clavesilla, and Patricia Trevor

 AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

CMA | SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Composition Activities

[Composition Concepts for Band and Orchestra](#) by A. Koops and J. Whitener

[Composing our Future](#) Chapter 8. Facilitating Composition in Instrumental Settings, A. Koops

[Musicianship: Composing in Band and Orchestra](#)

Rhythm Improv & Composing Games

Rhythm Challenge: Take a piece you are performing in 4/4 time. Improvise the rhythm or rhythm and melody to fit into $\frac{3}{4}$ or vice a versa.

“Telephone” for smaller groups: 1 student solo improvises a 2 or 3 bar rhythm and passes it... Then next person tries to copy it, but either purposefully or by mistake changes it. Go round the circle and see how the rhythm adapts.

Additive: start with a 2 or 3 note rhythm. Each person repeats the previous rhythm plus adds a tiny bit

Drum circle: start a groovy rhythm ostinato, students take turns to stand up and solo improvise

Rhythm Improv & Composing Games

Bonus outside of class:

Rhythm Challenge:

Improvise a short challenging one to two measure rhythm and record it, clapping or playing.

Swap with a classmate and attempt to write down your classmates rhythm.

Student Compositions Concert

A collaborative final concert

- Middle school students
- College music students
- Professional composers
- Professional musicians

Teaching composition at our school

- One day a week emphasis on concepts



Student Compositions Concert 2023 featuring:
AZUSA Pacific University ensembles and Clifton
Middle School Band and Orchestra

Clifton Middle School

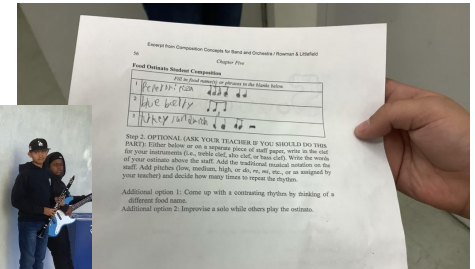
Making it a part of what we do.

- A weekly emphasis on lessons and projects
- Daily reinforcing of concepts.
- Advanced students may work on their own projects with individual goals.

CREATING SOUNDSCAPES

CALL AND RESPONSE

OSTINATOS



FOOD RHYTHMS

Free music technology you can find online.

[Noteflight.com](https://www.noteflight.com)

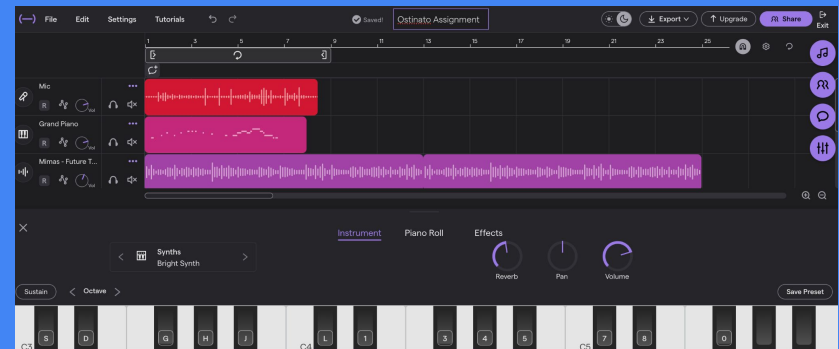
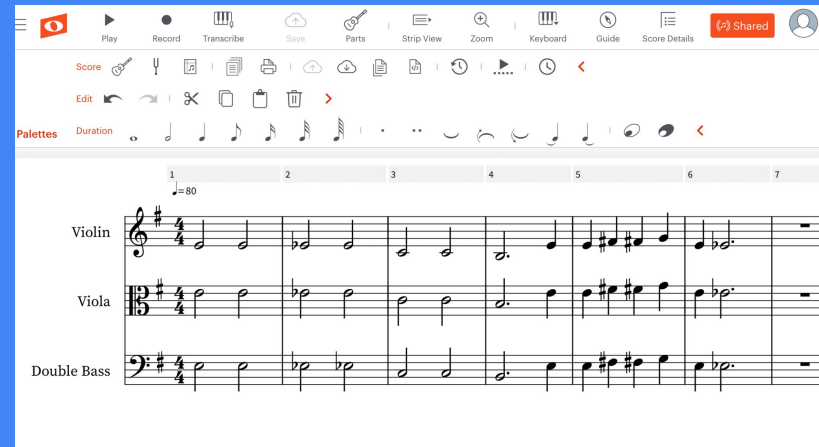
Free online notation similar to Finale or Sibelius.

- Free
- Great for basic notation writing and playback
- Paid version offers more options

[Soundtrap.com](https://www.soundtrap.com)

Free online digital audio workstation (DAW)

- Free online
- Record audio and edit recordings from a laptop
- Free samples and sounds for recording and editing.



Clifton Middle School



Other resources that have been helpful and inspiring

String Players

- Christian Howes Call and Response Videos

Band

Choir

Guest Composer Michael Lee

A. Guiding Principles

- a. Flexible Ensemble (based on Frank Ticelli's 5-voice model)
- b. Every idea gets a place
- c. Some ideas get developed
- d. A moment of musical inspiration for younger players
- e. A "win" on the finale

B. Form

- a. Alleatoric (directed improvisation)
- b. Episode 1: Parade of Ideas
- c. Episode 2: Developing a Theme
- d. Episode 3: Battle Stations (one student's intact idea, set with some contrasting elements from other students)
- e. Episode 4: Cadenza (Collegiate players, string quartet)
- f. Episode 5: Returning (Return to the primary theme, set simply for a big win)

Resources . . . improvisation & composition

[Cahn, William. \(2005\) Creative Music Making. Routledge](#)

Hicky, M. (2012) *Music Outside the Lines: Ideas for Composing in K-12 Music Classrooms*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hickey, M. (. (1997). *Teaching ensembles to compose and improvise*. Music Educators Journal, 83(6), 17-21.

Hickey, M., Koops, A., Randles, C., Stringham, D. A., Thornton, L., Webster, P. R., (2013). *Musicianship: Composing in band and orchestra*. Chicago, IL: GIA.

Kaschub, M., & Smith, J. (2009). *Minds on Music: Composition for Creative and Critical Thinking*. Co-published by MENC and Roman & Littlefield

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zzBZSA_e8oGaUxLi-Dm_ibOzzelal8z51c3mnWNIAE4/edit?usp=sharing

Resources to check out!

Noteflight learn!

Bandquest & Choralquest: <https://composersforum.org/education/>

NAfME Amplify

Resources for music teachers who want to include composition

- *Musicianship: Composing in Band and Orchestra* (GIA)
(Randles, Stringham, Koops, Hickey, et al)
- *Musicianship: Composing in Choir* (GIA) Strandle
- *Music Outside the Lines*. Maude Hickey (OUP)
- *Composing our Future* (OUP)
- Koops & Whitener. *Composition Concepts for Band and Orchestra* (Rowman Littlefield)
- Koops google doc with links for resources in composition:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zzBZSA_e8oGaUxLi-Dm_ibOzzelal8z51c3mnWNIAE4/edit?usp=sharing