



Elijah Rupprecht

student tenure: October 2011 – December 2018

One of the best “comeback stories” of all the students who were ever part of the percussion studio, Elijah became a solid leader his junior and senior years at Lawrence High School, including receiving I ratings at State Festivals for solos and ensembles, and achieved the rank of snare captain for his high school drumline. He was a testament to what a motivated student can do when they really applied themselves. His accomplishments include:

- KSHSAA State First Division (I) ratings for percussion solo (2017, 2018)
- KSHSAA Regional First Division (I) ratings for percussion solo (2017, 2018)
- KSHSAA State First Division (I) ratings for percussion ensemble (2017, 2018)
- KSHSAA Regional First Division (I) ratings for percussion ensemble (2017, 2018)
- Lawrence High School Marching Band (2015-2017)
 - Drumline Timpanist (2015)*
 - Bass Drum Line (2016)*
 - Snare Captain and Section Leader (2017)*
- Lawrence High School Wind Ensemble (2017, 2018)
- Auxillary Percussionist for school musical “Putnam County Spelling Bee” (2018)

Elijah is currently working on a degree in Electrical Engineering at The University of Kansas. Although he has been inactive in music recently, he hopes to get back into it in the future.

Some reflections about Elijah from Steve Riley...

It would be quite difficult for me not include Elijah on my “Special Alumni” list, mostly because he was one of those very rare “comeback story/late bloomer” students who all teachers hope for eventually, but often never see come to fruition. Elijah has given me permission to be quite candid in my reflections in the hope that it will help younger students that might be in the
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same type of predicament in their musical journey... and that's a testament to the type of fine young man Elijah has become.

Simply put- Elijah was not a very good student for a number of years. He started lessons in 6th grade and was one of those completely disinterested students for a long time. He never took practicing seriously, never achieved very high chair positions in his band percussion sections, and was a kid that I told to his face on more than one occasion that he was simply lazy – all this while at the same time having to indure his eye-rolling because I knew he thought I was out of touch and mistaken. I recall even trying to find out from his parents if he really wanted to continue lessons because I was about ready to let him go due to my frustrations with him. Then one day- everything changed. Like most young band students who have hung in there for years but really not made much progress, I was starting to sense an attitude around the time of his late freshman/early sophomore year that he was fully expecting to achieve all these leadership goals during his junor and senior year – and all this because he thought he deserved it simply because he was going to be an upper classman. I got quite irritated with him in this particular lesson when he informed me of these expectations, and I proceeded to tell him that I thought he should rather settle in and prepare to have his ego handed to him by some incoming freshmen I had in my studio that "will play circles around you, Elijah". He gave me a look that I had never quite seen before, so I knew after all these years I had finally gotten under his skin. He came back to his lesson that next week a completely different player. I was so excited, yet amazed that I asked him, what had changed? He said "You made me so mad during that lesson last week that I went home and practiced for 3 straight hours". And he did so all the other days that week. From that moment on, he became a great leader and possibly the best comeback story I've ever had in my studio. I am so glad that he hung in there all those years, and I am extremely happy for the success he had those final 2 years of high school.



Elijah getting ready to kill it on his I rating performance for his snare drum solo at State Festival his senior year.



One of the greatest joys for a teacher is when your students have become good enough players that you feel comfortable hiring them to do a professional gig with you! Here is Elijah pictured with fellow "Special Alumni" members Andrew Wallen (l) and Keaton Hoy (r) at a church service we all played together at First Methodist Church in Lawrence back in December 2017.