

# MSBOA Strings Commissioning Project

Composer: Richard Meyer (Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.)  
Title: "Momentum"  
Grade: 2-3

This commission was a joint project with the Okemos Music Patrons organization and was negotiated and brought about by Marilyn Kesler, Okemos High School Orchestra Director.

The work is dedicated to the memory of Jan Burchman, formerly a strings teacher at Chippewa and Kinawa Middle Schools in Okemos. Jan recently passed away from Leukemia.

The total cost of the work was \$1,500 of which MSBOA District 8 paid half \$750. The piece will include the dedication to Jan, and recognition of both the Okemos Music Patrons and MSBOA District 8. It is expected to be published by Alfred in the near future.

The premiere performances of the piece will be on the spring concerts of the Okemos High School Orchestra, Kinawa Strings and Chippewa Strings. Those Dates are listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Culling  
Chippewa Middle School Bands

Okemos HS Orchestras	Wednesday, May 23	7:30pm	OHS
Chippewa Strings	Thursday, May 31	7:30pm	CMS
Kinawa Strings	Thursday, June 7	7:30pm	KMS

(The back of this sheet includes a note from the composer.)

## Momentum

When asked to write a piece in memory of Jan Burchman, I was interested in finding out a little bit more about her as a teacher. With the help of her co-worker Marilyn Kesler, I received many comments about Jan from her former students. In reading these, I noticed that two words kept coming up in reference to her teaching style: “energy” and “enthusiasm”. These words became the springboard for writing this piece.

The title “Momentum” refers in the most obvious way to the driving rhythmic pulse that permeates throughout. But, on another level, it is meant to represent the results achieved by Jan, an outstanding string educator. Her influence as a teacher and the energy that she brought to each lesson can be thought of as the “momentum” that will continue to live on in her students’ lives and in their future musical accomplishments.

The piece incorporates two diverse moods—a highly rhythmic first section in b minor, built on rising and falling thirds, followed by a simple, chorale in folk song style presented first in the violins and then passed throughout the ensemble. As this slow section winds down, the energy is once again established with the re-introduction of earlier material. The chorale is then heard again, this time coupled with the energetic figures that started the piece.