

**ETM: The Podcast**  
**Episode 18: “Community Voices”**  
**TRANSCRIPT**

**Stephanie:** Something that I think is unique about music teachers is that we were all musicians first. I don't think you can say that about all other fields of education. You know, you don't necessarily have to work as a scientist to be a science teacher, but we were all musicians first, whether that was just in grade school or high school. You know whether we extended to college, whether we were performers, and I think so there's something really special about that authenticity that comes from, you know, being a person who actually did the thing that you're teaching your students, and I think that's why it's so important that we create pathways for musicians to become music educators. That being said, there's a real skill and a craft to being a teacher, and we never want to lessen that. So I love what ETM does in that, you know, we take people from all different backgrounds and we try to give them the tools on both these sides. How do we strengthen them as a musician? How do we expose them to, you know, all different types of genres and cultures and methodologies and ideas, and also, how do we strengthen them as an educator and really understand? You know what's..It's such a challenging and fulfilling and amazing craft in it and I couldn't even describe it in a few words of all the things that you need to know and do and what you do in a single class as an educator to help support students of diverse backgrounds and experiences and abilities and needs you know, to all learn and grow together.

**Noah:** You are listening to Education Through Music, the podcast. As always, I'm your host, Noah, and today's episode is all about ETM's new workforce development program. Joining us are Stephanie, Jamian, Jess, Jose and Riley, all of whom will introduce themselves in greater detail shortly. I'm going to largely take a step back in this episode and let the individuals most responsible for the success of this first cohort of the Workforce Development Program tell the story of what it is and how it is helping to respond to the teacher shortage. Now, without any further ado.

**Jamian:** So my name is Jamian Moss, Dr. Jamian Moss now as of May 15th, and my role here at Education Through Music is I work with the music teacher interns as their instructional supervisor.

**Jess:** Hi, my name is Jess Parr. I am a teacher with the Department of Ed and I work at PS72 in the Bronx. I am a mentor teacher and I am excited to be part of this program.

**Juan:** Hello, my name is Juan Ciccini. I am an intern for Education Through Music and I'm working with Jess Parr, right across from me at PS72.

**Riley:** Hi, I'm Riley Corcoran. I am working at All Hallows High School this semester as a music teacher intern.

**Stephanie:** Hi, my name is Stephanie Nantel and I'm the senior director of programs at Education Through Music. I just finished my seventh school year with Education Through Music and before I came to Education Through Music, I was a music teacher in New York City's Department of Education. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the whole nation has been experiencing a teacher shortage. It's not just specific to New York City and it's not just specific to music teachers. We've been really struggling at Education Through Music since all the schools returned in person in 2021 with finding music teachers who are able to sustain the role for an entire year. We've seen a shift in the field. A lot of people are applying for positions who have, you know, strong backgrounds as professional musicians and performers, people who have taught maybe some private lessons but don't really have classroom experience, and over the last several years, that was really what we targeted as what it takes for someone to be successful teaching in one of our programs. We give a lot of support, there's an instructional supervisor, but walking into a classroom and trying to engage a class of 20, 25 kids for your first time all by yourself, that's just a really big leap from being a performer or a private lesson teacher. And so when we were approached with an opportunity to apply for a very large grant and what kind of program we might want to build with that, the first thing we thought was can we extend, you know, what we already do in workforce development to try to make this program available to people who don't have any classroom teaching experience but who have skills that are really strong and that we think we could build on with just a little more time? And so that's how we built our intern program as part of our larger, you know, manpower development program. So we just piloted that in the spring and the idea around it was to kind of create this student teacher opportunity that people can do go and get a music ed degree have. Often it's the most beneficial part of your entire degree program because it's the time where you're really in the classroom, you're working with students, you're getting to test out all of this philosophy and ideas and theories that you've been hearing about, this content that you've been trying to create, and see how it actually works.

**Jamian:** I work with them as their instructional supervisor to enhance their pedagogical skills and then we pair them with a mentor teacher. The mentor teacher acts as a kind of like a cooperating teacher, right. So how you would see in a traditional music education program in terms of student teaching experience, they are paired with a cooperating teacher, who then, in this case, mentor teacher, who gives lesson plan feedback and access and extension of the work that I do with the intern as well. I would dare to say that the relationship between the mentor and the intern is probably the most valuable component that we have here, because they are... it's not only the frequency of interaction but the sustained duration of those interactions. And I believe that we've done a good job this year of choosing quality, high quality, highly effective on the Danielson scale mentors, which they have poured mightily into our interns.

**Jess:** I would say that you know, just the idea of having someone else to kind of ping pong off of was great. And you know, when you have someone else in the classroom they also come with ideas, and to try to collaborate with that was great. And as well as a struggle, for me, was kind of like trying to give up some of that power, because I've been teaching for a while and trying to run my classroom a certain way. So I'm like all right, I got to step aside and make sure I don't

interject when he's trying to manage the classroom and just kind of give up that power a little bit. But it also kind of made me think more about how I was doing things. Certain times I would, you know, things that I had to do better or things that I didn't really think about before. So it kind of brought me full circle a little bit.

**Stephanie:** Of course, it's never the same as actually running your own classroom. You know, student teachers get to walk in and benefit from the community that these veteran you know master teachers have created. But it's the next best step, and so we wanted to replicate that model for our music teacher interns.

**Riley:** At a very early age, like getting into middle school, I started getting into music. I think like my first memory of being really gung ho about becoming a musician was making friends in the neighborhood and watching Led Zeppelin concert film, Song remains the same, and just like immediately, all my friends wanted to start a band. So we all convinced, begged our parents to buy us instruments and my friends got guitars before I did so I picked the drums and every day, every night, we would basically just oscillate between playing in my hundred degree sweaty Florida garage jamming for hours until we got too tired and then went to just play split screen Halo 2 until we got tired of that. And then we went back to the garage and played recording. Around this time like MySpace was a thing and I found out that you could like put your band on MySpace in like 2006. So it just put a fire in me to learn how to like record a band and get my song out of the garage and onto the internet. And I used Guitar Hero equipment and very free software and I just taught myself in my garage with all of my friends, and it has never stopped. And now I'm 32 and I worked in studios and I worked at venues and music festivals. I lived in Austin for the past eight years and worked at South by Southwest and all these kinds of bouncing around doing gigs. I'm a gigging musician as well and I was kind of flirting with the idea of becoming a teacher and having that as my kind of sole like career path and it would free up a lot of time for me to be able to like play shows and do things in the evening. It seemed like it fit my schedule a lot. But I was going to do something like you know, AV or science or language arts in Texas. I didn't think I could ever be a music teacher because Texas and I'm from Florida, so I feel like the education system had never awarded me the ability to think that I could teach my skills in a class. And when I moved to New York I found a listing of ETM and since then it's just given me all of this confidence and resources in order to feel like I can really pull all of this knowledge out of my head and put it in a classroom setting and be like a music teacher and a recording teacher and teach people about technology and production that is in their pocket and give them the confidence to do what I did when I was in high school and middle school.

**Jamian:** That's one of the components of this program and I think of ETM in general, is that we take folks who have extensive performing experience and content knowledge. Riley, I mean it is an understatement what he just said about his content knowledge with music technology. I mean it literally is vast, to the point also that not only is it vast in terms of his prior knowledge but he is such a learner he's already talking about generative AI in his, in his music, exactly in his music tech classroom in a very kind of forefront way, right. But yeah, that's one of the components and kind of tenets of ETM in this program is to take folks and then provide them a

pathway to impart that knowledge. But then also I think it's a manifestation of a physical manifestation of students seeing themselves, of where they can be and who they can be right. That this person in front of them Riley, we're talking about Riley now, is a performer, is a musician, a gigging musician, right, like he makes a living doing that work and this person is in their classroom teaching them, right, like that there is a connection between real world practice and what's happening in the classroom. I think that's a powerful thing, right, like you are seeing your career in front of you in real time.

**Stephanie:** Something that I think is really important to mention about Education Through Music, we just finished our 32nd year, is that we have always been a workforce development program at heart. What ETM's mission is and how we do it is so unique, and that's really what I love about ETM. And what we do is we take music teachers who aren't certified in New York State. They might not even have, you know, music ed degrees, maybe only music performance degrees and we support them in building a program into a New York City school. We partner with the DOE so we can put our teachers in their schools. As we help our teacher build their program with professional development and curriculum resources, an instructional supervisor who comes and visits them in the classroom and gives them feedback. We also support them on their pathway to certification. That means we provide a certification coach. We offer educational assistance for courses and classes and exams and things they might need to take. Once our teachers receive their New York State certification, we work with their principals to get them hired into their school. And that's really unique because usually when you graduate with your certification, you're just kind of starting afresh, trying to find a program to get started, usually those programs you know who are hiring a brand new teacher. You know they might not have a well-fitted music room, they might not be a school who's used to having music, but when you work with ETM and you get hired into your school, you're taking over the program you already built, you're not starting afresh, and I think that's such a valuable experience in so many different ways.

**Jamian:** We just provide a pathway and just say like, okay, these are the resources, this is where we see the gaps, and then this is how we can help, support you in achieving that.

**Stephanie:** So the program that we designed we pay our music teacher interns over the course of a semester for the hours that they spend in our schools. It's about 16 weeks this semester and it's about 14 hours a week. They're observing. You know, they're working collaboratively with their mentor teacher. They're starting to gradually take on aspects of the music class where they're teaching. First just activities and then it grows gradually to entire lessons. You know, they're debriefing with their mentor teacher, also their intern supervisor, giving a lot of feedback, having a lot of conversations. They're also working independently on their own professional development through watching ETM webinars and reflecting on those.

**Juan:** So the first time I got acquainted with an instrument was in the Canary Islands, where I'm from. So I was born in the Canary Islands, part of Spain, if we don't know, on the west coast of Africa, and it's a very unique culture. There we have this timple. A timple is a type of ukulele, you could say. It's a small guitar, a small guitar family with five strings, and so I went to a

summer camp. My parents took me there I was maybe in second grade or something and, yeah, they just dropped me and my brother. They dropped us off at the summer camp in the island, at some stranger's house, and they gave us these instruments and they're like all right, you're gonna learn how to play this in a week. Right, we're crying like crazy. I'm in second grade. I was like, who is this man? Whatever, okay. So that was the first time I was more into folk music after that for years. I still am right, it's my passion, what I really like. But then I started. I grew up in Louisiana and in Louisiana we don't have access to simple pedagogy or anything. So I picked up the trumpet and from there the French horn, wind band orchestras became everything to me. It was just so moving to play with a bunch of people and make I don't know the most beautiful things you could possibly imagine, right? So this emotional aspect of playing with people is what really moved me to be a musician later in life. Yeah, I went to LSU as part of the Honors College, and in the Honors College you get to do a thesis, right, a little tiny project on whatever you wanted, and thankfully I had the right connections with our faculty and I got to do a presentation or a thesis on the music of the Canary Islands. Like it's all full circle. When I was a kid, it all came back and, yeah, now I'm really in love with the idea of maybe pursuing some more research on the different cultures that are in the Canary Islands, how they influence their music and why it's only there. Why can't we? Like no one at this table has probably ever heard of folia from the canary islands, right, like, like no one, and it's not something that we're really listening to, but it's really beautiful in it and it's from all over the world, this connection that I really like. So that's what...so turned me into a musician. And then what better place to learn from other cultures, teach about other cultures than a school, and especially in the Bronx, right, like how many cultures are represented in each classroom. It's good that ETM has given me the opportunity to grow as a teacher, especially in the Bronx and in New York in general. So many cultures here, probably the most in any major city in the world. I'm just happy to learn from the students more than just me teaching them. I'm learning so much, so many backgrounds I've never even fathomed in the Canaries or in Louisiana, right. So many things, lived experiences. I'll never live where I never have lived.

**Riley:** Going into a school kind of part-time to start, with somebody that is the same age as me but maybe like a couple years ahead in their professional teaching career, has been so rewarding for me because I am like consistently trying to put myself in their shoes and how I would do things differently and how I can take a lot of the knowledge that I'm getting from watching them do it firsthand and applying it to myself when I have my own class and I've been in the Bronx at an all Catholic boys high school, which is somewhere that, like my dad was in a Catholic school and my mom was in a Catholic school and I went to public school. So getting to see the way that those kids interact, in a music class and and see how, Alfredo is the teacher that I've been mentored by, see how he connects with the students on like a real level and not so much of like you know, so much of what Jamien has been providing me is a lot of this textbook classroom management technique and all of this theory and practice that can be in my head as I'm seeing the real world element of how kids react to those kinds of practices and it's really cool the way that everybody can spin it to their own preferences and you know there's a lot of universal truths to teaching. But getting to bounce around to other schools and meeting all the other ETM teachers, it just shows me that like I can really take it and make it my own and take all of this stuff that's been given to me, because I went to school for broadcasting and

radio. So I never thought of like education in a really like theoretical way until now. And then also just yeah, being in New York and these kids are like super high energy and hilarious and fun, and like how do you like contain that energy in a proactive way? And it's been really fun to learn about, especially like I just moved to the city seven months ago. So if you told me I'd be talking about the Kendrick and Drake beef with a bunch of 17-year-olds in the Bronx and arguing with them whether Drake lost or Kendrick won, if you told me that a year ago I would have been like...where? So it's been just like so fun getting to just be in there real time for the past six months.

**Stephanie:** Something that I think is really valuable about this program as well is that we have such an amazing and robust alumni community at Education Through Music. You know this program that I've been talking to you about of how we take teachers who aren't certified and we help them build their program and they get, you know, hired in their school. They go on to build just amazing premier programs in the city and we are just thrilled to, you know, have had a part of their start and to call them our alumni. And then this intern program allows us to engage them further. We're able to pay them for their time and working with our intern music teachers. It's amazing to have access to really these master teachers. You know people like Jess Parr, Joseph Otenthal, Julia Stackem, Alfredo Hernandez, people who really excelled in building programs at their school, and just to give our teachers access to them, you know, several days a week over the course of semester is an awesome experience.

**Juan:** Having a mentor teacher as good, I always say Ms. Parr, it's kind of weird to say Jess, right, but Ms Parr, I mean she's incredible. And what I really value more than like in the classroom or learning on paper what I'm supposed to be doing or how to get the attention of students, it's the conversations we have between classes right after we've just had a class and she brings up like how long have you been working? Like 20 something...

**Jess:** 15 maybe, 15 years.

**Juan:** Yeah, so I get like 15 years of of your learned experiences from what works and what doesn't work, you know, and and's just it's incredible way to start a career as a teacher, right, having someone who's been working for 15 years tell me, oh, did you see just now, like how you did this? Or they didn't like when you said this, that's, maybe you should try this. Right, it's so valuable to me to learn these things and you try it out in the next class, cause we're teaching similar things. And then, oh, wow, yeah, that works. Obviously she's gonna know what works. She's been doing it for 15 years, so it's really awesome to have that on a day-to-day basis all these invaluable comments from a very experienced, very good teacher.

**Stephanie:** But I think for our alumni, having that opportunity to really mentor and, you know, kind of coach a peer, is a great experience for them as well. It's an opportunity for a different type of leadership than you often have as the teacher in a classroom, with students. It gives them the ability to really work on how they give feedback. Giving feedback is such an important part of being an educator and it really is a skill and then something that you have to work on and build. And there's also, as educators, there's that need to understand what's the skill set that this

person is bringing to the table that I'm working with. You know, what is their passions, what are their abilities and how do I make them achieve based on who they are and what they have, because you can't just force someone to teach and be like you because they're not. How do we take this person and who they are and help them, you know, figure out what success is and what achievement is and growth is for them. So I think that's a great experience for our alumni and I hope that it's something that will, you know, continue to carry them to the next levels in their careers.

**Juan:** And, yeah, the interactions with the kids on a day-to-day is. It's very formative for me as an upcoming teacher, because every class is different, every student's different, and they've taught me so much, both on how they react and how I react to them too. I was very scared of them at first. I was so intimidated. You hear a lot of like, oh, this is a bad kid, not from his part, obviously. Maybe. But then I don't know, the kid is a sweetheart. It just depends on where you catch him or what happened. You don't know what happened that day to the kid. I don't know if he even has parents. I don't know anything about the kid, right, and they just teach me to approach any person, not just a child or a student. Approach any person with this mentality of you have no idea what's going on, give them a smile, have fun and they're probably a good person. No, one's a bad person, right, you know? Yeah, so I'm excited to start as a teacher with this knowledge that both these people have given me the students and my mentor teacher.

**Jess:** While I was going for my master's, I was also working for my first year for Education Through Music and I was learning so much more in the classroom than I was actually learning in my classes. And it was funny because you know, you see, all these people you know, go into teaching, but there's this turnaround of teachers and I think people would enjoy their job better and they would be a lot happier if they had better training or they knew what to expect or they had the background or the help from Education Through Music, the support from Education Through Music that they give. You know, I taught a bunch of years in public schools in the Bronx and then I left for two years when my son was born and worked in a charter school and there was nobody, it wasn't around the city and I just I missed that support and you know the way that they say oh you have a concert, let me get this and help you with this. And you know, between the background of Education Through Music and now the mentorship program, which I love, I think it's great. I think it's going to sustain teachers even longer because they know what to expect, instead of just throwing them into the classroom and saying, hey, here you go and remember that book you read and do that from chapter four. You say, oh, remember that day when you had that class and you know the one student wasn't playing the bucket drums, right, and you can kind of relate it to your own experiences, rather than, you know, trying to go back to a class that you took in college.

**Jamian:** There's a saying that you don't remember what someone said, but how they made you feel, and I think that goes back to experiential learning and I think ETM does a great job. And you mentioned the components of the program earlier. They are kind of and I know most traditional teacher prep programs. There is a student teaching experience. It's not as fulsome, I would say, as what we provide, but there is experience, and so what we try to do is try to straddle that fence of, and Riley mentioned this earlier in terms of theory, although I see theory

as the impetus for practice. So I see everyone has a theory, right, because it is the basis of an action, right? That's the definition of theory. And so you have to be through your lived experiences. You then form a theory that then you put into practice, right. So you come with your method of teaching, you come with your experience, and that is what we try to do here at ETM that they already have the prior knowledge. We're just here to kind of cultivate that.

And so the components of the program is simple. We have our weekly webinars that the interns complete and then reflect on that. I give them feedback on that and we give them prompts and questions to do. I observe them pretty much every week and we have a debrief. Of course, they meet with their mentor every day that they're there. They also co-plan together and their mentor gives them feedback on those lesson plans, and then at the end we evaluate them in a summative way after they've done all that formative development, right. From our weekly coaching sessions, to our weekly debrief sessions, to our weekly check-ins. This is all 3 different things happening, right. To now, work with their mentor, and this is another 4th thing and the feedback, you talked about the debrief in between classes and all of those components are working together in a formative way to the summative assessment and therefore we can recommend them for the full-time teaching corps now, because they are developing and effective educators, and so I think all of those components work in tandem, right. That you have the practical experiential learning portion, but the fact of the matter is that, and Juan mentioned this earlier we were talking, there's jargon in the field, right, there are terms that you must know. Right, there are concepts, there are ideas in which you must know, there are psychological kind of concepts that you should know when you're working with little humans and those interactions. There are methods that you may want to tap into, and so I think we do a good job of chewing gum and walking at the same time.

**Jess:** I wish this was around when before I went in.. my first year.

**Riley:** Yeah, I did want to say ETM is giving me a lot of resources to advance my understanding of education. And I reached out to have a meeting with somebody at a local college and I got on a Zoom with them and they immediately started acting a little smug to me and telling me I don't know how to read sheet music and I don't know perfect pitch or theory. And it immediately turned me off because all I want to teach kids is how to clip their 808s and, like blow everything out of the water that anybody at that college could ever do and better. And I think, like ETM giving me that confidence, you know, obviously there's a million paths they can take. I don't want to like I don't want to dump on the college, but I did come out of it with like a little bit of more confidence than I think I would have like, knowing that I've been through a couple months of seeing it full time and and knowing that these kids, like will react to the knowledge that I'm giving them in a positive way, even if I'm not like forcing them to learn scales and stuff like that. Yeah.

**Jess:** I was able to see the change in you from the beginning to the end. It was amazing, the confidence.

**Jamian:** Oh, yeah.



**Jess:** You getting up there in front of the class...

**Juan:** The first day I was at that school I had...oh my gosh, I had...I don't know if the polite way to say it was Jamie and that I had zero teacher presence. No, teacher presence they were in charge of the classroom. They were. Yeah, the kids were more confident than me. Obviously. What do they have to... they're not performing right, they're just in school.

**Jess:** And you just said to me yesterday you say, yeah, that's not as scary as before.

**Stephanie:** At the end of the semester there's a culminating experience that you know. They're observed using the Danielson framework, for which is the framework that teachers in New York City are observed and evaluated on, not just music teachers, but that's also the framework that we use for our observations at ETM and they're rated and evaluated on that. They also take over conducting a piece for one of the groups that they've been working with in the final concert or whatever the culminating experience might be, it might be a student project. And at the end we take the feedback from the mentor teacher, we take the feedback from the intern supervisor. I myself sit in on the evaluations and rate the teacher on how they do in their domains for Danielson and we decide if the teacher has passed and we want to offer them a position with Education Through Music. I'm thrilled to say that of our three interns of our pilot program from this last spring who graduated the program. All three of them were offered positions to teach with Education Through Music in the fall and all three accepted, and so this has been such a great experience as a pilot. We've learned so much and we hope that this will continue to increase the pipeline for people who are really interested in having careers as music educators and just need that extra support.