



SESSION I

Some Things I've Learned at TBA in the Past 40 Years

SESSION II

Elements of Disrespect! – Dots, Ties, Rests, Fermatas, and other “Stuff”

SESSION III

The Musically All Inclusive Rehearsal

James F. Keene – TBA Featured Clinician

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**Texas Bandmasters Association
2015 Convention/Clinic**

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**HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

THE TEN TEACHING POINTS OF THE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM

1. Attitude (leadership, learning environment)
2. Tone Production
3. Intonation
4. Rhythm
5. Technique
6. Theory
7. Interpretation
8. Repertoire
9. Routine
10. MUSICIANSHIP (!!!)

ESTABLISHING AND “EFFECTING” THE REHEARSAL ENVIRONMENT AND PROCESS

A CHECKLIST OF PROBLEMS TO AVOID

1. Planning and Environment

- A. Inadequate score study – “My band director loves music so much that he just can’t take his eyes off it!”
- B. No systematic rehearsal plan
- C. How do the students enter the room and take their seats?
- D. Allowing rehearsals to begin late
- E. Folders incomplete, missing pages, bad copies, etc.
- F. Failure to check music for ample rehearsal letters or numbers.

2. Physical Environment

- A. Incorrect set-up or inadequate number of chairs.
- B. Inadequate or loose stands
- C. Poor lighting
- D. Conductors stand is too low or too high
- E. Storage of cases during rehearsals
- F. Storage of additional equipment
- G. Access to audio-visual equipment

3. Rehearsal Techniques —it is essential that the conductor develops the ability (and commitment) to ANALYZE – DIAGNOSE – and PRESCRIBE

- A. Is there a routine?
- B. Mumbling or speaking in a conversation voice as opposed to an oratorical voice. Support, project and enunciate!
- C. Expecting students to be mind readers – be specific!
- D. Too much talking, not enough playing
- E. Changing your mind, “Let’s start at letter [B], no wait a minute, let’s go back to two measures before [A]... etc.”
- F. Talking at length with arms and baton in “ready” position
- G. Works too long on one passage, especially one involving only one or a few players.
- H. Doesn’t make effective use of whiteboard and audio-visual aids, recordings, etc.
- I. Wastes time fixing an instrument during rehearsal (expectations)
- J. Does the effective use of analogies and metaphors take place in rehearsal?
Analogy= darkness is to light, as night is to day
Metaphor= a figure of speech in which a word or phrase replaces another to suggest a likeness (or analogy) between them.
Major= sunshine
Minor= darkness, etc.
- K. Are expectations consistent, insistent, and persistent? – Your students will play only as well in tune as you demand. Your students will play only as soft a piano as you “expect” without compromise.
- L. Are students taught to listen? – Your students will become efficient musicians only when you have taught them to recognize melodic lines, and the contour on the page as against accompanying rhythms and motives, and to listen in order to hear the difference.
- M. Are students “expected” to watch?
- N. Are there inhibitions in being singled out or participating in the “rehearsal process”?

4. Non-verbal Communication

- A. Inadequate baton technique
 - 1. Technique is the vocabulary of “NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION”.

2. Too much emphasis on technique? Too much emphasis or Artistry to the neglect of technique? – “There is no such thing as too much technique or too much artistry.” ...*Elizabeth A. H. Green*
 3. The words “watch me” are largely meaningless; instead, teach your students what to look for in the stick.
 4. Beware that you do not scold them for playing the very thing your baton has just finished indicating. Train that stick to tell the truth.
- B.** Lack of professional approach and attitudes
- C.** Is body language effective?
1. Eye Contact Facial gestures
 2. Posture and motion: hands, arms, shoulders
 3. Laban Movement

On Discipline

- a. Be careful not to adopt a philosophy of discipline sheerly for the sake of discipline, rather than artistic discipline. Artistic discipline is the conduct which provides a rehearsal atmosphere conducive to rehearsal efficient and music-making.

Perhaps Bruno Walter, the legendary conductor, said it best: “The demands of hard-boiled mediocrity easily attain their mediocre fulfillment by means of conventional discipline, I must, however, categorically declare myself in favor of order, in general conduct as well as in music-making itself.”

... “An adequate degree of external discipline is as indispensable in the artistic workshops as cleanliness and orderliness are in a well-run household.”

“This external discipline is, however, neither able, nor supposed, to achieve more than the creation of an undisturbed atmosphere for musical work...”¹

¹Bruno Walter, Of Music and Music Making (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1961), p. 117


TWENTY REASONS TO WARM UP WITH PURPOSE

“Let us assume an attitude of musical excellence”


Purposes

1. Creating “Focus” (attitude, etc.)
2. Establishing and reinforcing eye contact (2 ways)
3. Emphasizing tone (individual and ensemble)
4. “Moving” the air (quick, big and fast breaths together)
5. Skill Development (technical, reading, etc.)
6. Precision (including vertical alignment)
7. Intonation (hearing and removing beats)
8. Blend (matching sound, “experiencing” colors)
9. Balance (establishing and matching volume)
10. Style (matching note lengths, weight and note grouping)
11. Matching articulations (consonants and vowels)
12. Phrasing and Expression
13. Creating and reinforcing non-verbal communication between ensemble and conductor.
14. In essence, we are ‘calibrating’ or establishing, the pace and environment of the entire rehearsal.
15. Strive for “creative repetition” (develop mental readiness and listening skills) rather than “habituation” or non-thinking or “mindless” repetition during warm up.
16. Don’t be afraid to stop and restart (if absolutely necessary). Make sure it is **TOTALLY acceptable**.
17. Conductor’s opportunity to acknowledge good sounds and playing through facial gestures and body language (from the podium).
18. Reinforce the “enjoyment” of what we are hearing when we play with good tone, intonation, blend, balance, sonority, fusion and musicality.
19. “Practice does NOT make perfect. PERFECT PRACTICE makes perfect.” --- Vince Lombardi, Rick Pitino and others
20. “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.” --- Aristotle

GUIDELINES OF STYLE AND MUSICIANSHIP

1. In ensemble playing, parts that are melodic or thematic must be brought out. Parts that accompany or are merely rhythmic or harmonic should be subdued. The thematic part may last for only two or three notes, or it may be an extended passage of many measures. Each player must listen to the other parts at all times in order to judge the importance of his own part. (See #28).
2. Breathing must fit the phrasing. Obviously, you must determine where the phrases begin and end, and take breathes where they will not interrupt the feeling and flow of the phrases. In cases where the phrase structure cannot be determined with certainty, it is often acceptable to breathe *after* the first beat of a measure and to avoid breathing at the end of a measure.
3. When a breath is physically necessary within the phrase, it can often be musically justifiable by adding a tenuto prior to the breath.
4. A note followed by a rest should be held full value, and does not end until the rest, unless otherwise indicated.
5. Make sure that rests get full value; be careful not to “compress”. The spaces and silences between notes are just as important as the notes in conveying the feeling and mood of the piece. Allow silence to be part of the music.
6. In a slow melodic piece, groups of faster notes should usually be played with some rubato and/or tenuto.
7. In a lyrical, cantabile style, final notes of phrases should be rounded off. By tapering the last note or making a bit of diminuendo just before the release, the phrase is made to sound more finished. Avoid leaving ‘square corners.’
8. Final notes of slurred groups in up-tempo music should be cleanly and clearly released when the last note in the slur by a staccato note; if the final note were not cleanly released, the next note could not be played staccato. A staccato note must have space before and after it. However, depending on the tempo and style of the music, attention should be given that the last note of a slur is not chopped off for the sake of articulation, thus breaking the line.
9. In fast or lively music or in music of light character, notes not slurred that are equal divisions of the beat should be spaced. Notes of a full beat or more must be held full value. All *all breve*, or cut time () , ‘short’ notes would include quarter






notes, eighths, and sixteenths. The exact degree of space will be determined by the style of the music.

10. Dotted rhythms should be interpreted and played with three things in mind, a. length/rhythm; b. emphasis/weight; and c. note grouping. Example –  dotted eighth followed by sixteenth is a. 3:1 length ratio; b. (approximate) 3:1 weight or stress ratio; and c. the sixteenth note is grouped with the following note, not the preceding dotted eighth. In almost every case, there is space between the notes.
11. The longer notes of a phrase or rhythmic pattern must be played with more emphasis than shorter notes. The difference need not be great; this will depend upon the particular phrase.
12. An accented note not slurred should usually be slightly detached from the preceding note. Slightly abbreviate the note before, and play it somewhat softer than the accented note.
13. When two or more accented notes are in succession, they must be separated from each other. Each one must be slightly abbreviated, leaving a little ‘daylight’ between.
14. In syncopated rhythms, notes starting on upbeats or offbeats should usually be accented. Since they are to be accented, they must also be played in a somewhat detached style.
15. An accent in wind instrument playing should result mostly from increased force of breath, not from a percussive action of the tongue, creating distortion of the tone. Tone quality should never be sacrificed for the sake of accents.
16. Notes that are altered by accidentals and fall on the beat should usually receive stress. A notes that is not in the key of the passage being played is nearly always an important note.
17. In ensemble playing, dissonances should be stressed. Dissonances in music of traditional harmonic structure are effective because of the satisfaction to the ear in the resolution to consonant chords. By accenting the dissonance and somewhat softening the tone slightly when moving to the chord or note of resolution, the musical effect can often be considerably enhanced.
18. A short grace note should be softer than the note that follows. Too often the quick grace note, as the note that receives the attack, is played too loudly or with an accent. It is NOT the important note.

19. A long grace note or appoggiatura should be accented somewhat (e.g. “Rienzi”, “Elsa’s”), with the following note softer. The appoggiatura is a dissonant note, and must follow the rule of dissonances in being slightly stressed.
20. Trills of a beat or longer in melodic passages may often begin with one or two slow alternations of pitch before proceeding to a rapid trill. This, however, can easily be overdone; if the change from slow to fast is too long drawn out, the effect is not good.
21. Don’t hurry to get to important notes – final notes of phrases or movements, accented notes, accidentals, etc. They must be carefully ‘placed’ or even slightly delayed in order to draw more attention to their importance.
22. A pick-up note or anacrusis, must be softer than the note on the beat to which it leads. This is particularly important when the upbeat and the note on the main beat have the same value. If the upbeat note is too loud, it draws attention away from the note on the main beat, which is the important note.
23. Long notes, except at the end of a phrase, or when otherwise marked, should be sustained at an even dynamic level. They should not be allowed to diminish, or become ‘wedge-shaped.’
24. A phrase in a legato, lyrical style must build with increasing intensity to its climax, then allowed to subside again. The climax, or musical high point, may be the highest note, the lowest note, one that is chromatically altered, or a point in the phrase that is distinguished in another way. Wherever the musical “high point” occurs within the phrase, the playing must draw attention to it, if the phrase is to convey the meaning that the composer intended.
25. When a principal theme returns later in the composition, it is often acceptable to precede it by a slight ritardando. The slowing down should be slight, and just before the return, not spread out over several beats unless so marked. The ritardando prepares the listener’s ear for the return.
26. March style is detach style—separate the notes, they must not touch each other. Often, however the march composer may indicate a legato trio theme for contrast.

27. **FERMATAS**

Fermatas must be carefully interpreted and “respected”.

- a. Length of fermatas should be at least longer than the note over which it is marked and most often at least double the note value. Releases are determined by markings as follows: 1.  2.  3.  4.  // 5.  || G.P.

- b. Length of fermatas should only be determined for musical reasons, such as if it is part of a soloistic cadenza, or whether or not the fermata occurs at a “final” or “non-final” cadence.
- c. Unless it occurs over a period, the fermata does not imply the cessation of motion or sound. It should be held for a definite number of pulsations, the next entrance occurring on a pulse lying within the stress pattern. The conductor must study the score carefully to learn why the fermata was used, and what it implies.
- d. When a fermata occurs over a major-minor 7th, the chord involved is in motion, and the fermata should be of limited duration, the music proceeding directly to the next chord without a break.
- e. When the fermata occurs at a period in the music and over a major-minor 7th, the held chord is probably a bridge, either to a new key, or another movement. There should be a slight break in the tonal structure before continuing. *Note: When it occurs at a period and over a major-minor 7th, and the foregoing is not true, (band music is often edited carelessly,) consider removing the 7th of the chord from the vertical structure, but BE SURE to inform the contest adjudicators beforehand.

28. THE HIERARCHY OF BALANCE (See #1)

- a. It is the conductor’s responsibility to identify the relative importance of all parts during the score study process.
- b. If well-scored by the composer, what the conductor sees in the score, should be heard by the audience. It had been said that “it is the conductor’s responsibility to help the audience discover the melody.”
- c. In practicality, the dynamic markings are actually for the listener, not necessarily for the performer. Therefore, an identification of the relative importance of the parts must be conveyed to the ensemble.
- d. A melodic line and especially a soloist are most difficult to balance when the accompaniment is scored for the same instrumental timbres and registers.
- e. Editing or rebalancing is often needed to realize the composer’s musical intentions. The conductor must consider 1) timbral strength and 2) maturity and ability of the players in student ensembles. For above reasons, a hierarchy of balance should be established.

- f. A tutti score, with all parts marked at the same dynamic level, may require a “practical,” if not hypothetical, dynamic reassignment as follows:
- | | |
|--------|--|
| f+ | 1. Melody |
| | 2. Harmony of melodic material |
| mf—f | 3. Countermelody |
| | 4. Melodic bass line |
| mp—mf | 5. Harmonic rhythm |
| | 6. Sustained harmonic or chordal accompaniment |
| mp (?) | 7. Rhythmic accompaniment (usually percussion) |
- g. The conductor is the final “quality control officer” in bringing the score to the listener.

From The Teachings of Elizabeth A.H. Green

A compilation of handouts and clinics

Characteristics of a Skilled Conducting Technique

1. Good technique is built upon a foundation of accurate knowledge.
2. Skill comes from dedicated and correct practice.
3. The players' eyes have two jobs: to read the music and to watch the conductor.
4. "Read your music!" means "Read everything on the page – not just the notes."
5. What the eyes see gives warning to what the ears should hear.
6. Sight-reading skills develop as the mind forces the eyes to look constantly ahead to the coming beat or beats. Glancing back to "re-take" is not permitted, regardless of what one has heard.
7. It is imperative that the players' eyes be on the conductor's hands at all tempo changes – ritards, accelerandos, double bars, beginnings and endings.
8. Players should become acquainted with the several schools of time beating, in order to gain facility in "reading" guest conductors.
9. The eyes should be trained to recognize melody vs. accompaniment by the appearance of the printed page.
10. The conductor's gestures are his basic means of communication. He cannot afford to stutter.
11. The conductor's gestures should vary in response to the ever-changing forward drive of the music.
12. The timing of the gesture depends upon the conductor's ability to think ahead while listening to the present sound. Timing also governs the speed of motion of the conductor's gestures between beat points. Speed of motion and distance traveled are directly related. Both speed and distance must work within the framework of the rhythmic beat.
13. The most effective way to get students to watch the conductor is to let them individually beat time for the orchestra. The rhythm of an ensemble improves when each student has been given the opportunity to stand on the podium and beat time. (This should not be confused with conducting.) (The last five minutes of a school rehearsal may be used to give individual students time-beating experience.)
14. Students can read the conductor's beat intelligently if they know what it *is*. The short path to knowing is *doing*.
15. The path to ensemble musicianship: First the student must feel the inevitability of the constant arrival of the next beat, and the eyes must recognize instantly how much of the music has to be played on each beat – *that is, notes have to be grouped by beats*. Once these two skills have become automatic, the player can devote conscious thought to the *musical aspects* of his performance: *intonation, dynamics, tone quality, and phrasing*.