

Band

Q&A with Jeremy Fruits

How is Rock Canyon different from the last school you taught at?

"Rock Canyon is terrific for a lot of reasons, but specifically, there is so much support; not only administrative support but parent support and student support. In terms of community, it is a lot more positive and helpful and uplifting."

Are you planning on making any big changes? If so, what?

"The program was already situated well in terms of having varying levels of student ensembles, giving students opportunities for jazz, and doing competitive marching band is amazing. In terms of the program itself, I don't see any big changes in the immediate future, just some directional changes in terms of what we're doing in each of those ensembles."

What is your goal for the future?

"This year for the second time ever, marching band made it to Semifinals at state, so our goal moving forward is for that to be our lowest bar that we can achieve. So, in the next five years, making finals at the CBA state with the marching band. In terms of the concert bands, I'd like for, in the next ten years, is to be an ensemble that performs for the Colorado Music Educators Association's Conference and also earn a superior rating at state for the concert programs. In terms of the jazz program, right now it's relatively small and I'd love for that to someday become two jazz bands and be a competitive force in the state."

Do you have anything exciting planned for the future?

"I'm not going to give too many specifics yet, but I'm planning a big trip for the bands next year."

What made you want to pursue teaching?

"I had a terrific band experience and it was an activity that was inclusive and basically created a family away from home and a family that connect you in a way that nothing else connects you in terms of music. So I decided, 'You know what? This could be a good thing for me.'" That was further emphasized in college and when it comes down to it, I just relate really well to band people. The promotion of the band program and the people and the family is my life."

Drama

Q&A with Cynthia Barker

What is your hope or goal for all of your theatre classes?

"I want them to find a fun way, and physical way, to be expressive and creative. Not everything is just about what comes out of a book or what's on a computer or even what they can create with their hands, but rather with their whole body. I want them to really appreciate theatre for the art that it is."

Can you give me a quick run-down on each class and what they do?

"Theatre I is an exposure to basics of acting. It is very improvisation-centered, not that we don't memorize scenes, but I try and make them use themselves as much as possible before we get to script work. Theatre II is much more into breaking down their acting, what they personally need help with with their acting goals for themselves. It also explores more types of theatre like mask-work, Shakespeare, film. Theatre III is an introduction to production. We still are learning advanced acting techniques but some of them, for the first time, I'm directing in a show, or some of them may put together their own scenes but then I put it in front of a public audience. Others, it isn't a first time but it's just a way to learn to work in a very large group ensemble on a produced piece. We also produce a children's play that we take out on the road. They write their own scenes. It's much more production centered. Advanced drama, which is theatre IV and theatre V, is more of the same except that their plays really go outside of the box from something I would pick commercially for after school. They're usually high-acting challenge. There's nothing that easy about what we're asking them to do. It's also more peer-centered. There are student-directed pieces, they pretty much produce the show in class, kind of like RCTV. It's **kid-centered. That's the philosophy there in advanced drama.**"

Do you have anything exciting planned, coming up?

Our musical is "Damn, Yankees," which is about baseball fans who are tired of seeing the Yankees win and one makes a sacrifice to make sure that never happens again. That's cool because it's based on an old literary thing called a Faustian legend."

What is your favorite part about teaching?

"I really like not having the same thing happen every day. I can change things on a whim; they change me. I learn just as much from [the students]. It's exciting. There's laughter, there's creativity."

What made you want to be a drama teacher?

"I always knew I wanted to be a teacher. At first I thought kindergarten, and then I thought about being an english teacher, but when I got into theater, it really helped me come out of my shell. It helped me feel a part of something bigger than myself. It helped me be with a group of people that were very accepting, and I couldn't get over how important that was to me, so that was something I wanted to perpetuate."