Music organization honors Sac State professors

The California Music Educators Association (CMEA) has tapped two Sacramento State professors for special awards to be handed out at the organization's annual conference Feb. 21-24 in Fresno.

Don Kendrick, director of choral activities, will receive the John Swain College/University Educator award for shaping music education in a meaningful way and making an impact on students and fellow music educators.

Sue Metz, music education, will get the Peripole General Music Educator award for excellence in general classroom music education.

Metz came to Sacramento State in 1999. She teaches general music for music education students, preparing them for instruction jobs in the K-12 level. Metz also teaches the music requirement for all liberal studies majors.

In addition to her teaching duties at Sacramento State, Metz works extensively with the CMEA and is an active consultant and clinician for general music, advising instructors who do not have music backgrounds about teaching music to their young charges. “You want them to do more than put the CD in the player,” she says. “You want them to be able to talk intelligently about music and light some sparks for these kids to go further in their music education.”

Kendrick has been teaching and leading the University’s choirs for 28 years. He too volunteers with CMEA, annually producing the regional section’s high school and middle school honor choir. He gathers students from dozens of high schools and middle schools in the region to form a large choir that receives instruction from master teachers. “The singers and their teachers gain new insights and techniques from guest conductors who inspire and motivate us all toward excellence in the choral art,” Kendrick says.

He also serves as music director for Sacred Heart Church and the Sacramento Choral Society & Orchestra.

Both professors were inspired to enter music at early ages. Metz learned the piano so quickly she was accompanist for middle school choirs while still in elementary
school. Kendrick’s father had him playing piano and drawing notes when he was 7 years old.

Metz and Kendrick also note the struggles of music programs the last few years in the face of dwindling budgets, and how important it is to retain music instruction at the primary and secondary levels. For some students, it’s their best hope of launching themselves on a career in music.

“A high school teacher is often the last person to put a thumbprint on the students before they go out into the world when they have no idea what to do,” Kendrick says.

“You do not become a music educator and not believe in advocacy,” Metz says, adding that instructors need to do what they can until the budget situation improves. “It will build up again. There’s a cycle it follows. You just have to be consistent and persistent.”

For more on Kendrick and Metz, visit www.csus.edu/music. For media assistance call Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

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