

# THE POLKA DOT POST!

● All About Dots ● Member Spotlight ● Interviews ● Art ● Poetry ● Games ● Events ● ...and More! ●

## School of HONK Beginnings

By Kevin L

The original idea for School of HONK was born from a feeling. A collection of feelings, actually, collectively and palpably shared among those of us attending the very first HONK! Festival. Feelings of joy, for sure, but also of hope, of empowerment and inspiration, a deep sense of both personal liberation and social connection. This new brass convergence – most bands weaned on turbocharging social and political protest, and drawing on a long, rich tradition of peoples' brass bands from New Orleans and other cultures across the post-colonial world – had transformed Davis Square into a scene from a Dr. Seuss story, a space in time where everyone is free and anything can happen.

We conceived our school's mission to engender those feelings every Sunday, by unleashing and nurturing the authentic musician in all of us. From our experiences with other street bands and community organizations, we had some ideas about the kinds of songs we'd play, about our general approach to learning and performance, and about how to create a welcoming and inclusive place for everyone.

We knew that learning music is easy when you're having fun. We would make it fun by committing to practice and perform every week, open to anyone, playing upbeat dance songs, with easy parts we can learn together by ear, and with the support of experienced players across all sections who were not all straight white cis men. And to encourage spontaneity, we knew we'd always have a plan, to ensure a sweet spot between ritual and pandemonium. From those initial ideas, not knowing any other comparable program, we did what street musicians around the world do – we improvised.

Gathering and coordinating with our mentor group was our first and most essential innovation, and along with supporting our music-making, our mentors embody and promote our school's values, bringing a wealth of ideas to expand and improve our program. Inventing and assigning a rotation of different roles



Sousaphone by Lily G

(tune leaders, greeters, buddies, etc.), experimenting with our section breakouts, finding ever larger and more accommodating venues, choosing our polka dot brand, incorporating our timekeeper and our introductory script, developing our dance troupe, organizing our retreats, expanding our repertoire, diversifying our membership – these and many other steps in our evolution were all due to the efforts and imaginations of our mentors, as well as many treasured, longtime members – all of us, together, learning as we go.

It is difficult to fathom the amazing journey we've taken together over the past ten years. We knew from the start that, if our school was a success – if we managed to spark spontaneity, spur creativity and develop our musicianship – we couldn't actually imagine, back in the beginning, what and who we would become, what we would look like or sound like. But we were pretty sure we'd know it when we feel it. It's the feeling we get witnessing so many of our members emboldened to take their first steps to discover their own musicality, and it's the delight in each week's spontaneous improvisations and flights of fancy that stick with us

## EDITORS' WELCOME

Hello and welcome to the very first issue of the Polka Dot Post – School of HONK's latest, greatest DIY newspaper/newsletter/zine! We're so excited to show off all the great things that our members have dreamed up and submitted to this first edition. Inside, you'll find everything from interviews with School of HONK members, to original artwork and poetry, philosophical musings about the nature of the dot, and even a dot-themed crossword. We want to give a huge thanks to everyone who contributed in ways small and large. Be sure to check out the back page to learn how to submit your own content for future issues. But more than anything, we hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed making it!

—PDP Crew

in the days that follow. Most revealing of all, it's the feelings we see in the smiles and sways of our weekly audience, as they come to feel it too, and the precious gift of living in a loving and generous community that envelops and encourages all of us. For so many, our school has changed the way we think and feel about ourselves, about music, about community, and about Sundays. We can't wait to see and hear what comes next.



Photo by Sharon C

# Dot Dot Dot...

## PERSPECTIVES ON THE POINT

### It's All About the Dots

*A sports analogy, written by someone  
who doesn't watch sports but loves polka dots (aka Maren)*

Imagine the Red Sox made it to the World Series and you have tickets! You make your way to Fenway, excited to cheer on the home team in the 7th game of the series. The players come out on the field, but instead of their uniforms, they are wearing regular clothes. The league decided that players can wear whatever they want, reasoning that they will play their best if they are comfortable. One player is in his college baseball t-shirt, another is in a Messi jersey, and several players in pajama pants. Each person is wearing something different. They play a fantastic game in their comfortable clothes and win the series. Great, right? It might be great for the players, but as a spectator, it wouldn't be so great. It would be confusing to watch. Is that a player, a coach or the ball boy? Which team is that player on? Should I be cheering for that guy, or is he the opponent? If this scenario happened, you would still get to watch skilled players playing baseball in the World Series, but it would be missing some magic. The uniform turns a group of guys playing baseball into the Red Sox.

Polka Dots unite our band in a way that uniforms unite a sports team. It makes it clear to our fellow band members and to our spectators if a person is in the band or just someone hanging out nearby. You might think that holding an instrument is enough to signal that you are in the band, but remember that many of our dancers don't have musical instruments, and at larger festivals like HONK, there are hundreds of non-SOH members with instruments. Our polka dots turn us from a group of people playing music into the School of HONK, wow! WOW! Of course, no one will be turned away for a lack of dots, but if you have been hesitant because you think you don't look good in polka dots, or you don't think you have been a band member long enough (because you have!) join the spotted spectacle. It's fun!

The good news is that there are polka dots to match every style and personality. Small and orderly, bright and sparkly, and everything in between. Stay tuned to future issues of the Polka Dot Post to learn about the history of SOH Polka Dots, DIY dotting on a budget, and more spotty fun.

### Noodling a haiku by Elka

Polka dots swaying  
to jointly created sound  
soaring from our hearts



# How Do You SAY: POLKA DOTS

Learning landmarks + languages ☺  
Romance languages edition



Pyramid of the Sun  
Teotihuacán, Mexico  
"LUNARES"



Eiffel Tower  
Paris, France  
"LES POIS"



Tower of  
Pisa, Italy  
"i POIS"



Christ the  
Redeemer  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
"BOLINHAS"

# Honk to Honk

featuring  
**DANIEL W**

*Interview conducted and edited by  
Ruth T in April 2024*

## **HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HONKING?**

2 years

## **WHO ARE YOU OUTSIDE OF HONK?**

(Laughs) I wish I knew. Well, I'm a father. I have two teenagers, I have a 17-year-old daughter and 15-year-old son. Both are at CRLS. I have a wife, Terri. We've been married 25 years.

I'm a musician, so I play music in a couple bands locally. Drums and percussion.

And, I guess, for lack of a better word, I'm an academic. I'm a senior lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School for Education. I've been there for 31 years. I teach on group dynamics, collaboration, learning place design, and workforce learning. And, I've been a researcher at a research center called Project Zero at the Graduate School of Education. It's a bizarre name, but it's the oldest research center at Harvard. It's a think tank on creativity and learning and it's been around since 1967.

I'm from Maine, so that's a tough identity to shake. Very provincial, if you've been up there.

## **WHERE IN MAINE?**

I'm from a tiny, tiny town – Readfield, outside of Augusta. It's got a thousand people. A running joke amongst Mainers is that we seceded decades ago, we just didn't tell anyone.

## **WHO ARE YOU AT HONK?**

A listener, a laugher. I am a supporter.

## **AND FOR PEOPLE WHO MAY NOT KNOW WHAT YOU PLAY OR RECOGNIZE YOU IMMEDIATELY...?**

I'm the skinny guy carrying the big green bass drum. How 'bout that?

## **HOW DID YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO PLAYING MUSIC BEGIN?**

Probably when I was in fifth or sixth grade, I had two friends who had guitars and there wasn't much to do where I grew up. I lived on a farm and didn't really have neighbors close by. But we had a barn and they would come over with their guitars and they said they needed a drummer. We went to the school the next day and I just started to play. It was really kind of beautiful.

My relationship to playing music has always been about who are the people and how can we have fun? It began pretty early and then continued through high school. I was always drawn to jazz and funk. James Brown is probably one of my favorite musicians.

I went to music school in college and continued to play, which didn't really jive with what I wanted to be doing. I found myself consistently missing my 8 a.m. timpani class because I was out in bars playing funk. I just like to play with other people. And practicing timpani arrangements by myself is not exactly my idea of a good time.

## **WHAT HAS HONK DONE FOR YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO MUSIC, AND FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?**

Probably for ten years, I've wanted to play with Honk. I can remember earlier Honk Festivals and just feeling like, this is my jam. Just the lack of ego and the embrace of accessibility is so beautiful.

One of the things I miss in the music scene, is it's harder and harder to find community with all these digital recordings and things like that. Just to be in a live place with people is really exciting. Honk's really revived that for me. It's showing up and now knowing exactly how things are gonna go. There's an equal playing field for folks. It's playing and it's a field. It's a community – a social field! Sorry, I just got really excited about that idea. But it's really rekindled my admiration for community.

## **GIVEN WHAT YOU DO FOR WORK, DO YOU FIND YOURSELF OBSERVING THE WAY PEOPLE ARE LEARNING AT HONK? DO YOU FIND YOURSELF PAYING ATTENTION TO THAT OR DO YOU TURN THAT PART OF YOUR BRAIN OFF WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING?**

I try not to overthink and just be and enjoy. Honk, for me, is two hours where we embrace enjoyment. And I don't have that outside of Honk where that's the explicit goal. So it has that purpose, but I do keep an eye out. I just like being in places where learning is happening.

Particularly in the setup where new folks arrive or the breakouts where we're working on our instruments. Those moments where there's some confusion, curiosity, and laughter, but also some vulnerability and maybe some nervousness. And then there's exchange of ideas and modeling, and solutions that get tried and adapted. I just find that really profoundly human. I love the humanity of those moments.

## **I'M NEW TO THE COMMUNITY BUT I RECOGNIZE PARTS OF THAT IN MYSELF. I LEARNED MUSIC UNDER A VERY SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCE GROWING UP. BUT I FORGOT WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO PLAY MUSIC WITH OTHERS UNTIL I JOINED HONK. WHEN I PLAY ALONE, USING SHEET MUSIC, I'M FOCUSED ON FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS AND AM AIMING FOR PERFECTION. BUT AT HONK, I'M TRYING TO BE IN SYNC WITH OTHERS AND NOT NECESSARILY TRYING TO BE RIGHT.**

I find myself leaning on others so much, which I love. It's like, what's the other person doing? So, I gotta play off that. There's a lot of emphasis on the listening, which brings me into the moment. You were talking about perfection. There's that phrase, perfection is the enemy of good. I think at Honk, perfection is the enemy of fun.

## **WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE ONE OF THE ONLY PEOPLE PLAYING YOUR INSTRUMENT AT HONK? PEOPLE ARE TURNING TO YOU TO KEEP THE BEAT. WHO DO YOU TURN TO?**

I turn to the cowbell, baby. I've never played bass drum. I came in playing snare, but there are a lot of snare players. There was a need, and I was like, I would love to learn this; this





would be cool. So I actually built the bass drum. I found a bunch of street signs from Vermont and made the drum. That bass drum is totally from scratch.

#### **WAIT, WHAT?**

Oh yeah, I got some street signs –a Route 89 sign– and a rolling machine and bent them and welded them. Someone asked me last January, “Oh how old is that drum?” And I said, “Oh, it’s about a month old.” But the signs are about 20 years old.

I’m a tinkerer. I also just love to make things. So I’ve been fabricating and making drums for many years. I think about retiring and I’m like, yeah, I’ll probably just make drums and be weird. That’s what I’ll do when I get old. I guess I’m already doing that.

#### **YOU’RE LIVING THE DREAM.**

You asked me how it feels to be one of a few bass drummers. I like it when there’s another bass drum player. It’s more fun, because that way we can play off each other and do little things and laugh about it. When it’s alone, it’s not as interactive, but I look for other muses. I’ll stand next to the tubas, or Nat with the bari sax and really try to listen and connect with the lower register more.

I would enjoy doing almost anything in Honk, but there’s something very primal about the bass drum. And when you’re wearing it? Oh my god, your whole body reverberates at low frequency. I have no words for the feeling, but it’s just gorgeous. To have that 52 hz wave just flowing through. It’s like, oh my god, it feels so good.

**THE WAY YOU’RE DESCRIBING IT – I HAVE NEVER SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED PLAYING PERCUSSION, BUT I WONDER HOW I WOULD EVEN WEAR IT. YOU’RE A TALLER GUY AND YOU CUSTOM BUILT IT. CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE PHYSICAL ASPECT TO PLAYING A BASS DRUM TO SOMEONE WHO DOESN’T KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE?**

It is a workout. I typically have a bag of ice and some heating pads for several hours after Honk.

I have herniated disks from playing so long. Everything I’m doing I feel like I’m training for a marathon. I’m getting in shape for October.

The fun thing about playing bass drum is that everything comes back to the one. For me, the challenges of someone who’s played

more kit and African and Latin percussion, I usually have the one (beat), but it’s an ecology of all other things. So, there’s the one but there’s all these flourishes and things you do around it. Or sometimes you drop the one. But you can’t do that with a bass drum. It’s just pretty straightforward on the one.

Physically, yeah, I’m not used to being that strenuous on my left arm. I’ve been purposefully building a lot more strength in my left, which is hard to do – I’m a right hand player.

I bring a stool sometimes when we’re indoors so I can rest sometimes, because I need it! I picked my poison, so I’m not complaining. I knew what I was getting into. I built the damn thing, so I could have made it smaller.

**YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT WHAT IT’S LIKE TO BUILD OFF THE ENERGY OF PEOPLE AROUND YOU. WHOSE HONK ENERGY DO YOU ADMIRE?**

I love Jose’s energy. When he gets the cowbell going and when he gets into his groove and he’s smiling and his head is bobbing.

**WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE SONG TO PLAY WITH SCHOOL OF HONK?**

If I had to pick one that makes me smile the most, I think it’s gonna have to be Groove Is In The Heart by Deee-Lite. Mainly because I just love that song. When I was in college, that was the song. So I have a lot of good memories with that song.

**WHAT’S A SONG YOU WISH SCHOOL OF HONK PLAYED?**

I just love The Pretenders, “My City Is Gone,” but I’m not sure how it’d be adapted. Maybe “The Big Payback” by James Brown.

**HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT POLKA DOTS?**

I don’t feel positively or negatively about polka dots. But for the setting of Honk? They’re perfect. It explicitly puts out the invitation to embrace fun and enjoyment. It just signals it. You don’t wear polka dots if you’re signaling serious and rigorousness. It just signals simply what the essence is.

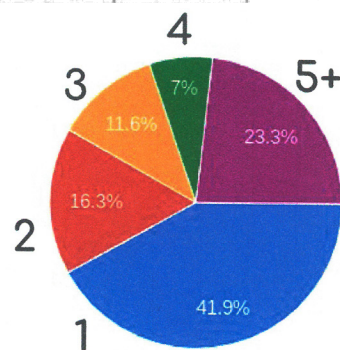
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*In future issues of the Polka Dot Post, stay tuned for more interviews with band members, including Josh, Syd, Courtney, Evelyn, and...you?*

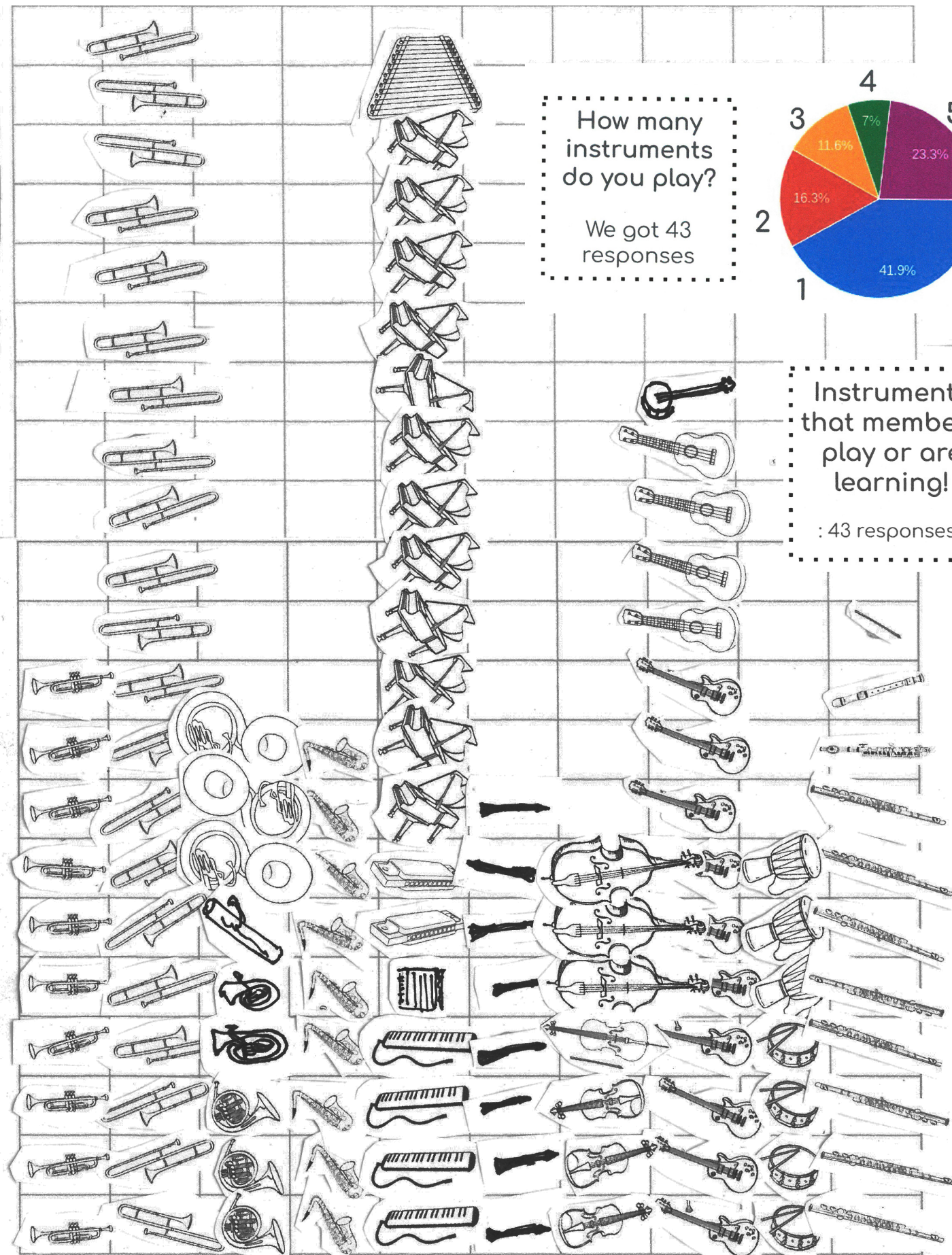
*Contact Ruth to record an interview!*



An infographic series about  
School of HONK members

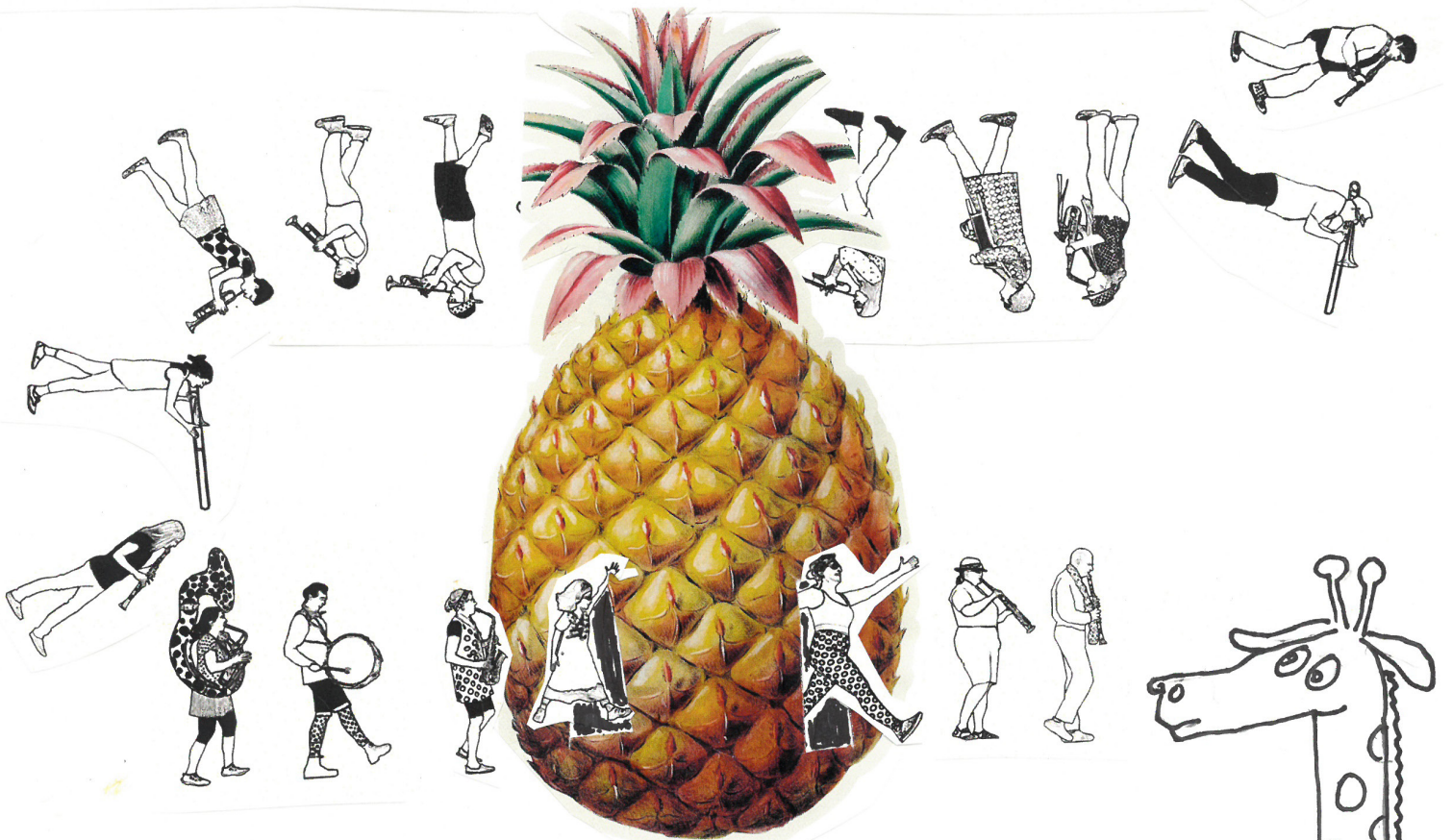
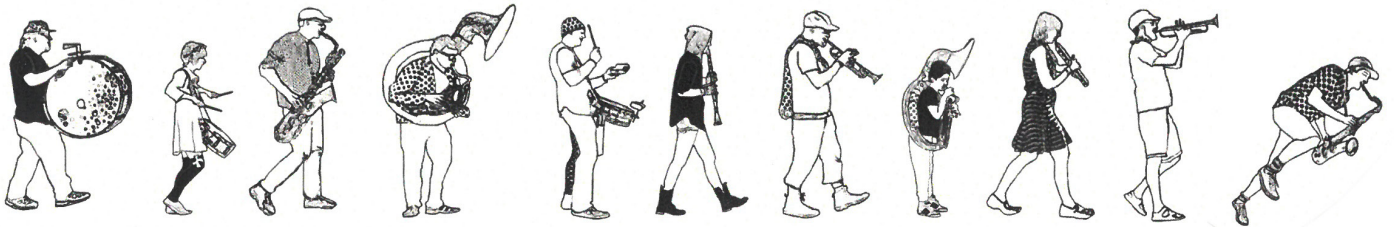


: 43 responses :





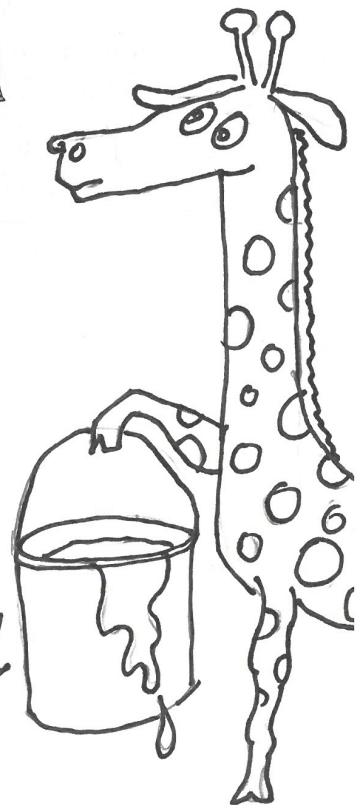
# THE MYSTERIOUS CLAN OF the Giant Pineapple



Strange -  
the pineapple  
lacks polka dots



Well, we can  
fix that!





# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

*With Rachel and Danielle*

Rachel and Danielle have been mixed up many times since they both joined School of HONK. They got together to reminisce on their favorite School of HONK memories, and though they're friends, they learned things about each other they never knew! See if you can "Spot the Difference" between them!

## WHERE DID YOU FIRST "SPOT" SCHOOL OF HONK?

**Rachel:** At the Somerville Library. I saw them before HONK Fest in 2016, just playing outside, and I was like, what is this giant polkadot band? I wanna join! How incredible! And then I just kept seeing School of HONK all over the place, like at HONK Fest and the Monster Mash parade, and I wanted to join, but I was too busy.

**Danielle:** Mine was at HONK Fest in 2017. I moved to Boston not so long before that, and I remember School of HONK saying, "You could be playing in our band," and I was like oh yes, next year I will be playing with this band at HONK Fest, just you wait!

## HOW DID YOU GET STARTED WITH SCHOOL OF HONK?

**Rachel:** Well I kept seeing School of HONK all over the place, but I was a grad student, so I had zero time on my hands. At the end of that school year, I was really excited that I had time to join. I started coming in the spring when we were at the Community Arts Center in Cambridge, and I decided to play the trumpet because I grew up playing french horn, and it was really similar to what I knew how to play, and it was a pretty smooth transition for me. I met Josh on my first day, and he taught me how to play Green Onions and Blackbird Special.

**Danielle:** Awwwww! Well, I wanted to go and took my time with it. There was always a reason not to, and I remember being nervous to go alone. I finally went in the summer of 2018, and I made a friend come with me. My friend had experience playing the drums, so we went and joined the percussion section. I feel like I had a little bit of a Goldilocks story with School of HONK, because I went the first time and I tried the drums, and it wasn't my thing. So then I came back without my friend, and they handed me a trombone.

**Rachel:** I didn't know this, Danielle!

**Danielle:** Ohhh, we're uncovering so much! So I had one day on the trombone, and I remember Mike A. was the newcomer buddy. But I was living with a roommate who was willing to lend me his trumpet to practice at home. So I went back one more time and picked up the trumpet, and this time it was just right.

**Rachel:** Wow, what a beautiful story!

## HOW HAS SCHOOL OF HONK MADE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE?

**Rachel:** How hasn't School of HONK made a difference in my life? It didn't start this way- I didn't talk to many people when I first started. But now so much of my community is based in School of HONK. Many of my close friends in the area are in School of HONK, I met my partner in School of HONK, and I lived with a friend in School of HONK for many years. I feel like I owe a lot community-wise to School of HONK.

**Danielle:** Well said! Community is the first thing that comes to mind for me, too. There's a lot to be involved in, and it's great to feel really connected to where we're living. I love that I can walk through Davis Square and run

into multiple bandmates. It provided a pillar of community that I had in St. Louis and that I didn't know how to find here.

**Rachel:** It's made a difference musically, too. I've been a musician my whole life and in many different ways, but I was trained in a very serious, classical way. As a singer in a choral setting, I was taught that when you make a mistake, you raise your hand. It has been very freeing to come to this kind of music-making environment where making mistakes is celebrated and just a part of what we do, and the point is having fun and then the rest will follow. And I've learned how to improvise, and I learned two new instruments! It's just so cool how I've grown in so many ways, values-wise and skill-wise, and I owe all of that to School of HONK.

**Danielle:** To clarify, the two instruments you mentioned are trumpet and sousaphone? Wow. I didn't know you hadn't actually played either of those before School of HONK. That's amazing! I don't have formal musical education, so just the fact that I can play a song on the trumpet and I didn't have to read music has totally changed my perception of music. It's so much more accessible than I ever imagined!

## HOW HAVE I MADE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR SCHOOL OF HONK EXPERIENCE?

**Rachel:** Well I have a vivid memory of a parade we were on in Cambridge Common. I remember when you first started, and you had very long hair. And you, me, and Kaleb were on parade, and we had just met, and I thought, "Wow, these are friends that I might have!"

**Danielle:** Oh my gosh, I have the same memory! Well, almost. When you shared that you came to School of HONK for a while and didn't know anyone, that never would've dawned on me! Kaleb and I started in the trumpets right around the same time. Kaleb was my OG Honk pal, and I remember us on that parade all together, but in my mind we were at CAC, and you taught me how to vamp on Green Onions! You were like, "Danielle, you can play this over the whole song," and I was like, "Wow, I played a whole song, and I now have multiple School of HONK friends!"

**Rachel:** So I remember that, you and Kaleb, us on that parade having a great time.

**Danielle:** Yes! It was so much fun. In my mind, it was my first day on the trumpet. Was it? Who knows! But I'm so excited I was an integral part of your early School of HONK experience, too. I had no idea! We had an instant friend connection! I remember you right from the get go. You made a huge difference in me continuing to come back to Honk, because I do think feeling like you have a friend, all of the sudden, it just opens the door.

**Rachel:** Aw, I'm glad that I made that difference for you! Wow.

**Danielle:** Wow.

**Rachel and Danielle:** Wow!

*Are you interested in spotting the difference with one of your bandmates in a future issue?*

*Email [thepolkadotpost@gmail.com](mailto:thepolkadotpost@gmail.com)!*



# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



CAN YOU FIND FIVE CHANGES?

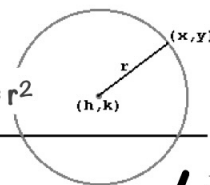
## DOT ESOTERICA

2 IN MATH CLASS, THE FIRST DEFINITION OF A CIRCLE YOU SEE MIGHT LOOK LIKE THIS:

$$(x-h)^2 + (y-k)^2 = r^2$$

THIS DEFINITION IS A LOT MORE COMPLEX THAN WHAT I KNOW OF A CIRCLE INTUITIVELY. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MY

EMBODIED  
SENSE OF  
ROUNDNESS

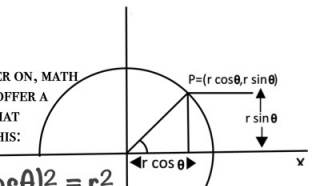


MAKES IT EASIER TO THINK THROUGH EXPERIENCE

### Defining The Circle

3 A LITTLE LATER ON, MATH CLASS MIGHT OFFER A DEFINITION THAT LOOKS LIKE THIS:

$$(r \sin \theta)^2 + (r \cos \theta)^2 = r^2$$



IN THE WORLD OF SYMBOLS, THIS REPRESENTATION IS A LITTLE MORE INTUITIVE TO ME. BUT WHERE IS THE SYNTONICITY? WHERE IS THE INTUITION?

MAKES IT EASIER TO THINK ABOUT ANGLES

4 NOW, IMAGINE HOW YOU WOULD TELL SOMEONE (A TURTLE, FOR INSTANCE) TO WALK IN A CIRCLE. YOU MIGHT SAY, "MOVE FORWARD A LITTLE. NOW TURN. MOVE FORWARD A LITTLE MORE. NOW TURN A LITTLE MORE." IN "ADVANCED" MATH COURSES, THIS DEFINITION IS STATED THUS:

"A CIRCLE IS A SHAPE WITH CONSTANT CURVATURE."

BUT HERE THERE IS BODY. THERE IS INTUITION. OR, AS PAPERT WOULD SAY, THERE IS

BODY SYNTONICITY.

5 ALL THIS TO SAY...

I SEE A DIRECT PARALLEL BETWEEN HOW MATH CLASS DISTORTS REAL MATH AND MUSIC CLASS DISTORTS REAL MUSIC. E.G. LET'S TRY TO DEFINE THE NOTE "A."

CALLING IT "A" IS ALREADY JUST A LAYER AWAY FROM OUR EMBODIED EXPERIENCE OF THE SOUND.

WE COULD ALSO SAY THAT IT'S PRESSURE WAVES VIBRATING WITH A FREQUENCY OF 440hz.

IN THE FACE OF THIS, HOWEVER, I FIND MYSELF ASKING: IN WHAT SENSE IS THIS EXPERIENTIAL DEFINITION MORE ADVANCED? LOGO MAKES THE EMBODIED DEFINITION NATURAL.

WE COULD ALSO REPRESENT IT LIKE THIS.



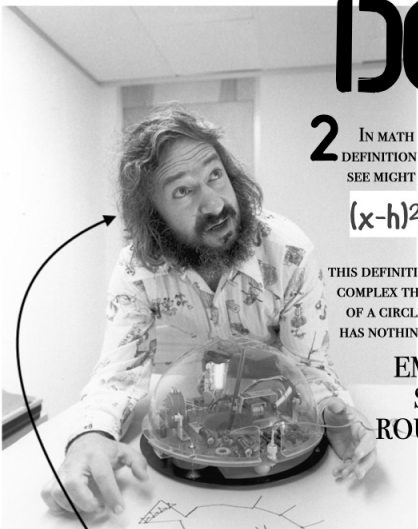
BUT WHY?

6 WHY DO WE PUT SYMBOLS FIRST? WHY ARE THEY PUT ON A PEDESTAL? WHY DON'T WE TRUST THE BODY? THE GUT? OUR OWN EXPERIENCE? WHY THE PRIMACY OF THE EQUATION OVER THE FOOT? WRITING OVER SPEAKING? THE CIRCLE OVER THE

DOT.

### 1 THIS IS SEYMOUR PAPERT.

HE WAS AN EDUCATOR, LEARNING RESEARCHER, AND TECHNOLOGIST. WORKING IN THE 1970S, HE DESIGNED A PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE CALLED LOGO. ONE OF ITS GOALS WAS TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS WITH THEIR BODY AND IN CONNECTION WITH WHAT THEY ALREADY KNOW. IN LOGO, YOUR CODE CONTROLS A "TURTLE," TELLING IT TO MOVE FORWARD OR BACK, TURN LEFT OR RIGHT, ALL WHILE IT HOLDS DOWN A PEN, LEAVING A VISIBLE TRAIL AS IT GOES. BY COMBINING SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS, ITS TRAILS QUICKLY BECOME COMPLEX GEOMETRICAL SHAPES. PAPERT'S GO-TO EXAMPLE OF THIS WAS THE CIRCLE, OR AS WE CALL IT AT SCHOOL OF HONK, THE DOT.







# The Gallery

## Counterclockwise from left:

Collage from the Polka Dot Post Craft-  
ernoon event • The original flyer adver-  
tising School of HONK's first meeting in  
2014 • Artwork from the Polka Dot Post  
Crafternoon event • Mark R with paint-  
ed saxophone (photo by Sophie C) • close  
up of Mark's painted saxophone (photo  
by Sophie C)



**SCHOOL  
OF HONK!**  
WANT TO PLAY HONK MUSIC  
ALL YEAR LONG?  
JOIN US!

**WHO:** Anyone, of any age or musical experience,  
who wants to have fun playing loud and lively music,  
mostly outside, to support our community. Families  
encouraged to join.

**WHAT:** Bring any acoustic instrument you like (or  
we can find one for you). We'll play all musical  
genres, drawing especially from world street band  
traditions as well as American popular music.

**WHEN:** Sunday afternoon, 3-5 pm, starting Oct 26.

**WHERE:** sprout, 339R Summer St. in Somerville.

**COST:** No fee - donations of any size accepted.

**QUESTIONS:** [kevin@honkfest.org](mailto:kevin@honkfest.org) / 617-977-4894







By Mark R

## The Story of a Polka-Dot Saxophone: and how to make your own!

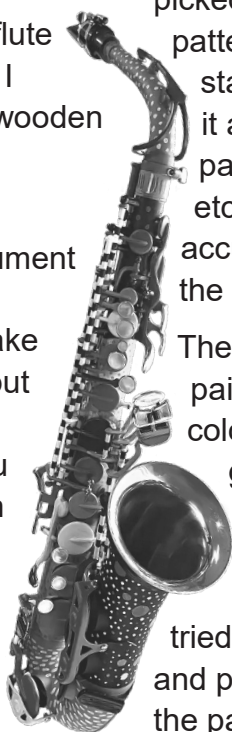


A lot of people have asked about my painted saxophone. Yes, I painted it myself. No, it does not affect how it plays very much. And here are a few thoughts on how to do this yourself.

oooooooooooooooo

First, if you only have one instrument, and it is one you rely on, I would avoid trying to paint it. While I did not run into problems, you could seriously mess up an instrument doing this. When I did this, I got another saxophone, an old beat up student model, so that if I ruined it, I wouldn't be out much. The same thing could probably be done to a flute or a plastic instrument. I wouldn't try painting a wooden instrument.

I have some amateur experience doing instrument repair. That's helpful because you have to take all of the keys off and put them back on while painting the horn. If you are generally good with small mechanical things, not afraid to experiment, and have a cheap horn to screw up on, then try it!



The first thing I did was some minor repairs: I replaced a few pads and corks and made several adjustments. This step was important because doing this later would involve repainting parts. Next, I completely disassembled the horn, removing every key. I cleaned the body in a bathtub with a degreaser (Simple Green) because any oil would cause the paint not to stick. I also cleaned the keys, but very carefully with a rag and q-tips to avoid getting it on the pads.

I used artist's acrylic paint, and a fairly cheap grade of that. I picked a set of colors and had a pattern in mind before I started. By purposely making it a riot of colors with a lot of patterns (stripes, polka dots, etc.), I did not have to be too accurate with my paint job, as the complexity hides mistakes.

The main body of the horn I painted large parts in solid colors. It required two coats to get good color. Some colors did not cover as well as others, and required three coats. I tried to cover all of the body and posts, but not get paint on the parts where screws attached

or at the edges of the tone holes. I also avoided painting the springs, corks, or any place my fingers would regularly touch (the thumb rests, etc.). But a little slop wasn't a problem. Latex paint is a rubbery layer when dry that can be scraped off without much effort. So after it dried, I removed any paint I had accidentally gotten where parts needed to attach.

I then went over these solid color sections, adding dots, lines, and stripes in contrasting colors. I painted all of the keys I had removed as well, being careful not to get paint on the pads, corks, screw and rod attaching points, or finger buttons. These required two-three coats to get good coverage.

Once everything dried, I checked for paint that accidentally got where it shouldn't be and scraped that off, then reassembled the horn. I added a drop of oil to each rod and pivot since I had earlier used degreaser to remove all of the oil. I reassembled it and play tested several times while painting, then removing keys again to continue the painting task over several days. ○

Day 1

How do I hold this?

Trombone mistakes sound funny.

Sean is so so cool.

Week 5

Hey! I can play some!

Glad Mike is so very tall  
I can copy him...

Month 4

I can't believe it.

I'm playing in the Honk Fest!

Fan to musician!

Month 9

I should practice more.

This group brings me so much joy.  
Count down to Sunday.

Year One

What to do with pup?

Maybe he can come with me!

He gets so much love.

Approaching Year Two

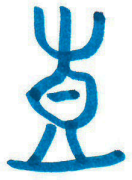
This never gets old.  
So worth fighting the traffic.  
True community.

THANKFUL

For Kevin's vision  
For all the mentors  
For all my new friends.

A series of Honk Haikus.  
(By Anna (approved by  
Rudy))





## Party on the Drum

who's got the rhythm of the sticks  
They've got the rhythm of the sticks  
Phewhoo Phewhoo Phewhooohoo

Who's got the rhythm of the belly  
They've got the rhythm of the belly  
Fungi Fungi Leaf leaf leaf ii  
Who's got the rhythm of the sides  
They've got the rhythm of the sides  
Pink purple brown blue woo woo woo

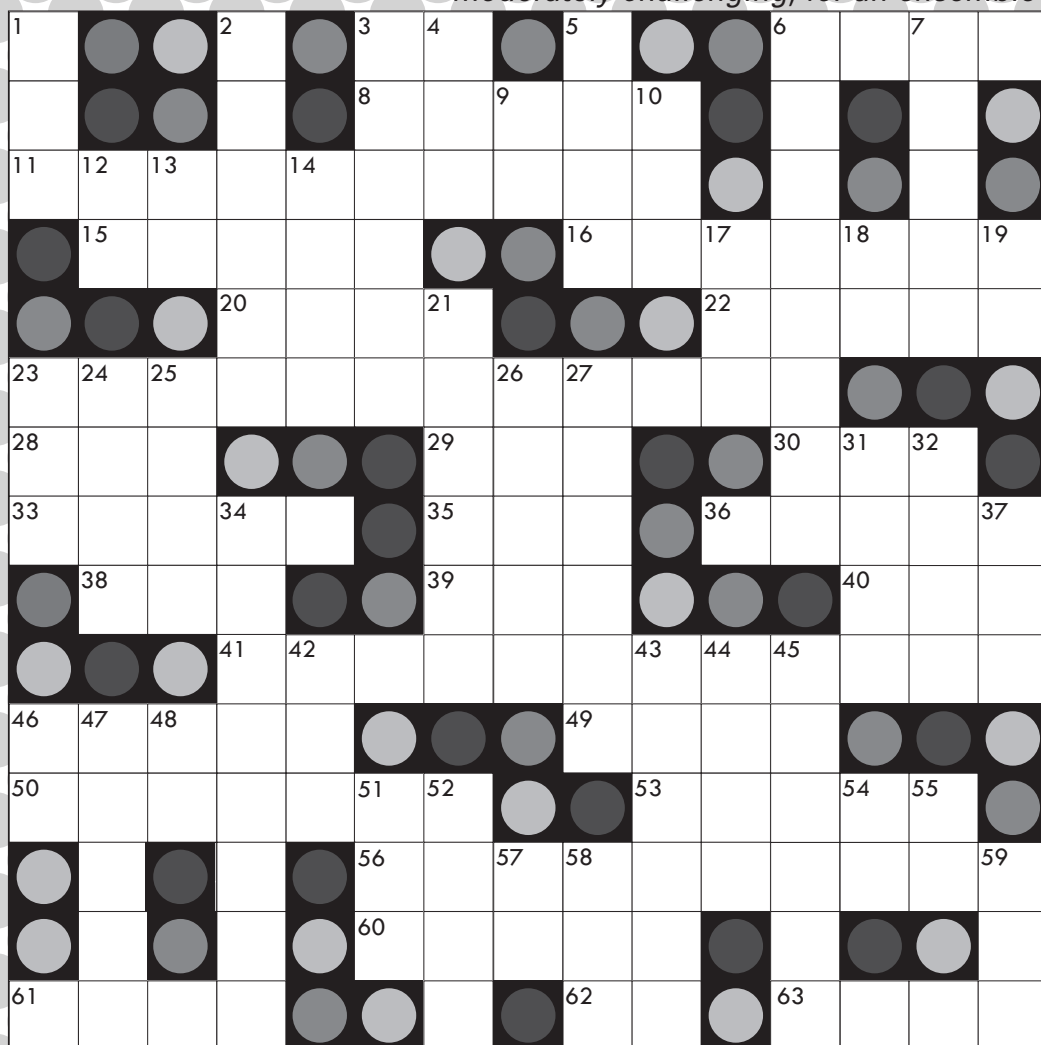
# THIS BEAT IS, THIS BEAT IS, THIS BEAT IS...

*moderately challenging, for an ensemble?*

## ACROSS

- 3 Eyeglasses Doc  
6 Depeche \_\_\_\_  
8 Notation: the full orchestra plays  
11 **What Kenny G is**  
15 Dot-shaped bread  
16 Xylophone kin  
20 Lightning McQueen's breakout movie  
22 \_\_\_\_, Wind & Fire  
23 **What this beat is**  
28 Vanilla, baby  
29 Pioneering ISP  
30 Country singer Ketchum  
33 Big Band leader William Henry Webb  
35 d-Lysergic Acid Diethyl-amide, AKA  
36 Unimportant key?  
38 "Hello" to the Girl from Ipanema  
39 \_\_ al-Fitr  
40 Patriotic "\_\_\_\_thee \_\_\_\_ sing"  
41 **What the David Adjmi & Paul Butler play is**

- 46 Mango yogurt drink  
49 From ear to ear  
50 Ready to listen  
53 "\_\_\_\_me a home"  
56 **What The Spree is**  
60 SoH dance style in "Video"  
61 "It's the End of the World \_\_\_\_ Know It"  
62 Comes before your "handle"  
63 Dotted Dog



## DOWN

- 1 Booker backers  
2 The trash can Oscar  
3 Keyboard zero  
4 Twosome  
5 Not A Kevin or A Mike  
6 Style played on a guitarrón  
7 Stefani has none  
9 Dolly's home state  
10 Boston home for modern art  
12 Start of "Alphabet in F"  
13 Sign with a hug and kiss  
14 Orchestrate

- 17 Debut location for SoH's 9-5  
18 Talking horse \_\_\_\_ Ed  
19 "Ooh, \_\_\_\_"  
21 Less fresh  
23 Metronome sound  
24 Why we don't play in tunnels  
25 "Dancing on the \_\_\_\_ing"  
26 Riveting icon  
27 Can't learn a new trick?  
31 By and by  
32 Old-school music quality  
34 Old-school music holder  
37 Singer Okasek  
42 Tito's Auntie

- 43 "All for" legalization  
44 Some horns  
45 Green ones  
46 A note to follow So  
47 Some saxes  
48 Opposite of fst.  
51 RPMs ÷ 60 =  
52 A rest for the rest  
54 Notation: part for a string  
55 Two of these, plus an O, on MacDonald's Farm  
57 "Whether you're hi or \_\_\_\_"  
58 Soprano Sumac  
59 Hip jazzy type



# WORD SEARCH !! Jesse

BAND  
BRASS  
COWBELL  
DRUM  
HONK  
HORN

MELODICA  
MUSIC  
PLAY  
SAXOPHONE  
TROMBONE

TRUMPET  
TUBA  
WOW!

M	U	S	I	C	S	O	H	T	H	A	S	R	D	E
P	B	O	R	E	S	H	E	N	O	B	M	O	R	T
R	L	E	T	B	I	S	M	A	N	L	P	I	U	S
T	R	A	F	R	L	O	U	B	K	R	E	S	M	L
C	E	R	Y	A	U	G	H	E	L	U	X	N	E	R
O	F	G	M	S	A	M	E	L	O	D	I	C	A	N
W	O	W	R	S	H	N	P	I	S	R	E	L	N	B
B	F	A	N	R	O	H	L	E	S	O	T	U	B	A
E	L	N	O	K	X	R	G	A	T	L	U	S	I	N
L	A	B	R	S	A	X	O	P	H	O	N	E	L	D
L	N	E	H	M	S	I	C	A	E	R	M	N	G	Y

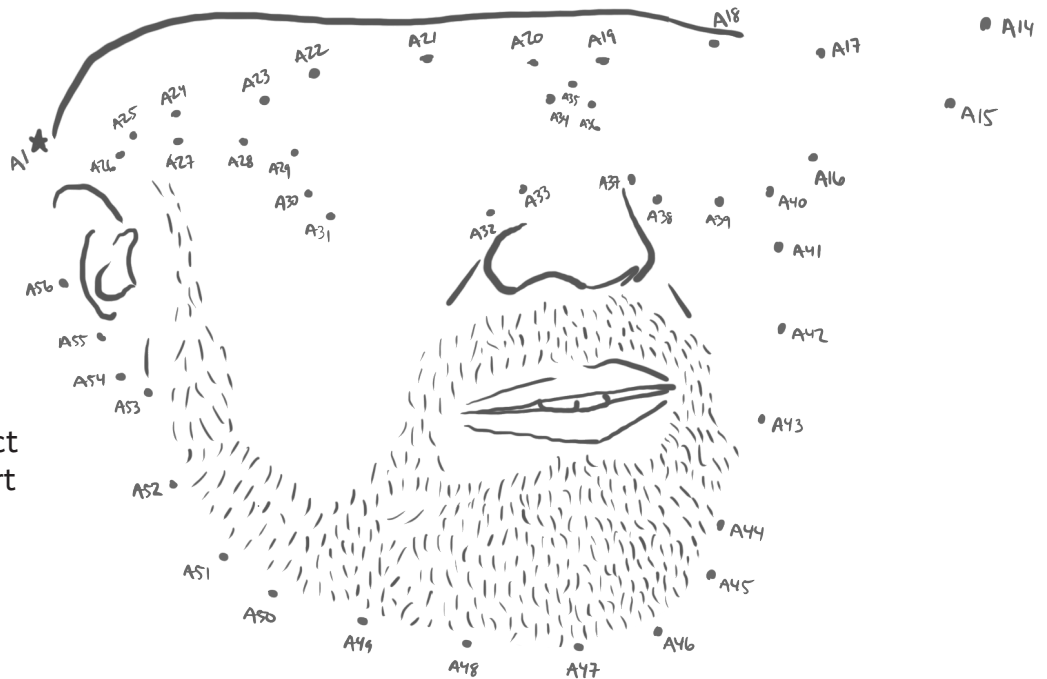


## CONNECT- THE DOTS!

Connect the dots to reveal a  
School of HONK icon!

Start at A1 (the star) and connect  
all the A dots in order. Then start  
again at B1 and connect all the  
B's. Keep going with the C's, D's,  
E's, F's, and G's to finish!

(Answer is on the next page)



# HOW TO ADD DOTS


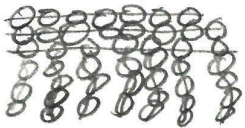
## Table of Contents

- 1 Rhinestones! (glue project)
- 2 Sequins! (glue or sewing project)
- 3 Circle pocket (hand sewing project)
- 4 Lights and battery pack holder! (glue and hand/machine sewing)

## RHINESTONES









- Rhinestones are small, sparkly stones that shine in the light! They are usually circular.
- To apply rhinestones, get a rhinestone glue (e.g. Gem-tac) and glue the flat side, then stick to your desired surface. Or, you can apply glue to the surface and then stick your rhinestone.
- Use lots of glue! It's hard to have too much.
- Rhinestones can be applied to clothing, instruments, anywhere the glue sticks!

## SEQUINS

- Sequins are sparkly circles with a hole in the middle. They shine in the light!
- They come in many forms
  - loose sequins can be sewn on - it's a lot of work!
  - sequin fabric can be used for clothing
  - sequin ribbon  can be glued or sewn
  - sequin tassel trim  can be glued or sewn. Tassels go swish! with movement or in the wind
- Note: every sequin jacket I've worn, the arms tend to snag on other parts of the jacket. Still fun though





## Catherine D' (crumpet) Circle Pocket



- 1 Draw a circle! A protractor is helpful or you can print out a circle and trace it. Make the circle a little bigger than you want your pocket to be.
  - 2 If you want the pocket to be lined, draw a second circle! If you don't care about lining, finish the edges with a blanket stitch and then go to step 6.
  - 3 Cut out both circles and sew them right sides together with a backstitch, leave a small gap 
  - 4 Cut close to the stitches with pinking shears except for at the gap 
  - 5 Turn the circle inside out! Push everything through the gap 
  - 6 Time to add your circle to the garment! Pin it in place. (or stay surface)
  - 7 Sew ~~the~~ bottom half of the circle to the garment with a whip stitch 
  - 8 Zipper time! Get a (non-separating) zipper or use zipper tape. Either way length = circumference / 2 + a little extra.
  - 9 Sew one side of the zipper to the pocket using whipstitch or backstitch 
  - 10 Put stuff in the pocket! This is to make sure the pocket opens nice and big. 
  - 11 Sew the other side of the zipper to the garment 
  - 12 Pause! Check the ends of the zipper to see you've left no holes/gaps 
- DONE! Enjoy your circle pocket.

\* Bonus tip: you don't need a lot of fabric for this. Try grabbing a "fat quarter" - bonus points for using polka dot fabric

## LIGHTS

- Lights are fun for decorating. There are two main types:
  - LED strip lights  They may have multiple colors and may be waterproof. They have adhesive on ~~ways~~ around well, but they are not great at 90° turns. ~~if~~ adhesive ~~ways~~ off you can tie your own glue.
  - ~~tiny~~ fairy lights  Small lights on a wire. Colors tend to be more limited. They have great flexibility.
- Make sure to get battery powered lights for playing on the go!
  - Usually two ways to control:
    - power switch on battery pack
    - remote (range is usually very short)

### Battery Pack Holder Tutorial

- 1 Measure your space! Use a soft tape measure to wrap around your instrument and the space. (To put two packs near the valve, on trumpet you want about 8.5" x 3" (then allowance) <sup>mounting</sup>)
  - 2 Finish the edges (blanket stitch by hand or folded hem on machine)
  - 3 Snap tape! Sew the ~~stitch~~ <sup>(hooky bit)</sup> ~~to~~ the wrong side of the fabric  wrong side up
  - 4 Sew the socket ~~part~~ to the right side of the fabric  right side up
  - 2.5 Wrap around to double check placement. ~~Just~~ where you will place snaps as needed.
- DONE! Enjoy having your battery pack secure.

\* Bonus tip: using a fabric with small dots will help you with measuring and cutting even lines

## TOOTIN' AROUND TOWN

### *upcoming brass & brass-adjacent events*

#### FRIDAY, JANUARY 31

**WHO:** Dead Letter Office (R.E.M. Tribute), Bikini Whale (B-52s Tribute)  
**WHERE:** The Middle East Downstairs  
**WHEN:** doors 7pm  
**WHAT:** Rock Lobster!

#### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

**WHO:** Mostly Bones  
**WHERE:** The Mad Monkfish  
**WHEN:** 7pm  
**WHAT:** trombone-heavy jazz

#### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

**WHO:** Rubblebucket  
**WHERE:** Big Night Live  
**WHEN:** doors 7pm, show 8pm  
**WHAT:** brass-forward indie rock

**WHO:** Power of Love (Huey Lewis tribute), Buoy of Summer (yacht rock tribute), The Fatal Flaw  
**WHERE:** The Sinclair  
**WHEN:** doors 7pm, show 8pm  
**WHAT:** corny, horny 80s hits

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8

**WHO:** Improbable Beasts, Michael Lowenstern  
**WHERE:** The Lilypad  
**WHEN:** 8pm  
**WHAT:** more bass clarinets than you'll ever see outside of, like, a bass clarinet convention

**WHO:** The Femmes

**WHERE:** Crystal Ballroom  
**WHEN:** doors 7pm, show 8pm  
**WHAT:** female & non-binary party band playing songs by women & LGBTQ+ artists - "Respect", "9 to 5", and/or "Groove is in the Heart" all likely

#### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9

**WHO:** Contemporary Sound Group, Conical Cacophony  
**WHERE:** The Jungle  
**WHEN:** 5pm  
**WHAT:** Balkan bangers and...idk go find out!

#### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

**WHO:** Hot 8 Brass Band  
**WHERE:** Arts at the Armory  
**WHEN:** doors 7pm, show 8pm  
**WHAT:** funky NOLA brass

#### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14

**WHO:** The Westerlies  
**WHERE:** Crystal Ballroom  
**WHEN:** doors 6:30, show 7:30  
**WHAT:** genre-blending brass quartet

#### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21

**WHO:** The Macrotones  
**WHERE:** Lizard Lounge  
**WHEN:** 9pm  
**WHAT:** "funky psychedelic soul decet" (thanks, Bandcamp)

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22

**WHO:** Rebirth Brass Band  
**WHERE:** Crystal Ballroom  
**WHEN:** doors 7pm, show 8pm  
**WHAT:** feel like funk'n' it up? this show may sell out, so if you don't move fast, ya may lose but...do whatcha wanna

#### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

**WHO:** Annie and the Fur Trappers, The Squeezebox Stompers  
**WHERE:** The Burren  
**WHEN:** doors 7pm, show 7:30pm  
**WHAT:** trad jazz (w/ swing dancers)

#### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27

**WHO:** The Smack Dabs  
**WHERE:** Boston Public Library, Hyde Park branch  
**WHEN:** 6:30pm  
**WHAT:** more trad jazz

#### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28

**WHO:** Josiah Reibstein and the HubTones  
**WHERE:** Regattabar  
**WHEN:** doors 7pm, show 7:30pm  
**WHAT:** even more trad jazz (Mardi Gras party!)

Wanna show off your creative talents in the next issue?

## ***Submit to the Polka Dot Post!***

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- » Artwork
- » Poetry
- » Cartoons
- » Philosophical Musings
- » Questions for Dear Dottie (advice columnist)
- » Jokes
- » Games
- » Anything else you can think of!

Send all submissions to [thepolkadotpost@gmail.com](mailto:thepolkadotpost@gmail.com)

