



“AN HONOR ENSEMBLE...CHANGED MY LIFE!”

Kansas Music Educators Association

Survey Of Honor Groups

February 22-March 25, 2024

A Question was asked at the 2024 KMEA In-Service of anyone attending the In-Service as a student, parent, teacher, KMEA member, or general attendee, which says, “An Honor Ensemble...Changed My Life! Tell KMEA Your Story!” A QR Code was created and put on a poster. The posters were hung throughout the Century II Complex. The QR Code on the poster leads to a Google Form, which has a few questions. These questions are: Name; Email; May we use your name?; What is your age range?; and What is your affiliation with the KMEA In-Service Event? Following are the participants’ answers.

In 1989 I auditioned for the KMEA all state jazz band on piano, and was accepted. Later I found out that I was the only audition! But it built my confidence to be part of the group. I felt like that first year a lot of the music was too hard for me, but then I got serious about playing jazz piano. I made it the next two years even with competition. I continued on through college and am still playing 35 years later! I teach elementary music and have for the last 21 years. I have had students qualify for the elementary all state choir since 2019 and it is always a great musical memory for them! Just a moment ago one of the parents here with me...**I am a Music Teacher!**

During the past two years of going to KMEA as a high schooler and a middle schooler about two years ago. I have truly found these experiences to be very memorable and also very meaningful to my life as a student. These experiences have helped me shape who I am now as a musician and also the musicality that I have grown upon. Being in the honor choirs has helped give me the space to be who I am as a musician and grow as one. When I first came into my last year of elementary at LES. I found that my musical taste was starting to grow and found that I wanted to continue it. My passion always was in the realm of choral music. So, in the last year, my joined the chorus under the direction of Emily Fish and was one that helped me change my overall perspective of being in the choral realm. This first half of the start of my choir experience was very crucial and truly was a great thing to help me grow as a musician. As I have continued, I have met many others who have impacted musical experiences such as Jason Sickel, Jaclyn Krulik, Daniel Freeman, Judy Erpelding, Elise Peterson, Patrick McCarty, Dr. Adams, Dr Fernando, and among many others. Most notably, they are the many reasons why I have continued due to the passion and compassion they enlisted for the arts of music besides. As I go along further into the experiences of musicality and life, I hope that I find the deeper passion into my love of this art. I want to thank KMEA once again for making a great impact into my life and a thank you for making the experience memorable and cherishing...**I was a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

Meeting all the new people and getting to be a part of a band with lots of people showed me how much fun it is to play my instrument and how beautiful music can be...**I am a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

I played percussion for this ensemble and I am originally a flute. But because I made it in the percussion section of the KMEA ensemble I was able to have a new experience for my senior year where I wouldn't strictly play the flute. I got to meet new people and expand my knowledge on percussion. This has changed my life because now I know what it's like more behind the scenes than sitting up front playing the flute...**I am a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

KMEA has given me a reason to improve my musical ability. Sometimes, people often feel that they aren't good at anything, or the things they are good at are useless or unnecessary. KMEA gave me a new lens to view my musical capabilities and give me a reason to enhance my sound, my tone, and even my mental health. KMEA has given myself a a chance to play for not only my own sake, but give joy to the audience that listens...**I am a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

This is my first year attending KMEA All State Honor Band. I made a very good friend who sits next to me and plays the same instrument that I play. We went to the Music Exhibit together and had a lot of fun browsing and getting to know each other better. I hope that my new band friend and I can stay in touch and become closer even after high school...**I am a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

KMEA was the pinnacle of my quarter life career as an amateur euphonium player. It made me realize that I wasn't as simple and primitive as I once was, but an elite unit on the field. Practicing those auditions unlocked a part of my mind that been sealed away for years, that dawg in me...**I am a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

I tried out for the 1234a honor band sophomore year, not really knowing what was going on. I ended up in the 12a honor band, which was under the direction of Ed Huckaby. It was an amazing experience. I made friends, had a great time with my director and fellow students. It also made me realize how real music was. I was playing music written in my lifetime, while being conducted by the composer. The next year, the 12a band was under the direction of Micheal Sweeny, the composer and arranger of some of my favorite songs from my middle school band days. Meeting and seeing him as a good-natured, funny guy, made the music come alive. Music is a living, breathing thing, and that made sense to me now. Currently, during my senior and last year, the 12a honor band is under the direction of Rob Grice. Once again, I am playing the composer's music for the composer. I get to hear what he was thinking as he wrote the piece and the way it was truly meant to be performed. As a flute player, sitting in the front row of every band I have ever played in, getting to listen to and chat with the composers that created my middle school career is an amazing experience that I can't put words to. I will remember and cherish all of the time I have spent in the 12a honor band for the rest of my days, and I hope it brings music to life for more students as it has done for me...**I am a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

I don't have any one specific experience to share, but being able to play and perform in larger ensembles in general has given me a sense of purpose (as cheesy as that is). The several past honor bands I've been to have made me gradually realize that I want to keep music with me for the rest of my life...**I am a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

My wife and I actually met for the first time at the All-State Choir during our senior year of high school. We had brief conversation because we were both attending Emporia State University in the fall, and she noticed my ESU hoodie. Flash forward 6 months, we were put on the same dorm floor, two doors down from each other, both majoring in Music Education (both equally inspired to become educators due to all of our All-State Ensemble experiences in multiple different grade levels throughout our time as students). The rest is history!...**I am a Music Teacher!**

This year has been very difficult for me. I have been a member of the 1234A band for 2 years. I broke my wrist playing basketball over the summer and found after football season it was broken as I did not know at the time. This was detrimental news to me. I then found out it would require surgery. I received 3 days before my all-state audition. I do not really remember the audition as I was very out of it due to the drugs and the pain. But I powered through and did anyways even though I hadn't been able to practice for a week. My audition did not go very well and I was disappointed. I know I would've made it if I had not had to get surgery. I found I didn't make it and it crushed me, my family and band directors' hearts. But there was still hope because we found out about the 12A band for small schools. I love playing the tuba so I decided to do it right away. It wasn't what I had hoped for but I was very grateful for the opportunity. When I arrived I immediately knew how lucky I was to still have the opportunity. Music has also helped me make great friends and enriched my life forever. My tuba friends supported me greatly and felt it in their heart when I didn't make it in the band, but they helped console me and were there for me even though we weren't in the same band we still met up and hung out. This shows how music can bring people together and it doesn't matter what band you make it in your friends will be there for you no matter what. I would like to thank everyone for all their support of me in this troubling time...**I am a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

My band wasn't the biggest in high school and we didn't have full instrumentation, so going to "State" was awesome for me. Going to Allstate my junior year was amazing because I was able to be with a full clarinet section and play harder repertoire than what I was playing back at my high school. Randall Standridge was the clinician for the 1234a band that year and he was so inspiring and made the experience worth while. Now in college, the Allstate experience helped set up my career and I plan to come back every year as a collegiate member...**I am a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

KMEA was the experience of a lifetime. It gave me a new appreciation for music. It made me realize just how many people care so deeply about music and how deeply it can impact people...**I was a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

Coming in to state I had no expectations. Now that I'm performing soon I can say that I'm a much better and more involved player than I was at first. Everything from my tone to my volume. Even my dedication to pick up my instrument to practice. I want to thank my band teacher and our director for the 1234a band. It was an unforgettable experience...**I am a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

My sophomore year (23-24) of high school I made "state" and I met some amazingly wonderful people. I got to meet Z. Randall Stroope who was the director for Mixed Choir. (It was absolutely fantastic) It was the last day/performance day and I had forgotten my name tag to get in. Well Stroope and I had ate lunch together one day before hand and he noticed they wouldn't let me in. So he walked up to the lady and he handed me his name tag and said "there now she has a name tag and can get in." Then after I got in I went

to rehearsal and after the performance as I was leaving he pulled me aside and I took a picture with him then he took the name tag (his name tag) signed his name and wrote "to a wonderful human being. My best always" I will never ever forget that moment. Not only that but I had met so many amazing performers (some of them I still talk with today) but to whoever is reading this: if you get the chance to go to state, take it. I learned so much from just being there, it's a breath of fresh air to see so many talented people in one place coming together to create something so special. I hope all musicians get to experience it one day. It's a very positive experience and I don't think I would be the performer I am if it was not for the people I met that week and all the amazing things I had learned. Thank you to KMEA for all of the wonderful and memorable times I had, state choir will always and forever have a special place in my heart!...**I was a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

I've been in six different KMEA All State groups between 2016 and 2023 (including the very first All State elementary choir back in 2016!) and every time I've gone...I had the time of my life. I've met so many people I call my friends through All State and I can verify that every experience I've had has been magical. Because of this, the end of February has always been the high point of the year for me and something I always look forward to. Thank you KMEA for creating such a magical experience. As for a specific life-changing experience, I have three. I was a member of the 2023 All State Mixed Choir conducted by Z. Randall Stroope. After my lunch break on Friday that year, but before rehearsal started again, I and a bunch of other kids were showing off the kazoos we had bought in the exhibit hall. All of a sudden, I began to play the intro to Stroope's song "Lamentations of Jeremiah" which we were singing that year. Everybody began to join in and at one point I realized Stroope was videoing us! The second big thing was performing that song at the concert the following day. I remember my classmates in the treble choir who loved "Lamentations" so much expressing jealousy that I got to sing it and they didn't. After we finished the song, I could hear the trebles whooping and hollering all the way from the balcony where they were sitting. It was nice to know they liked our sound so much. Finally, I remember when I was in the Middle Level Honor Choir in 2018 with Rollo Dilworth. We were singing his arrangement of "I Sing Because I'm Happy" that year. After getting back from our lunch break, but before rehearsal began, we all just randomly broke out in song singing that song. I remember seeing Dilworth coming back into the room and nervously cutting us off before resuming rehearsal. I love KMEA, I've loved my years in All State, and I hope there are others that feel the same way...**I was a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

I learned about KMEA through my dad who was a band director in the 1960- 90s. I was able to audition and be in KMEA band and orchestra for years. My first year my freshman year in 1969;;; It was a wonderful experience when I was able to connect with many friends and enjoy having a wonderful conductor. I played in All State groups throughout my 4 years of high school. Three years were spent in the band and my junior year I played clarinet in Orchestra. This was a different experience for me as I had gone to small school and had not had the opportunity to perform with orchestras. My first two year in KMEA band I was from Goodland High school and my dad Carl Schminke was my director. In my junior year we were living in Salina and I attended Salina Central and was a member of the All State Orchestra. My final year I was living in Dodge City Kansas and I was a member of the honor band. I made so many friends during this time and also chose to become a music educator. I attended Fort Hays State as a clarinet and education major. During my junior year I transferred to Emporia State as my Clarinet instructor Harold Palmer was retiring.....My instructor at Emporia was James Fleisher. After graduating I spent the next 43 years teaching music in various school districts. I ended my career when I retired from Derby Public Schools. I took an after retirement job in Udall and was able to teach with my son Josh Turner, instrumental music. I now am a music sub for Rose Hill schools. This year was extra special as my son is the band teacher in Rose Hill and they were able to perform at KMEA. It was extra special as my dad Carl Schminke age 91 retired Kansas band teacher and myself 69 retired music teacher were able to be at his concert and enjoy

this wonderful family moment. I loved being in a music family and sharing my love of music with Kansas Students...**I am a Music Teacher!**

State String Orchestra was an amazing experience for my freshman son. It cultivates friendships with other student musicians that are truly life-long. As a musician and private music teacher myself, I run into friends from All-State, and the memories are so special. All-State is something that you truly remember fondly for the rest of your life, and it sticks out as one of the best experiences during high school. The KMEA auditions and rehearsals teach kids responsibility, independence, hard work, and being a team player. The confidence they gain from being a part of such an amazing orchestral performance is wonderful! ...**I am a Parent, Grandparent, Relative of an Honor Ensemble member**

It made me fall in love with what I do all over again. Getting to experience such focused rehearsals, with such focused musicians was such an eye-opening experience. It made me realize how big of an impact music has had on people of all ages, and how big and important it is for people. Getting to see people so passionate, and so in love with what they do re-inspired me to dive deeper into my love for music, and try to become the best version of me...**I am a Member of a KMEA or Kansas All State Honor Ensemble**

Since being a member of the 1985 All-State Choir, my clinician/director, Dr. Donald Neuen, has served as a lifelong mentor and inspiration. My first booking as KCDA president in 2004 was securing Dr. Neuen for our Summer Convention and introducing him two years later was a professional highlight I'll never forget...**I am a Music Teacher!**

This poll was created and compiled by Kelly Knedler (KMEA Advocacy and Government Relations Chairperson), February-March, 2024.