

# Charles Chadwell

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1816 ½ E Michigan Ave Lansing, Michigan 48915  
(512) 423-2832  
[charles.chadwell5@gmail.com](mailto:charles.chadwell5@gmail.com)  
charliechadwell.com

## Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As I near the end of my degrees, and my time in academia as a student, I find myself reflecting frequently on the experiences I've had, the environments I've learned in, and what I value most in my education and teaching. Students entering schools of music now are more diverse in their backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and academic preparedness than ever before. As I learn about systemic racism, gender inequality, and wealth disparity as it affects student opportunity, I realize more and more that the ways in which I've been taught throughout my tenure as a student cannot universally serve all the students I hope to teach in the future. The environments in which my education has taken place have not been nearly as diverse as they could have been, and in the last few years I have become aware of how necessary diversity and inclusivity are to fostering student success. Though I will forever be grateful for the mentorship of my past teachers, I know that my own teaching will have to adapt to be more inclusive of a diverse student population, and I personally will need to be aware of and combat the systemic barriers that prevent underrepresented groups from participating in academic institutions.

Regardless of whether I'm teaching one of my saxophone students or my introductory music theory class, there are values that I consider at every step in the process of my teaching. One of my most important is that my students learn to be versatile, and that they come out of my classroom having learned about diverse subjects and musical styles. In addition to the expectation that my saxophone students become fluent in jazz, classical, and commercial styles, I also interweave knowledge of music theory and recording technology into my private teaching. Similarly, I want my music theory students to be aware that their work in my class will go beyond analyzing the niche genre of Common Practice Era music. I incorporate jazz, pop, and contemporary musical examples as often as possible to show them that the tools they're learning are widely applicable. In my private lessons and in the theory classroom, I also regularly encourage discussions on the problematic nature of the canon, and how it unfairly places white male composers on pedestals. Although examples from these composers are included, I minimize their frequency. In the discussions that do take place, I avoid superlative language that suggests they are 'above' any other composers, or are in any way 'genius' – labels which lessen the contributions of marginalized composers.

In addition to acknowledging the problems with the canon, I also talk with my students about the exclusionary nature of academia in general. Though efforts are being made to recruit underrepresented groups, for the foreseeable future it will always be true that colleges and universities, to an extent, are more accessible to privileged groups in our society, particularly those who are wealthier, and those who are white and male. As aspiring musicians and artists, I want my students to be aware of these issues so that they can help make future generations more diverse and inclusive, and so that their work can be accessed by a wider audience. It is imperative that my own educational endeavors to reach beyond the typical audiences that are

more likely to have access to the arts. I aim to recruit students locally and go out to less privileged areas to promote the school of music's visibility to populations that are less likely/able to see it. I hope to create a classroom and studio full of students with myriad backgrounds, races, genders, and orientations, not only because it's the right thing to do, but because everyone's learning stands to benefit from a more diverse and inclusive environment.

Charles Chadwell

ABD, DMA Saxophone Performance  
Michigan State University

Adjunct Instructor of Music Theory  
Western Michigan University  
He/him/his