

The Birth of *RIME* and the Passing of the Torch

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With the 2019 issue of *Research and Issues in Music Education* (*RIME*), I was pleased to pass the torch from the University of St. Thomas (UST) on to Dr. David Stringham and his team at James Madison University (JMU). We've had a good run of launching and developing the journal at UST since 2003, and this point seems like a good time to further clear my plate to make room for other efforts—and to help move *RIME* to the next level. Some of the information I'm sharing here is taken from past issues of *RIME* and some is new. I'll do my best to paint a picture of the past 15 years as well as give some history on what it was like to launch an online journal.

Here's what I wrote in the debut issue (Volume 1, Number 1, 2003) of *Research and Issues in Music Education*:

When I first began developing the concept of a journal on research and issues in music education (*RIME!*) in 2000 at the urging of C. Thomas Brooks, music department chair at Gordon College, I fortunately had no idea of the obstacles facing me. This inaugural issue of *RIME* is a momentous event for the many people who have helped with advice, editing and instruction, including several senior scholars who have launched journals themselves, and who helped steer me through the murky waters of academic publishing. I especially thank the members of the editorial board who accepted my invitation to serve without knowing what would be entailed. They were selected with extreme care—prospective members needed to be strong researchers, writers and advisors themselves—and it was essential for them to be proactive in looking toward the future in research dissemination.

As well, I am grateful for the administration of the University of St. Thomas for accepting RIME as an official St. Thomas publication. RIME marks another step in the grand experiment of on-line research publishing—an idea that is gaining stature in academic circles with the advent of quality journals. While on-line research reporting formats will probably never subsume print journals (I can detect a future music education historian quoting me here), RIME was founded with the premise that there is indeed room for a quality web-based music education research journal.

What I didn't include were the many steps it took to get to the place of publishing. I got my start in higher education as an assistant professor of music at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts teaching music education, music history and conducting a brass choir after a teaching career in K–12 vocal, classroom and instrumental music in rural Minnesota and inner-city and suburban Chicago, a military enlistment as a euphonium player with the 298th U.S. Army Band in Berlin, and upon completion of a Ph.D. in music education at the University of Iowa where my dissertation advisor had been Dr. Kenneth Phillips. As I was transitioning in 1999 from Gordon to the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, Gordon music department chair Tom Brooks was connecting with an online music education business—schoolmusic.com. The heads of this company, at Tom's suggestion, contacted me about developing two publications for them—1) an online magazine, and 2) a peer reviewed online research journal. Tom knew of my interest and experience in research, writing and publishing—and because of my background in teaching vocal and instrumental music from kindergarten through graduate school, I seemed to be a good fit for the initiative.

While the magazine didn't develop, I set to work on the journal. I'm not convinced, however, that I would have launched a journal if I had known what it was going to entail. But

that's the beauty of jumping into something blindly. So I went about securing a domain name (originally rimeonline.org), working with Robin Crespo of schoolmusic.com to develop a web site, applying for an ISSN number with the Library of Congress, and coming up with the various parameters of a journal including what I hoped would be helpful elements, especially the "Contributors' Checklist," within the *Submission Guidelines*—and to form an editorial board—some of whom are still blessedly onboard. All of this took an enormous amount of work and time.

As these various pages and elements began to be developed (which took a couple of years), before we could put out a call for papers and launch the first issue, schoolmusic.com was sold to *Woodwind & Brasswind*. One of the most unsettling phone calls I've made in my life was when I called the CEO of *Woodwind & Brasswind* enquiring if he knew that he had bought an as-yet unpublished online journal and if he was willing to release it to me and the University of St. Thomas. He fortunately did know about the invisible journal and told me that he was happy to move it over to us. I blessedly didn't know the technical aspects of doing this.

Bringing *RIME* into the University of St. Thomas had some benefits because I would be able to speak face to face with staff members who would be doing the web building and publishing of articles. A difficult part, however, was that while staff members understood web building, they didn't always have a grasp of the elements of a peer-reviewed journal. This was a learning experience for all of us.

I don't recall all of the people who had a hand in getting the first issue out, but I will always be grateful to Dr. Susan Alexander who, as interim vice president for academic affairs, approved *RIME*'s move from schoolmusic.com to UST and to Joe Landsberger, the institutional

technical staff member who did the actual building of the initial html platform and who published the first issue.

Here's what I wrote as an introduction to the second issue in 2004:

This second issue of RIME is dedicated as a memorial to the life and work of George Heller who served as an invaluable consultant in founding this journal, and who passed away this past July. His work, especially in historical research has been acknowledged throughout the profession, but I will use this space here to recognize his kind, mentoring gestures. My e-mail inbox contains scores of gracious messages from him in response to my countless "what-do-I-do-now?" queries over the four years it took to get to our present point. George's practical, straight-ahead life approach, combined with his research, editing and publishing knowledge were generous gifts to the profession, to the journal and to me. I will always be indebted to him, and I am grateful that something at some point told me to ask him to write for the inaugural issue last year. Here's to you Dr. Heller. Thank you; I will ever be grateful that our paths crossed.

Along with publishing work of a more traditional vein, one of the goals of RIME is to publish articles that lie somehow outside the parameters of established research—either by research design and approach, or by content and subject matter. I am happy to be presenting the second issue of RIME, and am especially pleased to be publishing four unique articles on diverse aspects of music teaching and learning.

I have quoted Dr. Heller many times over the years as he graciously told me in the beginning, "People tell me that online journal publishing will be simpler and more straightforward than hardcopy printing; I'm not convinced." He was right to be skeptical, and I found that there was nothing simple about the process of building or maintaining an online journal.

From the onset, the goal of *RIME* was to “promote research, dialogue, practice, and policy in music education [by] publishing quantitative, qualitative, philosophical, historical, speculative, and bibliographic articles that are peer-reviewed and contribute to an understanding of any focus and level of music education.” Within this, one of the bases of establishing *RIME* was to form an arena that I described in the *Notes from the Editor* of the 2006 issue as “a platform that would not only serve as a venue for disseminating quality research within several different research methodologies, but one that would also provide an arena for thoughtful, well informed discourse—substantive articles based on experience through teaching, formal and informal education, and professional dialogue.” This was the corresponding “issues” element to the “research” aspect. The goal was to include substantive articles that didn’t fit with or follow typical research methodology. We have included several thoughtful articles that fit in this category over the years. I’ve been especially proud of the breadth of *RIME* contributors, who have included promising junior researchers from around the world—not only from institutions of higher education but also elementary and high school teachers—as well as senior scholars who have contributed to the heft of our work. Many thanks to all of you.

The outstanding *RIME* editorial board of course is one of the main reasons for the success of the journal. In 2007 I wrote:

In the past year, our editorial board has welcomed the additions of William Bauer of Case Western Reserve University, Colleen Conway of the University of Michigan, Mitchell Robinson of Michigan State University, Michael Hewitt of the University of Maryland, Deborah Blair of Oakland University and David Hebert of Boston University. We’re pleased with these additions and look forward to their service and professional input. With this said, I offer my personal thanks to out-going board members, James Austin of

the University of Colorado, Jacqueline Wiggins of Oakland University and Janet Robbins of West Virginia University. These three scholars were crucial as editors and professional colleagues, and the existence of *RIME* is due in no small part to their contributions. Jim, Jackie and Janet, we were fortunate to have the three of you on the board from the ground level.

I am indebted to editorial board members who have been at the basis of the success of *RIME*. Many thanks to all of you—past, present and future.

After Joe Landsberger's retirement in the early 2000s, Kevin Knutson within UST's institutional technology services took over the publishing of *RIME*. Under his guidance and the work of his undergraduate student staff, *RIME* took on a more streamlined professional appearance with students doing the bulk of the myriad of steps of publishing each issue. This period was also the era when *RIME* became listed with various educational resource centers including *Gale*, *EBSCO* (an acronym for Elton B. Stephens Co), *Proquest* and the *Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)*—I'm pleased to say, at their invitations. This was a confusing era for journal publishers and of course for librarians because companies continually changed ownership. Consequently, I don't recall the various developments in this area along the way. As I wrote in *Notes from the Editor* in 2007:

I tell my graduate students, history is difficult to assess as it is happening, and I think this may be no more evident than in the world of online publishing and instruction. When I do web searches for *RIME*, I am pleased to find it in many databases and am reminded that being careful about editorial content is paramount, since I have no idea how far the work of these scholars will reach. While I don't know what the future of online publishing will be, I have a feeling that it is here to stay.

A major step for *RIME* came in 2014 when Meg Manahan, Associate Director for Collection Management and Services with UST's O'Shaughnessy-Frey Library took over the

journal's publication. With this, she converted the journal to be hosted by [*Digital Commons*](#) with *bepress*, which meant that each issue would be simpler to publish, catalogue, download and disseminate. I don't know everything that this entailed other than that there were numerous cumbersome steps and that the task of converting all of the past issues to the new format and each article to a PDF was herculean. Many thanks to you, Ms. Manahan.

Launching, maintaining, editing, converting, and now transitioning *RIME* has been a grand adventure. Now as I release *RIME* to Dr. Stringham and his colleagues, I wish them the best as they work to strengthen the journal's presence, scope, and breadth and continue to "provide a forum devoted to thorough research and commentary that energizes, informs, advances, and reforms the practice and pedagogy of music teaching."