

# smartnotes

the smartmusic e-newsletter



- Spotlight: Martha Boonshaft
- Steps Before Winter Break
- Contest Preparation
- Tips and Tricks
- Just Released
- Announcements
- Meet the Team

## Spotlight on band director Martha Boonshaft

Martha is a band director at the Garden City Middle School in New York. Her 300-student band program was recently featured on the **CBS Early Show** because of her use of SmartMusic®. Leigh Kallestad, our Educational Sales Representative, visited her school for an in-service last month and had a chance to talk to her about her experiences with SmartMusic.



### How assignments fit into our curriculum

SmartMusic is the natural extension of the curriculum that we use in the middle school. The children are given a syllabus with the requirements at the beginning of each quarter. They must successfully complete this work to gain all of the points available for the quarter. SmartMusic Impact™ – an online grade book – lets each student review their own work for themselves at home. If a student likes the score received for a completed exercise, they may submit that recording and subsequent grade electronically, right into the Impact grade book. If they think they can do better, they can try again. This is so different than last year. In the past, the children would practice their exercises at home and then play them for my colleague, Jen Lovino, or me in their lesson periods or before school. By using SmartMusic, the same exercises are being practiced at home; however, the computer becomes their adjudicator for the notes, tempo, and rhythms. This program keeps the children from slowing the exercise when it gets difficult and is far less forgiving of wrong notes.

### Comments from parents

The response from my parents has been tremendous! Of course, parents are greatly involved in their children's online activities. With SmartMusic being a closed and safe website, they can relax once the program is up and running. I'd like to share a few of the parental responses I've received:

*"I can say that practice at our home with Nicole is definitely a fun experience for her and I no longer have to play the bad guy by reminding her to practice. The program alone keeps her interested enough and encourages her to try and better herself."*

*"The other night, Chris Jr. was on for two hours straight trying to better his score...it's like you said on TV (bravo on that) that they get crazy with it... when they get on, it's a game and they don't stop."*

*"As a side note, he has practiced over two hours this weekend trying to complete the other assignments! I think this is hysterical. I can't tell you how we used to argue about the duration of his practice sessions."*

*"Dan practiced more today than I have seen him practice all summer (maybe I shouldn't have admitted that!). He really likes the program and whatever prompts him to do more can only help him. I am really encouraged by this endeavor and hope other families are feeling good about SmartMusic as well."*

The program has increased parent-teacher communication greatly. As we are constantly commenting on our students' work, with positive statements followed by constructive comments, the parents are much more willing to talk with us. They greatly appreciate the time that we are spending assessing each child's personal performance. They feel that their student musician is getting truly individualized instruction. And they are! I plan to create a SmartMusic newsletter to share more of these positive responses and information that will help the program run smoothly in their homes.

### **Tips on using computers in your program**

With any program that involves computers, you must have a contingency plan for the families that do not have computers or for the inevitable crashed computer. In my program, we have four computer stations in the music rooms. They are not fancy. Three of these are located on our desks. We bought 'practice room' subscriptions for \$25/year, downloaded the program, added a microphone and they were ready to record. The fourth is in our sound booth that I purchased with fund-raising money. With the sound booth, I can give any student the opportunity to work on their SmartMusic during their lesson or during a band rehearsal. In addition, any student can come in before school and log in to the school computers to work on their assignments. By doing this, the parents can be assured that their child has equal access to the program.

### **Closing thoughts**

Differentiated Instruction is one of the biggest movements in education today. SmartMusic not only addresses this, but facilitates the teacher by fully integrating this important educational practice into their classroom. With a few keystrokes, they can establish a practice curriculum for their entire class or for one individual. After assessing all of the students in our bands, my colleague and I determined those who needed to have their program modified. The beauty of SmartMusic is the ease with which you can create a program for your students that addresses their personal needs. No child will know that another's assignments have been modified and the child with the modified assignments is free to gain the same feeling of success as his or her peers. I have had several parents thank me for the opportunity to see their child glow with pride over his or her work. One of my students with a modified program put it best, by saying: "Every time I complete a song, it just makes me want to practice more!" As a music teacher, who could ask for more?

Click [here](#) to read the Garden City Middle School Band newsletter which highlights Martha's use of SmartMusic.

 [TOP](#)

**Steps to take before winter break**

Don't forget to move your subscription before your winter break. During winter break, many school districts fix or replace computers by cleaning or imaging machines, which will remove your SmartMusic subscription information.

You can prevent the loss of your subscription by doing the following (on each school computer which has an installation of SmartMusic) before you leave:

1. Connect to the Internet
2. Launch SmartMusic
3. Access the Subscription Menu, and choose Move Subscription

This will keep your subscription available to be used on another machine during the summer or to be re-activated when you return from break.

Upon your return, simply:

1. Install SmartMusic from the disc (or open the program if it was not removed).
2. While connected to the Internet, click Activate and enter your e-mail address and password for SmartMusic.
3. Choose the correct subscription for the computer you're activating, and click OK. SmartMusic will be ready to go!

If you need assistance with this process, please contact our SmartMusic Technical Support team online at [www.smartmusic.com/support](http://www.smartmusic.com/support) or call (866) 240-4041 Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 AM to 8:00 PM CST.

 [TOP](#)

## Contest Preparation with SmartMusic

If this were a perfect world you would have your students practice with an accompanist every day as they prepare for solo and ensemble contest. This is, of course impractical, but with SmartMusic it can be a reality. SmartMusic has thousands of contest accompaniments and they can all be played at any tempo, even looping difficult passages, allowing students to work out the difficult passages while listening to and relating to the accompaniment. At any point they can record themselves and within seconds hear how they performed, often making the corrections you typically have to make as a band director. Once they know the solo well they can turn on Intelligent Accompaniment®, and this enables them to create their own interpretation – it actually listens and even follows them if desired.

When it comes time for contest, the student not only knows their part, but also knows how it relates to the accompaniment, never having to count out rests again. And if they want to make it truly a comprehensive experience, they can look up specific composer and composition information from the File menu right in SmartMusic.

There is also a search feature on our website and also in SmartMusic. Twelve states have given us their state contest list and it's one of the search categories. In the program, select Open SmartMusic Accompaniment from the File menu to see which solos are in SmartMusic. You will see a listing by instrument and you can also click on the search button at the bottom of the screen to find a particular title. Our "Find Music" section on

www.smartmusic.com also lets you search by title, composer, instrument, difficulty level, and state contest list and level. Click [here](#) to search by state contest list or click [here](#) for a complete listing of titles.

It's very clear that students who use SmartMusic for contest preparation perform at a higher level, and "knowing how it goes" takes much of the stress out of the performance. Whether you want to use SmartMusic at contest is clearly your decision. We all believe that a human accompanist provides the truest musical experience, and we highly recommend it. However, there may be instances where you don't have an accompanist or an appropriate accompanist may not be available. SmartMusic is a superior choice in both cases. In fact, more than 30 states have approved the use of SmartMusic at contest because they recognize these issues.

Our website contains an excellent overview of Contest Preparation. Click [here](#) to see specific instructions for the student, teacher, and contest manager.

 [TOP](#)

## Tips and Tricks

### **Do I need to import my class list into Impact?**

Importing a file with student data is optional. Contact information (student's name, address, e-mail address) is gathered from your students as they complete the enrollment process. In addition, students can supply their parent/guardian's name and e-mail address when they enroll. You can access this information from Impact to notify parents of their student's progress.

### **My students enjoy recording multiple "takes" of my assignments before submitting their best recordings. Why are they sometimes unable to access all of their previous takes?**

Takes are only accessible from the computer you've recorded them on. If a student completes assignments both at school and at home, they will only be able to access recordings made at home while at home, and vice versa. Their alternate takes are securely stored inside each computer's Impact database, and are not audio files that can be manually moved to other locations. Please note that a similar issue occurs with Practice Record assignments – students will only receive credit for practice time spent on the computer from which they submit each assignment.

### **If a student submits an assignment that isn't their best work, can I reassign it?**

An assignment can be reassigned for the student to try again. Reassigning deletes the current score as well as the recording and screenshot that were submitted with the assignment. Here are the steps:

1. Click on the student's assignment grade in your Impact Gradebook™.
2. When the assessment window opens, click on the "reassign" button.
3. This will delete the submission and allow the student to try the assignment again for a new grade.

 [TOP](#)

## Just Released

### [More New Band Titles](#)

More than 40 new concert band, jazz ensemble, and orchestra titles have been released in the last month for a total of over 500 ensemble titles. Search a listing of new titles:

Click [here](#) and select an ensemble type.

See a complete listing by clicking [here](#).

### [Volume Pricing now available](#)

Discounts begin at 100 subscriptions. E-mail [smartbuy@makemusic.com](mailto:smartbuy@makemusic.com) for more information.

[^](#) [TOP](#)

## Announcements

### **Microphone Price Increase on January 15, 2008**

Encourage your students to buy their subscriptions and microphones now. Vocal and instrumental microphone prices will be \$19.95 starting next year. Already have your subscriptions and need additional microphones? Click [here](#) to buy accessories.

### [Have you updated to SmartMusic 10.1?](#)

SmartMusic Impact and more titles for concert band, jazz ensemble, and orchestra are included with SmartMusic 10.1 as well as support for accompaniments created in Finale® 2008 and Vista compatibility. Updates are free to current subscribers so click [here](#) to download yours now.

### [SmartMusic Impact Demo](#)

Click [here](#) to preview Impact before you set up your own account and classes.

### [Upcoming Events](#)

Come see SmartMusic at the Midwest Clinic 61st Annual Conference, IAJE Annual Conference, Florida MEA Conference, and [more](#).

### [Educator Resources](#)

[^](#) [TOP](#)

## Meet the Team

Julie Sopoci graduated from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, with a degree in instrumental music education. Her major instrument was clarinet. She briefly taught beginning band, juggling students at five private elementary schools before taking a slight (18 year) detour away from music to work in the travel industry. As a vice president of Travelways/Travel Beyond, she specialized in travel to Southern Africa and Western Europe. She appreciated being able to travel to so many fascinating places and meet a lot of interesting people



along the way but something was missing. When MakeMusic gave her the opportunity to become involved in music again, she jumped at the chance and has been with the company for nearly 12 years.

She has worked in the Repertoire Development department since she joined MakeMusic, and is now the department manager. The changes in SmartMusic have been dramatic over the past twelve years, and the program can now take advantage of audio recordings as the basis for the accompaniment files. That opened the door to expand beyond the extensive solo library, and the current focus is on accompaniments for large ensembles. The first concert band, jazz ensemble, and orchestra accompaniment files were released in April of this year. In less than seven months the SmartMusic ensemble library has grown to more than 500 titles.

“RepDev” responsibilities include licensing the music to be included in the library, the development of all of the SmartMusic accompaniments, and the quality assurance testing of those accompaniments. There is an assignment coordinator who oversees the creation of the assignments that are included with every concert band, jazz ensemble, and orchestra title added to the SmartMusic library. The assignments are available to all educators to use with SmartMusic Impact, the web-based grade book that works in conjunction with SmartMusic. Impact was first released with SmartMusic 10.0 in April this year, at the same time as the first ensemble accompaniments.

Most recently, they have begun engraving the ensemble pieces for which Finale files don't already exist. In November they added a new position, music editing and engraving supervisor, to take on that huge project. The RepDev team at MakeMusic has nearly tripled in size in just a little over a year, and there are also engravers, assignment creators, and others that work with us outside of the office. It's been very exciting to watch the development and growth of SmartMusic over the years, and to be a part of the team that creates SmartMusic accompaniments. There is always something interesting going on here, to say the least!

Julie's husband Steve is a trombone player, and has used SmartMusic himself for several years. Music is also very important to their two daughters, Jennifer and Katie, who are both vocalists, dancers, and teachers. Outside of the office, Julie enjoys reading, travel, photography, gardening, and spending time with their three-year-old granddaughter, Téa.

 [TOP](#)

Copyright © 2007 MakeMusic Inc.  
7615 Golden Triangle Drive - Eden Prairie, MN 55344  
Contact us: [www.smartmusic.com/support](http://www.smartmusic.com/support)

