

# UIL S.O.S.! Strategies for Successful Performances

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# Texas Bandmasters Association 2013 Convention/Clinic



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# U. I. L. S. O. S.!

# **Strategies of Success**

Dr. Eric Wilson, Baylor University

## **ULTIMATE TRUTH**

"Music, with its transformative power, can open our hearts, enrich our spirits, enliven our imagination, and cultivate a powerful sense of community." Sir Ken Robinson

# **ULTIMATE GOALS**

- 1. Be someone to whom others are drawn (not for selfish gain but for making a lasting difference upon others).
- 2. Create performances by which others will be inspired.

## What are the motivating factors?

- Honest representation of the music
- Ensemble's best performance
- Student's best performance
- Feeling of accomplishment
- Validation/Endorsement by others
- Winning (medals, awards, honors, trophies)
- Defeating other individuals and programs
- 3. Deciding the goal(s) and motivation(s) will help shape the process.

## LEVELS of APPLICATION

- Beginner through Professional
- Solo Performances
- Ensembles of varying sizes
- Recitals & Concerts
- All Region/Area/State Process

- Marching/Concert/Sightreading Contest
- Solo & Ensemble Contest
- Festivals
- Honor Band Process

## **ESSENTIALS for SUCCESS**

- Posture
- Breath Support
- Embouchure
- Playing position

- Hand position
- Role Models (directors, teachers, professional musicians, recordings)

#### MUSICAL CHARACTER & PERSONALITY

"The more colors you can bring to the music, [the more] you can affect somebody emotionally. [Music] is not just about displaying your technique, although that's part of it. You're trying to present the people with something that's going to move them because it moves **you** when you play it. That's where the spiritual aspect of music comes in." Jazz Trumpeter, Wallace Roney, Jr.

#### 1. Don't settle for "safe" or "comfortable" performances.

"That's [quite] an ambition, to be mellow. It's like wanting to be senile."

Composer Randy Newman (Film scores: Toy Story, A Bug's Life, The Natural, Meet the Parents, and Seabiscuit), on "middle of the road" music

#### 2. Let yourself be evident in your performances.

"Music must be very personal: only then will it be universal. We recognize ourselves in others, not in generalizations about others. A style is a personal view. The view comes first, the style follows. Sing [Play] of your self and others will know what you mean." *Bruce Adolphe* 

#### 3. Children's Book Analogy

Reading with charisma—Use funny/contrasting voices when reading a story to interest your child.

## STRATEGIES of SUCCESS

#### 1. Genre

# Baroque Ornamentation—Basic understanding of obligatory embellishments

- Ornamenting baroque music is a *necessity*
- Appoggiaturas—usually approached from above
- Trills—general rules listed below; cadential trills most common (See Examples 1 & 2)
  - Begin on, not before the beat
  - Begin on the *upper* note, not the *printed* note
  - Pacing of the speed (tempo, character, duration, proficiency of player)
  - Resolution on *printed* note
  - Non-turned vs. turned endings (nachschlag)
- Mordents—upper neighbor vs. lower neighbor (
- Turns—3, 4, or 5 note turns (start on printed or upper note)
- Embellish more on repeated sections

Example 1—Saxophone Quartet Bach/Eymann, *Prelude and Fugue in D minor* (End of Prelude)



Example 2—Saxophone Quartet
Bach/Eymann, Prelude and Fugue in D minor (End of Fugue)



# 2. Style

# Baroque Note length in Allegro music (See Example 3)

- Connected
- Staccato
- Lifted (bounced air stream often works best)
- Consistency is critical
- Tempo choices may vary from printed score, if musically tasteful



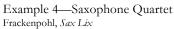








Jazz Straight vs. Swing eighth notes (See Examples 4 & 5)





Example 5—Saxophone Quartet



# 3. Articulation

Discrepancies

Printed vs. Performed (See Example 3)

Jazz

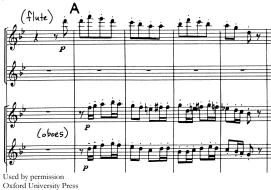
Printed (See Example 6) vs. Performed (See Example 7)





# Tempo is a determining factor (See Example 8)

Example 8—Mixed Chamber Ensemble; Marked "Andante" Jacob, Old Wine in New Bottles (Movement 2, "The Three Ravens")



#### Accents

# Variety of markings and manners of production (See Examples 9 & 10)

- Attack (front side of note)— breath vs. tongue vs. slur; light, firm, heavy, accented
- Sustain (middle of note)—shape (=, <, >); pacing of shape (subito vs. gradual)
- Release (back side of note)—duration (lifted vs. touching); manner (open/air vs. closed/tongued);
   shape (=, <, >)

Example 9—Mixed Chamber Ensemble Jacob, Old Wine in New Bottles (Movement 2, "The Three Ravens")



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Example 10—Mixed Chamber Ensemble Jacob, Old Wine in New Bottles (Movement 2, "The Three Ravens")

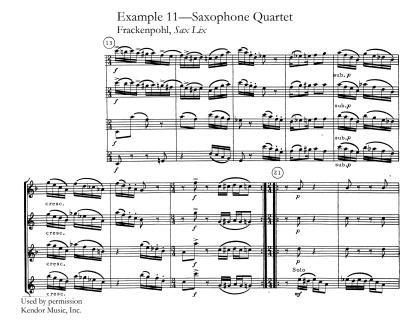


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# 4. Intensity Tools

# **Dynamics** (See Example 11)

- Avoid mezzo-everything; think extreme dynamic contrasts (floor to ceiling)
- Follow printed dynamics, but add others (with musical taste)



**Phrasing** Direction (flat, rising, falling); Contour (ebb & flow); Duration

**Articulation** Increase/Decrease degree of attack

Tempo Accelerando/Ritard if musically appropriate

Vibrato Increase/Decrease speed & width as needed

**Combination** (See Example 12)

#### Example 12—Mixed Chamber Ensemble

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## 5. Ensemble

**Accountability** Each person has individual part mastered

**Knowledge** Learn everyone's parts/roles and how they fit together

Balance Each voice leads & supports depending upon musical context (See Example 3)

**Precision** Rehearse creatively & efficiently to improve accuracy (See Example 13)

Example 13—Saxophone Quartet Frackenpohl, Sax Lix



# **6. Synthesis of Strategies** (See Example 14)

GenreAlla marciaNote DirectionBsn/Cbsn (marked #5)StyleVariedPhrase DirectionHn/Tpt (marked #4 & #6)

Articulation Varied Balance Lead & support

**Dynamics** Varied **Precision** Listen for motor (marked #2)

Example 14—Mixed Chamber Ensemble Jacob, Old Wine in New Bottles (Movement 4, "Early One Morning")



#### 7. Interpretation

"Interpretation is a strange concept: when a musician is convinced of what a piece should be, how it should sound, what it means, when a musician feels she has discovered the essence of a work, she identifies with it, embodies it, then she does not think that her performance is an interpretation: it is the piece as the composer meant it to be. An interpretation is what other musicians do." *Bruce Adolphe* 

- What is "the definitive performance?" Can it pertain to me or only others?
- Not ego driven, but strong belief that "this is the way the music goes"
- Dependent upon musical knowledge, respect toward composer, and score study
- Informed Intuition—relies upon both intellect and feeling ("instinctive knowledge")

#### 8. Logistical Procedures

**Dress Nicely** It signifies you care enough to bother

**Confidence** Be *excited* to perform; embrace the opportunity

**Eye Contact** Greet audience (judge) with a smile

Equipment Bring stands, music, mutes, etc. (plan ahead)

Set-up Determine before entering the room/stage

Warm-up Decide what the routine will be for each person

Tuning Have a routine procedure for improved intonation

**9. Composure**No matter what happens, do your best to stay composed and focused

Do not allow the "critical self" to overcome the moment

# Acknowledgments

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#### **Chamber Ensemble**

Paige Brown, flute
Jonathan Castillo, bassoon
Sarah Saenz, flute
Steven King, bassoon
Will Smith, oboe
Jennifer Lane, contrabassoon
Liz Hebert, oboe
Andrew Merideth, horn
Daniel Malacon, clarinet
Matt Reynolds, horn
Jake Hale, clarinet
Drew Fremder, trumpet
Ben Hauser, trumpet

#### Saxophone Quartet

Alex Baczewski, alto & soprano Jake Barr, tenor
Greg Newton, alto Mason Tenery, baritone

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