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## MEJ at 100: A Journal for “All Interested in Public School Music.”

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[June 2014 MEJ]  
From the Academic Editor

## ***MEJ* at 100: A Journal for “All Interested in Public School Music”**

*by Patrick K. Freer, Georgia State University, Atlanta*

Photo by Doreen Birdsell

This issue of *Music Educators Journal* completes our 100<sup>th</sup> volume. Our centennial year has been marked by articles and columns related to the anniversary. Some of these have been historical views of particular topics or developments, and others have critically examined our journal—looking back so that we can move forward. Where and how we move forward is an open question. Where we’ve been is easily seen in the print and digital versions of our issues, though our centennial year has afforded opportunities to reflect on our past so that we might imagine our potential futures.

Our journal began with the simplest of suggestions at the 1914 meeting of the Music Supervisors National Conference: that a publicity committee be formed to communicate news, trends, and pedagogical techniques “to all interested in public school music” (see Music Supervisors National Conference, *1916 Journal of Proceedings*, p. 58). The first issue of *Music Supervisors’ Bulletin* was published a mere four months later, in September 1914. Two questions dominated discussion about the journal in its first year: what is the journal’s purpose, and how should it be funded? Those are the two questions that remain critical a century later. The journal’s purpose has shifted only slightly, from an informational newsletter in the early years to the “official organ” of the association in the middle years of its century. *MEJ* at one time was published nine times a year and contained much of the news information now published in *Teaching Music*, online, and in our fifty state journals. That shift has allowed *MEJ* content to become more scholarly, with the challenge of remaining pertinent “to all interested in public school music.” The second question, about funding, is nowadays often posed as an inquiry about the inclusion and influence of advertising in *MEJ*. Advertisements were included in the first issue of *Music Supervisors’ Bulletin* for a simple reason—the advertisers possessed mailing lists of music teachers. Early issues of our journal provided very inexpensive advertisements in exchange for access to mailing lists that could fulfill the purpose of reaching “all interested in public school music.”

The articles in this special issue take advantage of the opportunities to look both backward and forward. Our feature articles examine:

- How *MEJ* has influenced the musical identity of Americans (McCarthy)
- Lessons we can learn from a century of *MEJ* articles about advocacy for music education (Hedgecoth & Fischer)
- The evolution of the slogan, “Music for Every Child and Every Child for Music” (Heidingsfelder)
- How the cover designs of *MEJ* have chronicled changes in our profession (Freer)
- How the preparation of music teachers has evolved since 1914 and where it might need to change for the next century (Allsup, Regelski)

The collection of winning essays from our Collegiate Essay Contest views our anniversary from the vantage point of prospective music teachers—those who will shepherd our profession (and our journal) through much of the next century. *MEJ* sponsored a similar collegiate essay contest in 1986 (May 1986, pp. 34-37). First place was awarded to Lynn Hunter, a student at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland; and second place was awarded to Sandra Snow at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. I was the sixth-place winner, and the recognition was pivotal to my development as an academic writer and editor. I hope our current student winners will be similarly inspired.

This edition of *From the Academic Editor* is a bit unusual for me. The column is designed as a response to pressing topics in each issue, with a goal of pointing readers to how authors have addressed similar topics in past issues of the journal. Let me take a moment, though, to thank some individuals for their contributions to our journal. First, I am continually intrigued by the contributions of our journal's first editor (1914-1922), Peter W. Dykema. I am proud that Dykema and I are connected through our association with Teachers College, Columbia University—he as a professor, and me as a graduate. I believe we are the only two editors to share the Teachers College connection, and it is of great personal interest that our terms opened and now close the first century. Second, I am absolutely indebted to our NAFME staff editor, Ella Wilcox. Ella ensures our words are relevant (and reasonably intelligent) both for readers of today and those of future generations. Ella, I simply cannot give you enough credit for the incredible work you provide to our authors and readers. Finally, please offer congratulations--at every opportunity—to the members of our Editorial Committee. Their service to our journal cannot be overstated.

One hundred years ago, at the turn of the 1914 calendar, the Ford Motor Company invented the moving assembly line to support the nascent automobile industry. Without the assembly line, Ford would have been unable to distribute its products throughout the nation (then at 48 states) and offer updated technologies as soon as they were produced. In 1914, the forerunner to *Music Educators Journal* was similarly launched to distribute news and updated information “to all interested in public school music” throughout the nation, offering camaraderie, community, and professional support to our emerging profession. I believe we still do.

Congratulations, all!

\*\*\*\*NOTE: Please set this in a text box at the end my column\*\*\*\*

### **The Editorial Committee of *Music Educators Journal* in its 100<sup>th</sup> Year**

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