

Blog: Interview with Rob Davidson, JAEC Presenter; 5 Days Left to Register!

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Thanks to an Americans for the Arts (AFTA) Emerging Leaders Scholarship, I was able to attend AFTA's Half-Century Summit this year. Rob Davidson, Program Director with VH1 Save The Music Foundation and member of the AFTA Arts Education Council, was also in attendance. Rob and other members of the Arts Education Council led attendees through the day and a half long Arts Education Preconference, where attendees identified concrete action steps for building a bright future for arts education. Rob will help us do the same thing in Arizona as the closing speaker for the Joint Arts Education Conference on Thursday, July 29, 2010. He was kind enough to take a moment to answer a few questions regarding the upcoming conference. First, I asked Rob to introduce himself:

Audio Clip One: Introduction

Rob Davidson:

I'm Rob Davidson, I'm the program director with VH1 Save The Music foundation, and let's see, I've been working in this field for over ten years now. I started, I was a music teacher and went from there to the symphony orchestra world and was doing education programs both in Pittsburgh and then in New York, and was recruited by VHI Save The Music foundation to do advocacy for music programs and help schools around the country restart and rebuild music programs in their schools.

Next, I asked Rob about the Arizona Arts Education Census. As you may or may not know, the results of the first-ever statewide survey of arts education in Arizona public and charter schools will be revealed at the Joint Arts Education Conference. The results will inform our work both at the conference and into the future, and I asked Rob why data like this is important for our field:

Audio Clip Two: Why This Data is Important for our Field

Rob Davidson:

It's absolutely critical for this field. How can you possibly know how to build a program, and to secure a program and move forward in the field unless you know where you're starting? It's essential to have that starting point, to know what you have, what resources are currently there, so that you can put those pieces into place and start bringing in other resources to build a better program for the future.

Finally, I asked Rob about the session he will lead at the conference. We tasked Rob with an interesting challenge by titling his session, *Bringing It All Together: Charting a Clear Course for Arts Education in Arizona*. I wondered if he could briefly summarize what "charting a clear course" meant to him:

Audio Clip Three: Charting a Clear Course

Rob Davidson:

Well the first thing that comes to mind is the previous question, you have to know where you're starting. But outside of that you have to come to the conference to find out.

Alex Nelson:

Great. Well, we hope that you all do that. Thank you very much Rob for taking a second to chat with our Arizona folks, and we look forward to seeing you next month.

Rob Davidson:

Great, looking forward to it.

“Next month” has turned into this month, and with just one week left to register for the Joint Arts Education Conference, we hope you will join your peers and colleagues to help lead positive change for arts education in our state and your local community.

And thanks again to Rob for sharing a little about himself in advance of the conference; we look forward to the important perspective his voice, and the voices of our other excellent speakers, will bring in helping us shape the next steps for building a bright future for arts education in Arizona.