

# From the Board

## Alfredo Vélez III, 2013-14 TBA Past President

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The 2013 TBA Convention/Clinic was a smashing success thanks to the efforts and proficiency of several dedicated people. The TBA staff and Executive Director Mike Brashear spent countless hours organizing the clinic offerings as well as securing the financial support from our business partners and exhibitors. So much transpires behind the scenes



in executing everything from registration and meals to facilities and concert events so the normal attendee experiences nothing but a smooth and seemingly picture-perfect convention. For this, we owe a great debt of gratitude to our fulltime staff Robin Tovar and Justin Young as well as our part-timers Chuck Kuentz and Charlie Munsell. Please take the time to let them know that you appreciate their enormous contribution.

I share a long-held belief that the quality of the clinics and presenters are what sets the TBA convention apart as a leading professional development showcase. Our 2013 convention was jam-packed with remarkable musicians providing us all with memorable presentations. I want to express my gratitude to each of our talented presenters

and performers for providing an incomparable clinic experience for our state and all of our members.

I would like to thank all of my fellow board members and Mike Brashear for their diligence and substantial support in working together and helping me fulfill my responsibilities to our association. A personal thank you to our current president Richard Herrera and past president Tom Harrington for being available and acting as respected sounding boards many times throughout the year. Our convention's success was truly a team effort.

I want to recognize the work of Brian Merrill on the TBA Academy and Frank Troyka on Student Day. They both have magnanimously invested their personal time and creative resources to the benefit of TBA, our members, and students of Texas. I must lavishly thank my wife, Heidi for her exceptional work with spouses' division. Heidi and the spouses' division provided an elegant luncheon and diverse activities for our spouses and families. As mentioned above, there are countless people that are responsible for the enormous undertaking in crafting our

convention. Words cannot express my eternal appreciation for your gift to our profession.

As you are into the start of a new academic year, I would like to leave you with a few thoughts that I hope you will consider in your busy schedule. I would propose that the following message is probably better suited when planning your next year.

I encourage you to keep a weekly or daily journal or a log of the happenings in your professional life. This could become an invaluable reference and resource in determining your long-term success. This documentation can help you evaluate yourself and situation plus it can serve as a tool in planning and organizing your future goals and methods for self-improvement. You can also use this information to evaluate the progress and development of your students and conceivably offer your ideas to enhance your student's musical experience. The main objective of this exercise is to give you an avenue to examine yourself and your effectiveness as a teacher.

Let me illustrate this through an example. We can all recall a time in class when we called a student's attention to an intonation issue and they were able to improve purely because we directed their awareness to the issue. We too

can improve our performance and delivery by simple awareness of our daily/weekly procedures followed by honest self-evaluation. You can look for solutions, improvements or remedies to aspects you discover about yourself and your teaching. Much like listening to rehearsal recordings can let you more objectively evaluate your band's performance, by taking you out of the moment you are better able to realize what is a true representation of your band's performance at that particular rehearsal.

In your journal, attempt to record the factual events in your teaching environment without editorializing. Then after the facts, also record your thoughts or moods based on these events. You can make a note of in-class observations as well as peripheral occurrences including administrative, parent or collegial interactions.

It is important not to be too judgmental in a negative manner. Your goal is to eventually gain a positive result and often it is a long road ahead. Please consider that we as teachers and musicians are always a *work-in-progress* and may never actually arrive at our final destination. This can be daunting to some so it is wise to create checkpoints or milestones along the way to mark your progress to give a real sense of

achievement. We do after all need to feel good about a process we will commit to sincerely.

Although quite difficult, attempt to be honest with yourself. You are looking to improve or bring change to what you normally do in your teaching life. We are all familiar with this quote: *If you keep doing what you're doing now, where do you see yourself in one year?*

I am assured that you will find more of these types of questions than answers.

- What kind of culture have we created in our classroom?
- Are we a good to great leader?
- Do you bring out the best in others?
- Do you know your people well enough?
- Are we inspired and do we inspire?
- Do I need more information before inspiration?
- How do I help my students achieve their best?

As we often impart to our students, you are your own best teacher. Improving ourselves as teachers gives us the best opportunity to improving the experience for our students and colleagues. Hopefully we do see ourselves as works-in progress as long as we are in this profession.

- Happy trails!



TBA 2013-14 Board of Directors, front left to right: Executive Director Michael Brashear, Alfredo Vélez III, Chico Portillo, Bruce Beach, Richard Herrera, Steven Moore, Jeff King, John Morrison