

Developing Musicality in Every Orchestra Classroom

CASMEC Conference
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10:00 to 10:50am / DT Salon B

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BALDWIN WALLACE UNIVERSITY

conservatory of music



“Elementary students, high school students, and professional musicians can all demonstrate this skill at very high levels of competence if the repertoire at each level permits them to do so.”

-Bob Duke

“To play a wrong note is insignificant. To play without passion is inexcusable.”

-L. Beethoven

BASIC QUESTIONS FOR TEACHING MUSICALITY

- **What are the biggest barriers to playing musically?**
 - Notes & rhythms
 - Lack of student understanding
 - Difficult to teach

- **When should we start teaching students to play musically?**
 - Immediately
 - Everyday

- **What basic skills do students need to play musically?**
 - Ability to listen, adjust, & match
 - Ability to watch, adjust, & match
 - Ability to control bow speed (50 mph +/-)
 - Ability to control bow weight (50 lbs +/-)
 - Ability to control bow contact point (Lane 3 +/-)
 - Ability to control bow area
 - Ability to transfer skills from piece to piece

TOP 10 BASIC RULES FOR PLAYING MUSICALY

1. Must watch each other at all times
2. Must listen each other at all times
3. Give every note & phrase a direction
4. Similar phrases must sound different
5. Repetitive notes must sound different
6. Long notes are never stagnant
7. Phrase endings matter
8. Not all phrases & musical lines are equally important
9. Bring out the dissonance and its release
10. Apply to small & big phrase

TOP 10 COMPOSER CLUES

1. Rhythm
2. Rests
3. Texture
4. Timbre & instruments
5. Scoring (entrances & exits)
6. Contour
7. Range
8. Tempo
9. Dynamics
10. Style & articulations

ADDITIONAL NON-PRINTED OPTIONS FOR CREATING MUSICAL CHANGES

- Alter the **tempo** (e.g. slower, faster)
- Alter the **dynamics** (e.g. louder, softer, crescendo, decrescendo, taper, grow)
- Alter the **balance** (e.g. bring out different instruments, dissonance, musical lines, timbres)
- Alter the **articulations** (e.g. remove or add emphasis)
- Add **empty time** (e.g. breath marks, bow lifts - *What's the difference?*)
- Alter **vibrato**
- Determine how the **accompaniment** can provide support or help shape

CONDUCTORS MUST LEAD BY EXAMPLE

- Must teach students to watch and react to us
- Must go beyond beating time
- Must show the musicality we want from the ensemble
- Cannot provide incompatible information to the ensemble
- Sometimes it is best to get out of the way
- Must trust the ensemble

ADVICE FROM MY FAILURES

- Teach musicality every day.
- Remove the barriers.
- Isolate the required skills & build upon them individually.
- Focus on the fundamentals.
- Do not give your students the answers – make them think, apply, & do.

“Teach...don't tell”