



UIL S.O.S.!

Strategies for Successful Performances

CLINICIAN:
Dr. Eric Wilson

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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/Eyemann, *Prelude and Fugue in D minor* (End of Prelude)

The musical score for Example 1 shows four staves of music. Each staff begins with the tempo marking "rall. poco a poco". The music consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some trills and ornaments indicated by small symbols above the notes.

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

The musical score for Example 2 shows four staves of music. Each staff begins with the tempo marking "allargando". The music features longer note values and more complex rhythmic patterns, including trills and ornaments.

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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

Example 3—Saxophone Quartet

Bach/Eymann, *Prelude and Fugue in D minor*
 FUGUE $\text{♩} = 120$

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Jazz

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

Example 4—Saxophone Quartet

Frackenpohl, *Sax Lix*

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Example 5—Saxophone Quartet

Niehaus, *Just for Show*

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3. Articulation

Discrepancies **Printed vs. Performed** (See Example 3)

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

Example 6—Saxophone Quartet
Niehaus, *Just for Show*

Musical score for Example 6, Saxophone Quartet. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves are marked with a circled '55' and a 'Solo' instruction. The first staff has a dynamic marking of *mf* and the second staff has a dynamic marking of *f*. The last two staves are marked with a circled '63' and a 'Solo' instruction. The first staff has a dynamic marking of *mf* and the second staff has a dynamic marking of *f*. The score includes various articulation markings such as accents and slurs.

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Example 7 (Articulations altered)

Musical score for Example 7, Saxophone Quartet. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves are marked with a circled '55' and a 'Solo' instruction. The first staff has a dynamic marking of *mf* and the second staff has a dynamic marking of *f*. The last two staves are marked with a circled '63' and a 'Solo' instruction. The first staff has a dynamic marking of *mf* and the second staff has a dynamic marking of *f*. The score includes various articulation markings such as accents and slurs.

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”)

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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)

Example 11—Saxophone Quartet

Frackenpohl, *Sax Lix*

13

21

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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

Jacob, *Old Wine in New Bottles* (Movement 4, "Early One Morning")

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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*

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6. Synthesis of Strategies (See Example 14)

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Genre | Alla marcia | Note Direction | Bsn/Cbsn (marked #5) |
| Style | Varied | Phrase Direction | Hn/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”)*

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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 <i>excited</i> 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

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Chamber Ensemble

Paige Brown, flute
Sarah Saenz, flute
Will Smith, oboe
Liz Hebert, oboe
Daniel Malacon, clarinet
Jake Hale, clarinet

Jonathan Castillo, bassoon
Steven King, bassoon
Jennifer Lane, contrabassoon
Andrew Merideth, horn
Matt Reynolds, horn
Drew Fremder, trumpet
Ben Hauser, trumpet

Saxophone Quartet

Alex Baczewski, alto & soprano
Greg Newton, alto

Jake Barr, tenor
Mason Tenery, baritone

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