

## **A Music Teacher's Testament**

### **Podcast #7 The Music Educator's Crucible**

Hello and welcome back to The Music Educator's Crucible. My name is Merlin Thompson and I'm the creator of this podcast series dedicated to music education. For today's music, a shout out to musopen.org for making available Paul Pitman's performance of the second movement from Beethoven's Pathétique Sonata.

The title for this 7<sup>th</sup> podcast is – A Music Teacher's Testament - it's the title of something I wrote a year ago after reading – The Making of Us – by Sheridan Voysey – a book that chronicles Voysey's 100-mile pilgrimage inspired by the seventh-century monk Cuthbert's journey along the northeast coast of England.

Voysey concludes his pilgrimage by crafting for himself what he calls – A New Creed - an eloquent expression of affirmative statements that got me thinking. What would it look like if I put together something similar? Something that might represent music teaching? What words would guide music teaching forward?

In September 2019, I sat down and gathered my thoughts in a one page written document - a blending of transformative ideas and poetic verse with music teaching at the helm. To be working with words and giving voice to the dailyness of being a music teacher - it all felt very satisfying and pleasantly illuminating. I gave it the title - A music teacher's testament and if you'd like your own copy, I've placed a pdf on my website [MerlinThompson.com](http://MerlinThompson.com).

My hope is that you'll find reflections of yourself in A Music Teacher's Testament. That it will give you reason to celebrate the precious moments - the endless visible and invisible awakenings that characterize music teaching everywhere.

# A Music Teacher's Testament

By Merlin B. Thompson

I am a music teacher. Whether by intention, by accident, or by calling.

Honoured to nurture musical journeys.

Privileged to walk alongside my students.

My days are rich with meaning and value.

I open doors. I show the way. I jostle. I step aside.

I treasure when students take the reins.

Smiles bind us one to another.

Conversations expand our mutual understanding.

Gestures tell stories of their own.

Dreams abound in the twinkle of an eye.

Rhythms of certainty and uncertainty punctuate the path.

Safety and security cushion the journey, while

Risk fills the space of predictability with fresh horizons.

Willingness sparks the flame of exploration.

Fear inflicts wounds on success and shame on failure.

Surrender is not an option.

Fear is my friend the whistleblower.

Music teaching resonates with energies of the universe.

We hold it in our hands and in our imaginations.

It fuels our love for each other.

It anchors homes and communities.

My commitment is to serve all with grace and generosity.

The enthusiastic. The dedicated.

The busy. The stressed out. The troubled.

No matter the twists and turns, celebrations and setbacks,

I play my part for music and humanity.

I affirm the wonder of who students are.

I bring empathy, dignity, and gratitude

to the work that needs to be done.

This is my testament.