



Perspectives on Performance

CLINICIANS:

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Perspectives on Performance
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*Nature never stays at one level, there is a constant vibration –
each note in music is like a link in a chain – important and as a connection between
what has been and what will be - **Pablo Casals***

A Question of Balance

Starting Point and Common Balance Ideas

- a. Flute, Oboe, Clar., Trumpet
- b. Horn, Alto Sax
- c. Low Reeds, Low Brass

Balancing Choirs

- a. Woodwinds as an ensemble (balance to Oboe, Bsn., Bs. Clar.)
- b. Brass as an ensemble (balance to Horn, Baritone)
- c. Balance to lead chairs in Flute, Clar., Oboe, Trpt.

Balance to Color Instruments

- a. Full Ensemble
- b. Balance to Fl., Oboe, Bsn., Bs. Clar., Euph.
- c. Consider Euphonium placement in ensemble

Balance to Small Groups in Ensemble

- a. Assign small groups (use names)
- b. First Chairs
- c. Group suggestions (i.e. W.W. Quintet, Fl./Trpt.)

Achieving Color Effects with Limited Instrumentation

- a. Use Bari Sax, Bs. Clar
- b. Use Tenor Sax, Fl.
- c. Substitute Brass-Horn/Euph.

Remember 2nd Parts

- a. 2nd Clar. (i.e. balance to them in high w.w. parts)
- b. 2nd Trombone (i.e. balance to them in high brass parts)
- c. 2nd Trumpet (listen for chords in trpt. Always)

Percussion Balance

- a. Balance Perc. with ensemble (same dynamic range)
- b. Balance Perc. to Low Brass (include Perc. in sectionals at times)
- c. Balance Mallet Perc. to Upper W.W. (same sectionals at times)

Balance Exercises

- a. Modeling with Color Instruments and Small Ensembles
- b. Small Groups with Ensemble
- c. Choirs then Ensemble
- d. Designated Groups with Ensemble
- e. Remington Exercises with Balance priority
- f. Split Ensemble Remington with Half on Concert F
- g. Play Exercises with eyes Closed
- h. Use Chorales Changing Balance Requirements

What is Lyrical Playing?

Artistically beautiful, expressive playing

- a. Not loud or forceful
- b. Shaped, rubato, smooth

Rhythmic vs non-rhythmic

- a. Is all music a song or a dance?

The role of our brain in listening and enjoying

Discussing lack of agogic weight in lyrical playing

- a. Why is this hard?
- b. This is only one aspect of lyrical playing, but is the easiest one to teach and the most often neglected

Use of the metronome

An exercise to develop this skill

Some musical examples

Moving fingers and valves

Ideas on Teaching Musicality and Soloists

“Note Grouping” concepts of James Thurmond

- a. *Arsis-Thesis* concept of music for movement, expression and style (countless books on technique)
- b. Anacrusis is or *Arsis* is the note group that precedes the first beat (*thesis*) of a measure.
- c. The arsis is the generator of motion and expression.

- d. The quality of the *arsis* or motion is the most satisfying element of music.
- e. Note group is two or more notes grouped together in an *arsis-thesis* design, and perceived and executed as a unit in-order to achieve a more expressive interpretation of music.
- f. Evolution of rhythm and the metric foot and how the *thesis* developed to finally create a bar line to designate the long note as the downbeat.
- g. Movement is the progression of *arsis* to the next note (*thesis*) in the note group or motive which gives rise to movement imagery in the mind.
- h. Note grouping is a system grouping in an *arsis-thesis* succession to properly emphasize the elemental motives or phrases of a melody with respect to the importance of the *arsis* as generator of motion and expression.
- i. Discussion of note grouping in motives, periods, phrases.
- j. System and application in pedagogy, performance and conducting.
 - i. Most interesting part of phrases is not the downbeat on bar line which is usually a long note (*thesis*) but in the moving notes (*arsis*) before or at the end of the measure that move to the bar line.

Marcel Tabuteau's melodic numbering ideas

- a. Assigning numbers to the levels of volume in melody

Pablo Casals and the "Art of Interpretation" by David Blum

- a. "Technique wonderful sound ... all of this is sometimes astonishing – but it is not enough."
 - i. Relating music to the The Six Principals of *ch' i-yǔn* of the 5th century art critic Hseih Ho who documented the first fundamental canons of Chinese painting.
 - 1. Principals 2-6 - vitality of brushstroke, accuracy of portrayal, versatility in coloring, care of arrangement of composition, transmission of tradition through copying the works of earlier masters. These Five Principals are learned through study and perseverance.
 - ii. The First Principal as it relates to music is the most important – the concept of breath-resonance or life motion.
 - 1. Comes from "the silence of the soul" - the heart.
 - 2. What is inside you – your feelings for the music.
 - a. Innate feeling for form, style, background, mood, kind and quality of sound, color, balance, timbre, tempo, dynamic gradations, phrasing, expression, type of articulations
 - 3. What is the composer's intent in writing the piece?
 - 4. "It is something definite, yet it is indescribable – sense that everything is harmonious."

5. Spirit of the music comes into subtle accord with the movement of life around you.
6. It is active and passive, embracing and releasing – a profound sense of *being*.

Audiation

- a. Audiation is to music what thought is to language
 - i. The ability to hear music and comprehend music for which the sound may not be physically present,
 1. Recall, make connections, anticipate and predict.
 2. Play and hear lots of music.
 3. Learn through differences, not sameness.
 4. You must discriminate to learn.
 5. Teach patterns, tonalities, meters.

Ensemble and individual exercises to develop musicality

- a. Concentrated and varied listening.
- b. Singing or playing the musical line for the students.
- c. Rote imitation in ensemble drill.
- d. Group singing – *solfege or vowels*.
- e. Scales with direction - note groups always having the feeling of an upbeat.
- f. Scales or Clarke studies in thirds with *arsis-thesis*.
- g. Scales slurred - 1-2-1-3 etc.– floating top note as you get more disjunct - again *arsis-thesis*.
- h. Dynamics using numbers on any note, scale, motive or phrase.
- i. Vibrato on stressed or long notes.
- j. Breathing and lingering before change of direction.
- k. Tenuto and Rubato – movement of time and energy.
- l. Exercises in all styles emphasizing motion and movement – repeated notes or repeated design must not be identical.
- m. Long notes or repeated notes that stay at the same level become monotonous.
- n. Spend time to save time.
- o. Group and individual help sessions – How to?

What is the Music About? Why is That Important?

In most cases, composers take inspiration and source material from a story, culture, historic event, dance, person, or ritual that they use in compositions.

Music is ABOUT something.

Big hint as to what the music is about.....

The emotional associations, visual imagery, associations and references to other things, involves a completely different part of the brain and is

independent of the skills part. It presents a shortcut to the music. The notation is not the music; the notation just gets us close.

Examples

The Greater good.

Planning for Concert Season

Plan in May and Summer about skills needed to perform selections in the Spring.

What concepts as a director do you want to learn during concert season?

Fundamental concepts for both Fall and Spring should be the same. Do you plan more for marching than concert?

Begin teaching concepts for the Spring in the Fall.

Include the concepts you need in the marching show.

What new skill do you as a director want to learn during the year?

Identify strong soloists and sections which need to develop in the Fall.

Begin concert sectionals as soon as possible. Choose selections as early as possible as to map out the time needed to learn.

Schedule full band rehearsals beginning in February.

Suggestions for All Performances

Is a contest a performance or just an evaluation? Or is it a recording opportunity?

Is a performance something special or is it a really accurate run with few blips?

Do you teach concert etiquette?

Acknowledge ensemble, audience, applause.

When to warm up on stage and what to play.

The announcement.

What to do between selections.

Rapport with students and audience after the performance.

- a. Recognition of soloists.
- b. Have the group stand and receive audience applause.
- c. Director and group acknowledge audience.

Questions?