

FMEA 2008 CONFERENCE

"Transformation – Changing Our Perceptions"

Effective Rehearsal Techniques: Infusing your Daily Rehearsals with Musical Concepts

Presented by

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Featuring

The Gaither High School Wind Ensemble

Brian Dell, Director

Friday, January 11, 2008

11:45 AM-12:45 PM

Tampa Convention Center

Room 13-14-15-16

Clinic Literature

HARMONY IN Bb

8 measure chord progression in Bb Major (copy attached)

Bb Eb F Bb Bb Eb F7 Bb

I IV V I I IV V7 I

Can be utilized to teach basic harmony while allowing students the opportunity to hear and participate in producing "pure" or "just" intonation. (See attached "Chords of Just Intonation").

BLESSED ARE THEY

From "A German Requiem"

Johannes Brahms, Scored by Barbara Buehlman

Ludwig 5:15

FBA Grade 4* (page 1 of condensed score attached)

"A well-scored and intelligent arrangement of one of Brahms' greatest works (the first section of the "German Requiem"). Technically rather easy to play but musically quite demanding, it requires good control of dynamics (especially ability to play softly and accompany melodic

lines), refinement and blend of tone, good intonation (especially octaves), sensitive phrasing, nuance and inflection, and great flexibility. Despite the considerable abridgement of the original (which runs about 9 minutes) this arrangement is recommended for all bands capable of handling its musical and tonal demands.”

From *Music for Concert Band, a Selective Annotated Guide to Band Literature*, by Joseph Kreines

Also listed in *Best Music for High School Band: A Selective Repertoire Guide for High School Bands & Wind Ensembles*

by Thomas L. Dvorak, Robert Grechesky, and Gary M. Ciepluch
Published by Manhattan Beach Music

Also listed in *Teaching Music Through Performance, Volume 1*

Compiled and edited by Richard Miles
Published by GIA

CHORALE

Vaclav Nelhybel

Belwin / Alfred 5:00 (informational sheet attached)
(currently out of print)

“A powerful, intensely dramatic work based on a medieval Bohemian chant, developing it through various settings from the evocation of fear to that of hope at the end. It opens with a statement of the first phrase of the theme, one note at a time, with crescendo on each note built from successive entrances – all presented over a sinister and menacing snare drum rhythm. This leads to an accented tutti statement of the first phrase in unison, followed by the second phrase in bass trombone and baritone with obbligato lines in trumpets and trombones. This is succeeded by a varied statement of the first phrase in clarinets, then saxophones and bassoons. The second phrase is then taken up in canon by clarinets and baritone. The tempo now changes (Allegro, $\frac{3}{4}$, quarter=138) with a contrapuntal and canonic treatment for cornets, trumpets, and horns, punctuated by low brass and woodwinds playing the theme one note at a time at irregular intervals, with a strong rhythmic underpinning by snare drum. Another contrapuntal treatment follows, with upper winds playing the theme in canon while horns and sax play it in augmentation. The meter now changes to 4/4, with the second phrase now taken up by brass choir and percussion. This is followed by a Meno Mosso with homophonic chordal statement of the first phrase in full band, followed by a soft contrapuntal statement of the second phrase, brought to a climax leading into a Piu Vivo, presenting a canonic statement between upper and lower voices along with an 8th-note obbligato. This leads to an allargando using the final segment of the theme, which brings the work to a powerful conclusion. Requires excellent brass (trombones with security in upper register, trumpets with rhythmic security, horns with solidity and focus), clarinets with security in upper register, saxes and lower woodwinds with richness of tone and control of intonation, and intelligent, rhythmically solid percussion. The very opening requires good control of soft entrances and crescendos, while the end demands control of sonority in loud, intense playing. Highly recommended.”

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Rehearsal Suggestions

I. First, you have to get their attention!

- A. Provide a physical environment conducive to learning.
 - Neat, clean, uncluttered
 - Organized and functional
 - Free of outside noise and distraction (aural or visual)

- B. Communicate and implement a procedural system for rehearsals.
 - How to enter the room
 - Where to find the list of music to be rehearsed that day
 - Where to check for other important announcements and information (on the board)
 - How to get instruments from storage area
 - How and where to store empty cases
 - Process for making or adjusting set (chairs and stands)
 - Procedure in the case of tardiness or absence (immediate and follow-up)
 - Warm-up and tuning procedures—routine combined with some variation to provide a blend of consistent reinforcement and interest
 - Required items for rehearsal
 - Instrument
 - Music
 - Pencil
 - Accessories
 - Rehearsal policies and procedures (rules)
 - End of class (or rehearsal) procedure

- C. Prepare your plan for the rehearsal
 - Set conceptual goals. (What musical learning will take place?)
 - Study scores or method book(s) to be used in instruction.
 - Plan for specific instruction related to concept.
 - Prepare supplemental materials as needed.
 - Apply what students have learned.
 - Practice the application.
 - Evaluate and assess your teaching and their learning.
 - Provide assessment feedback to students.

II. What are the principles of quality band performance?

- A. SONORITY
 - Characteristic tone production
 - Balance
 - Blend
 - Intonation

B. CLARITY

- Time (steady, free, or somewhere in between?)
- Accuracy (notes and rhythms)
- Vertical alignment
- Articulation

C. MUSICALITY

- Interpretation
- Style projection
- Expression

III. How can you improve the sonority of your band?

A. Improve tone quality.

- a. Set the bar high. Simply insist that they get better—that each individual consistently strives to make a more beautiful sound.
 - i. Give them models. Play great recordings for them. Identify exemplary professional players and ensembles for them to seek out and listen to on their own.
 - ii. Identify and expose them to great band programs in your area. Encourage live concert attendance.
- b. Reinforce the concept—talk about it and provide examples regularly.
- c. Attend to the mechanics of breathing
 - i. correct posture—explain why it's important
 - ii. correct inhalation—efficient and relaxed
 - iii. correct exhalation—control and support of the air stream

B. Balance

- a. We must achieve balance (low voices to mid voices to high voices) in order to achieve a beautiful sonority.
- b. We must identify each component of the composition and ensure that the proper “line” is predominant at the appropriate time.
 - i. Melody
 - ii. Counter-melody
 - iii. Obligato
 - iv. Harmonic rhythm
 - v. Harmony
 - vi. Accompaniment
 - vii. Bass line

Note: This is an excellent time to explain the definition of *ostinato* and to caution students as follows, “When you have a sustained accompaniment part (long notes or a rhythmic ostinato), you must be careful not to allow the volume to creep upward as you play.”

C. Blend

- a. Like instruments matching tone quality
- b. Similar instruments matching tone qualities
- c. Dissimilar instruments matching tone qualities

D. Intonation

- a. Work on pitch and tuning, while constantly reinforcing the concept that it will only sound in tune when their individual sounds are of high quality.
- b. Assign responsibility for individual physical tuning (use of an electronic tuner to adjust the length of the instrument) to each individual student.
- c. Develop their sensitivity and discrimination with regard to pitch. Teach them to use their ears and adjust. Say to the students, “It’s ok to be wrong—if you choose “sharp” and you are wrong, then you know for sure that it was actually flat.” Use yourself as an example. Most of us are not infallible in our pitch discrepancy judgments.
- d. Utilize the “pure perfect 5ths” tuning drone.
- e. Sing, sing, sing...and then sing some more.
- f. Use buzzing on mouthpieces with brass players.
- g. Find creative ways to keep the percussionists engaged in these lessons.

IV. How can you improve the clarity of your band?

A. Time

- a. Define tempos and unify pulse. Encourage students to listen to the other players, subdivide, watch the conductor (while watching the music), and feel the pulse of the ensemble.
- b. Use a metronome to identify inconsistencies and tendencies with regard to time (pulse). A time anomaly when practiced incorrectly, becomes “the way it goes” not only in the minds of the students, but in the mind of the conductor as well. The concept of steady pulse must be internalized by all. Try playing with no conductor to build this internal pulse. The result will be the ensemble’s ability to play with steady pulse, as well as with non-steady pulse and nuance (ad libitum, affetuoso, affrettando, agitato, a piacere, appassionato, calando, con affetto, con moto, fermata, incalzando, liberamente, libero, mobile, morendo, mosso, moto, passionato, perdendosi, rallentando, ritardando, ritenuto, rubato, slargando or slentando, smorzando, sostenuto, stringendo, tenuto, etc.).

B. Accuracy of notes and rhythms—provide your students with the fundamental concepts necessary for musical literacy. Then the responsibility for correct notes and rhythms can be *theirs*.

C. Vertical alignment is the result of good time and rhythmic accuracy

- a. Work for matching articulations
- b. Attend to the beginnings and the ends of the notes.
- c. Attend to the duration and the shape of notes.

D. Improve articulation for proper style execution.

- a. Convey the concept that articulation is the vehicle for expression of different styles. Play recorded examples of basic styles—models.
- b. Many young players have trouble playing short, light, or separated. Work on physical articulation first to eliminate fundamental problems. Use analogies to encourage continuous support of the air stream and lightness of the tongue. Demonstrate on your own instrument and/or use outstanding students as models.
- c. Inability to play connected or smooth.
 - i. “Play 4 quarter notes with a whole note of air.”
 - ii. “Music happens between the notes.”

V. How can you improve the musicality of your band?

A. Interpretation—It is the conductor’s responsibility to lead the ensemble in the appropriate direction, culminating in a collaborative music-making experience.

B. Style

- a. Research the composer (arranger) and his/her intent.
- b. Study the historical context.
- c. Define the essential elements of the style.
- d. Find model recordings.
- e. Share your findings with your students. Make the music relevant for them.

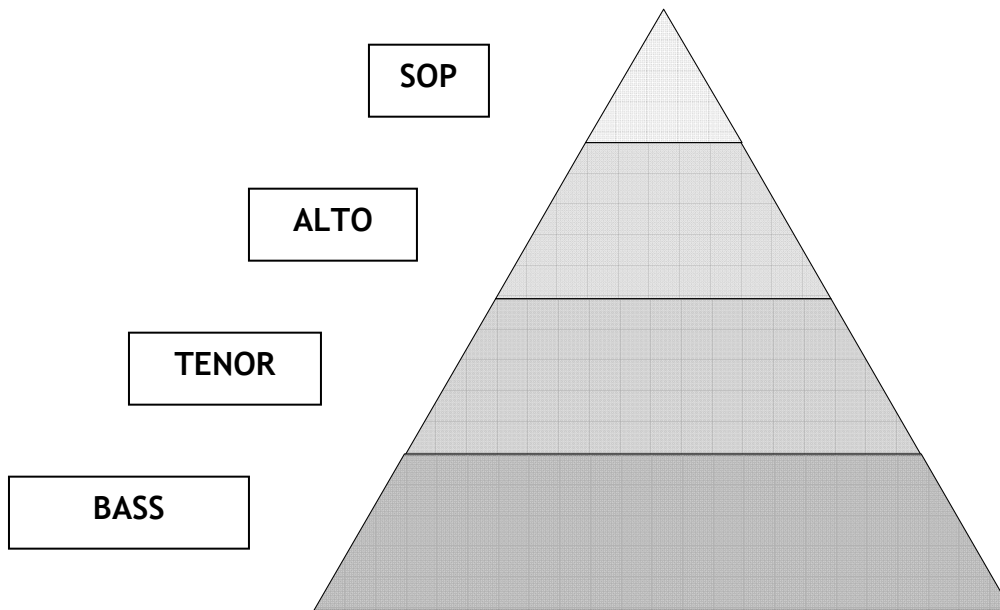
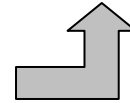
C. Expression

- a. Vertical playing must be transformed to horizontal playing
 - i. Shape the phrase.
 - ii. Connect the notes.
 - iii. The line has to GO somewhere.
 - iv. You have to SAY something with your performance of that melodic line.
 - v. The music happens between the notes.
 - vi. Repeated notes or patterns in a melodic line must DO something.
 - vii. Play it as if you were singing.
 - viii. Stretch the upbeats and/or the weak beats (concept of elongated notes of syncopation).

IMPORTANT—ALWAYS set and maintain high musical expectations of your students. The suggested techniques can and should be applied in musical context.

NOTES _____

Your Band's Sonority—Taking it to the NEXT Level



The Basics

- Characteristic Tone Production
 - Concept of Sound
 - Posture and Breathing
 - Embouchure
 - Articulation
- Balance
 - Pyramid
 - Adjustments Dependent Upon the Literature
- Blend
- Intonation
 - “Just” or “Pure” Intonation and “Tempered” Tuning
 - Wind Band Application and Rehearsal Suggestions
 - Use of recorded perfect 5ths or adjustable keyboard
 - Sing, Buzz, Play
 - Awareness of pitch adjustments on specific intervals—see chart
 - “Harmony in Bb” with audible perfect 5ths as support

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