

Episode # 5 | Be The Best Musician You Can Be

Special Guest Dr. Gillian MacKay

Intro: Hello Everyone! Dylan Maddix here and welcome to The Band Room! Before we jump into today's episode, please do me a favor and head over to itunes or whatever podcast app you use and give The Band Room Podcast a rating, or even a review! This really helps getting the word out to others. And now...we begin!

It has begun! School has started. Many of you head back to your classrooms, some of you sit in those classrooms, maybe some of you don't have a classroom at all. At any rate, to help you get off on the right foot The Band Room Podcast brings you our first ever guest, Dr. Gillian MacKay from the University of Toronto. I couldn't think of anyone better to be a first guest! For those of you who don't know of Dr. MacKay, let me read you her impressive bio.

Gillian MacKay is Professor of Music of the University of Toronto, where she conducts the Wind Ensemble and teaches conducting. Gillian has an active professional career as a conductor, adjudicator, clinician and trumpeter. She has conducted honour ensembles throughout Canada and the United States, and is Associate Conductor of the Denis Wick Canadian Wind Orchestra. Dr. MacKay has adjudicated Canadian band festivals at local, provincial, and national levels in Canada. She has conducted honour bands and judged competitions in the US, Singapore, Thailand, and Korea.

Dr. MacKay enjoys presenting clinics and workshops at provincial and state conferences in Canada and the United States, and is known for her work on the relationship between conducting and mime. Currently, she is investigating the application of the Michael Chekhov acting technique to movement and meaning in conducting. Recognized as a conducting pedagogue, Gillian leads the University of Toronto Wind Conducting Symposium each July, and has been the guest instructor at other symposia in Canada and the United States.

Gillian holds degrees and diplomas from the University of Lethbridge, McGill University, the University of Calgary, and Northwestern University.

I first met Dr. MacKay as a grade 12 trumpet player participating in the Prince Edward Island Senior Honors Band. The room was full of honking trumpets, squeaking clarinets and percussion giving it their all, this is what we thought warming up at the time. She took to the podium with not really knowing any of us, but those of that have had the opportunity to work with Dr. MacKay know that this nervous feeling we have as students (playing for a new conductor) doesn't last long with her. She immediately puts you at ease with her calm (sometimes not so calm demeanour), lightning fast wit and humor and a way of teaching musical concepts that everyone can grasp, with a smile. The weekend came and went and as any student thinks, that was it, I'll never see that person again.

Years went by and I applied to be a conducting fellow with the Denis Wick Canadian Wind Orchestra. To my amazement I got the position, not knowing what to expect, and not knowing who to expect. You've probably guessed by now, it was Dr. MacKay who was the who. I had the joy of working with her and Dr. Mark Hopkins from Acadia University, but this time as a conductor. Since then I've been lucky enough to be one of her students at UofT where I did my masters in trumpet and all the conducting I could get me hands on.

Gillian MacKay is a rare kind of person, a master at her craft, someone with one of the fastest wits I've ever seen, a person who truly cares for her students and their success and is an amazing communicator and most importantly, person. I am honored to call her my mentor and friend. I hope you can gain many tidbits of inspiration from her wise words, to have you ready to take on the challenges of the new school year. Please forgive the recording quality, I met with Dr. MacKay in her office earlier this week with my zoom recorder. I hope you enjoy this interview!

Play interview

There you go, the one and only Dr. Gillian MacKay! I hope you enjoyed our discussion and can use some of what you heard today and put it into real practice, pun intended. Thanks again to Dr. MacKay for giving up her Labour Day morning to spend with us in The Band Room! And thanks to all you that could stop by.

If you want to learn more, I have attached links to the show notes (found on our website) where you can find out more about Dr. MacKay, the cool she's up to at the University of Toronto this year and the school itself.

If you liked what you heard make sure to subscribe to The Band Room and give us a rating and review and tell all your friends how much you enjoyed it. If you really love the show, consider becoming a patron with Patreon, helping to offset podcast hosting costs, and investments into new equipment, so we can continue to bring you great content and great people! Follow us on our social media to keep up with what's on the go and if you have any thoughts on today's show or have ideas for future shows, leave me a comment on our website. Thanks again and see you next week in, The Band Room.

Learn More!

Dr. Gillian MacKay

<http://www.baylor.edu/music/index.php?id=859387>

University of Toronto Faculty of Music

<http://www.baylor.edu/music/index.php?id=858980>

