Summer 2009 Issue

Music Matters

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PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY MUSIC TEACHER

Music Matters

Official Publication of **The Foundation for Music Education**

Volume No. 2, Issue No. 1: Summer, 2009

In this issue:

Music Matters

The Foundation for Music Education

For those of you who are new to our organization, a brief introduction is in order. The Foundation is a multi-faceted, not for profit organization, with the sole mission of promoting activities to enhance and advocate music education through support of music educators. The information

contained in this publication is but one means of educator support. The Foundation is excited, as the newly launched Music Educator Resource Network (MERN), purposefully supporting the newest members of the music education profession, now becomes the official mentoring network of the Texas Music Educators Association.

Additionally, plans are in the works for a variety of ongoing activities and events designed specifically to generate funding to promote music education. While The Foundation for Music Education has its roots deeply in Texas, its mission is of a national scope.

Call for Articles

We sincerely hope you find the articles in this issue helpful. Music Matters seeks to represent all facets of music education. Submissions for publication are welcomed and encouraged. Details regarding submission for future issues are available on the final page of this issue.

- Keith Dye

COMMON CLARINET SECTION EQUIPMENT ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

- *Rick Yancey*

Do you have intonation problems in your clarinet section despite good players and good equipment?

How do you raise the level of concern of your clarinet players with regards to reeds?

After working with my own clarinet section and others for many years, I find that many clarinet sections have problems that can be traced to equipment issues. This article contains suggestions that non clarinet playing directors may find helpful.

Many years ago, we played on students instruments more often than seems to be current practice. We had a spray can of "Sani-spray" that we sprayed on the mouthpiece before and after we played it. My observation is that in most cases, when I played on the students' clarinet, I sounded very similar to how they sounded. In other words, the kids that sounded good were playing on a good set up and vice versa. The mouthpiece, reed, barrel, and ligature combination is crucial to success, even more so than the brand of instrument.

Mouthpieces/Barrels

There are many terrific, high end clarinet mouthpieces available. I play a Vandoren M13. Some great student players that I have coached play on mouthpieces by Greg Smith, Hawkins, Gigliotti, and the Vandoren M15. The great sound that these mouthpieces get comes at a price. They often play flat or right at pitch, and a shorter barrel is needed. Most of your clarinet players likely have a 66 mm length barrel. In many cases, the length is engraved on the barrel. If you don't know the length of a barrel, you can measure it. If some of your clarinetists have these high end mouthpieces, and other clarinets in the section don't, intonation problems can result. A shorter barrel, 64 mm or so may be necessary. If the band tunes higher than A440, this is even more important. The combination of mouthpiece and barrel is crucial; they are not independent of each other. Moennig barrels are Buffet barrels with an altered bore. I have found them to be excellent and I think that they improve throat tone intonation. These barrels come in all lengths.

Level of Concern

Try to raise the level of concern regarding equipment with your clarinet section. If you manage to raise their concern, they are likely to raise their standard of playing as well. Have an inspection of their cases. Make them remove any broken reeds and trash from their cases. Take note of any lipstick on their reeds! Vacuum out their cases and insist that the students keep them clean. Check their personal reed inventory. Discuss brands and strengths of reeds and how they get broken in and how they wear out. Time honored stories of slime on the back of the reed, mouthpiece jelly, worms, etc are useful to keep them thinking about reed and mouthpiece care. Clarinets should be swabbed several times with a cloth swab after each rehearsal. Take off the mouthpiece and swab the entire clarinet, always in the same direction, bell to barrel. Mouthpieces should be swabbed a couple of times a week. Don't just tell them to do this, observe them do it daily as your rehearsal concludes.

Reeds

Most students are not as concerned as they need to be with reeds. A reed is not a static piece of equipment like their clarinet or mouthpiece, it is an organic, changing product.

COMMON CLARINET SECTION EQUIPMENT ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS, cont.

Reeds must be soaked or moistened to prepare them for playing. This should take at least 45 seconds, perhaps several minutes. The reed needs to go into the student's mouth while they assemble the clarinet. This does interfere with the important exchange of verbal information and clarinet gossip that takes place before each rehearsal, but that is the price they must pay!

The student should then look at the end of the tip of the reed to see if it is flat. The reed can be put flat on the table of the mouthpiece and pressed flat with the thumb. Slight flexing of the reed is also helpful. The reed should then be put on the mouthpiece. The ligature should be already on the mouthpiece and pushed up. The reed comes down, butt end down so as to not damage the tip. Great care should be taken to get the reed on straight, and at the desired height. You should see the students examining this intently, and it may take several re-positioning attempts. If this happens quickly and on the first try every time, it is likely not being done correctly.

Reeds must be taken off the mouthpiece at the end of rehearsal, and wiped off. They should be stored in a reed guard or on a piece of flat glass with rubber bands to hold them flat. The reed guard or glass should be stored in a sealed plastic bag. You may notice that as a reed ages and wears out, it sounds "buzzy" and looks darker. This is because the saliva goes into the pores of the reed, then evaporates, leaving sediment behind. On the next playing, new saliva goes in and new sediment. When the pores fill up, the reed is shot. If you store the reeds in a sealed environment, then they don't dry out as much, and thus less new moisture goes in and less sediment. The reeds will last longer. Many of the reeds that you buy are not going to be good enough to play, or "keepers."

The following tips will help you select good prospective reed candidates.

Look at the butt end of the reed. If it is thicker on one side than the other, it is not going to be good.

Hold the reed up to the light so that you can see the architecture of the reed. The lighter areas are thinner and vice versa. A notable imbalance will be a problem.

As students try out reeds, the sound that they hear is not the same as the listener hears, much as your voice sounds a lot different when you hear a recording of yourself. A good reed should have a slight buzz in the sound, and it should blow freely. A good reed prospect will play loudly on the first try.

The backs of reeds should be polished by rubbing them on a piece of high grade paper. Look at the back of the reed after you do this. The shiny area is flat. Repeat as needed.

I thin the tip of most reeds with a strip of very fine sandpaper. This must be done very sparingly, and only mature students should be encouraged to do it. Private clarinet teachers should adjust the reeds of their students as they do their own.

And Finally...

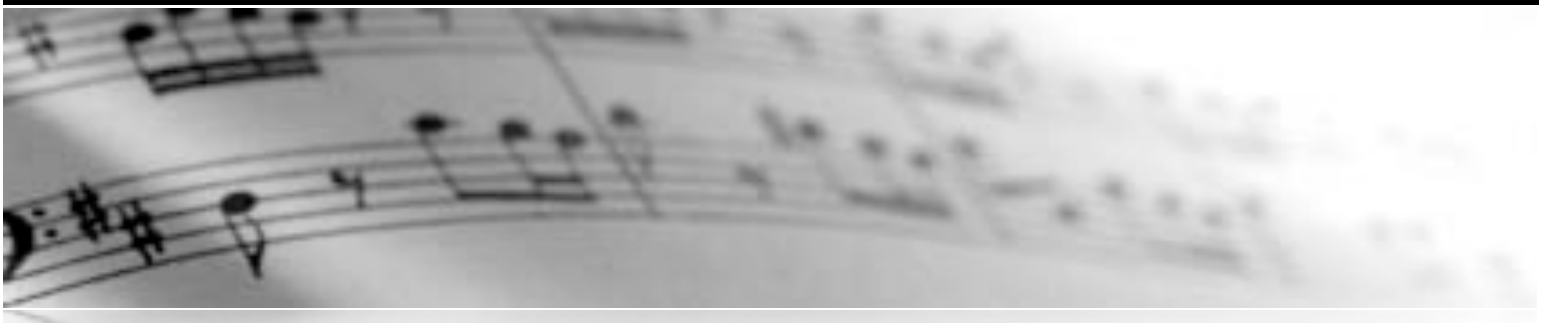
Your clarinets take longer to warm up than the instruments in your band that are made of metal. If you tune the clarinets too early in the rehearsal, they will be very sharp by the end of rehearsal.

Clean tone holes periodically with a Q-tip. Every year or so, take off the register key and clean the register tube with a pipe cleaner. You will get out a little plug of gunk.

Clarinet players and band directors need to be aware that the louder that the clarinets play, the lower the pitch goes, and vice versa. They also need to know that the brass and flutes go the opposite way!

Good luck with all this, and as a UIL judge once wrote on my UIL concert sheet: Clarinets, don't squeak!

Rick Yancey is in his 33rd year of teaching and is presently Director of Instrumental Music and orchestra director at Lamar High School in Houston.



Ten Easily Integrated Strategies to Boost Mallet Proficiency in Beginning Percussionists

- Chris Dye

Many teachers struggle with developing successful mallet percussionists in the beginning band. Often their reading skills seem to develop more slowly than on other instruments and frustration builds that leads to many just becoming "drummers." Some directors resort to having piano background requirements for students to begin percussion study. While piano lessons can give students a great springboard for mallet percussion success, there are simple methods that can help all beginners develop the reading and muscle memory skills inherent to the instrument.

1. Keyboard mallets are not snare sticks – Playing on a keyboard percussion instrument represents two major shifts from the snare drum. The surface of the instrument will not provide the same rebound, and the balance of the mallets is far different. Help to ease this transition by working with keyboard mallets on a drum or pad before moving to the mallet instrument. Stress the need for the wrist stroke to provide more of the rebounding motion; this will set students up for optimal tone production on the keyboard.

2. Shifting from the beginning – Covered extensively in Leigh Howard Steven's *Method of Movement for Marimba*, the idea of shifting is that the rebound of one note should also include the lateral travel needed to prepare for the next note. By requiring shifting from the very first notes on mallets, students are forced to learn to keep their eyes reading forward on the music and any "hunt-and-peck" mallet playing is eliminated.

3. Two hands, one hand, both hands – When approaching a new phrase of music, after counting the rhythms and naming the notes, perform the passage four times. The first time, using no mallets, have the students physically touch each bar with both hands. The exaggerated physical motions this requires will quickly build muscle memory and appeal to many students' tactile sense. Then, have the students play the passage with one mallet only using each hand and then finally with an appropriate sticking that integrates both hands.

4. Visual scales – Introduce scales not only with note names, key signatures, and interval patterns but also by creating visual images of each scale. This can be done either at the instrument or by creating worksheets with keyboard layouts. Have students mark each note in the scale so they can see the pattern and visualize which notes are "legal" in that key. Likewise, also practice marking the five notes that are "illegal" in each major key. For some students, picturing the five notes to avoid is easier than recalling the seven notes to aim for.

Ten Easily Integrated Strategies to Boost Mallet Proficiency in Beginning Percussionists, cont.

5. The "peek" method of muscle memory building – Many beginners struggle with the desire to look back and forth between the music and the instrument for each note. Give them specific guidelines for how often they can "peek" at the keyboard. Start with "no peeking" and forgive them in advance for the wrong notes while encouraging the correct directional movements. Gradually allow more peeking, but help students plan out where the most critical moments are that they may need to look down (large leaps, complex stickings).

6. Covers on – For those most stubborn learners who struggle with fluent reading, have them play with the dust cover on the instrument (for bell kits, a thin towel or pillow case can work well). Mark a reference note on the cover in masking tape and have the students rely on their muscle memory for the rest. This can also be a useful tool for ear-training, as students lose the visual reference for right and wrong notes.

7. Teach deductive stickings – Have students carefully label stickings in their music by giving them specific guidelines that will empower them for good choices. Have them first find large intervallic leaps and notes on either extreme of their register and mark them accordingly (generally landing the right mallet on the highest notes and the left on the lowest). Then have them try to fill in the rest using alternating stickings and have open discussions about where double-stickings may be necessary.

8. Musicality every day – Performing a wide variety of phrasing, dynamics, and accents comes more easily on percussion instruments than on wind instruments, so insist that they use these tools early on. Give the percussionists a dynamic or phrase shape of the day and have them apply it to all of their scales or other exercises, giving them a large repertoire of musical expressions they will be more likely to apply later.

9. All the parts – When performing beginning band music, where the range is limited by the physical development of the wind players, use notation software to transpose all of the parts for mallet percussion. This can prevent the boredom of reading in a five or six note range, give them valuable bass clef reading practice, and provide a useful pitch reference for other sections in full rehearsal.

10. Give them inspiration – All of your beginning percussionists have been exposed to famous drumset players and most have probably seen rudimental drummers in marching bands and drum corps. Bring in recordings and especially videos of great mallet performers as well to show them the level of virtuosity they can achieve.

Chris Dye is an assistant band director at Frenship High School in Wolfforth, Texas. He is a graduate of The Schwob School of Music, Columbus State University and Texas Lutheran University.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Marcia Zoffuto

Introduction -

The following is a handout from a clinic Marcia Zoffuto presented for the directors and the WTAMU Band Camp only a month before her death. I went expecting it to be a guide to making a band sound great (which she did so well). There was some of that, to be sure, but, as you will see, it was much more about the philosophical underpinnings of teaching: how to treat students and how to motivate them not just to be better players, but better human beings.

The clinic was not only informative, it was inspiring; delivered in her own inimitable way, with grace, charm, and wit, and with great wisdom. Of course, Marcia knew she was seriously ill at that time, and I strongly suspect she knew the end was near. As a matter of fact, she conducted her last concert at the camp a mere three weeks before she died. But there she was, completely absorbed with the two things most precious to her: kids and music.

Whoever coined the phrase "tough love" must have had MarcIa in mind. My, how she loved her students. But she was tough, too, always demanding everything they could give, and sometimes a little more. As one who was lucky enough to be her college flute teacher and band director, perhaps the highest praise I can give her is to say that she was herself the kind of student she expected her own students to be. And that's about as close to perfection as one can get in this life.

- Dr. Gary Garner

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Create your own "ivory tower."

Take small steps

Challenges are the name of the game

Pick your battles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT, cont.

Establish goals, expectations and basic requirements for learning within your own circumstances.

We must literally be willing to begin again and again over the course of the learning process.

Creative teaching is preferable to "fixed" methods.

Mix and match approaches

On the spot trial and error

No "tried and true, guaranteed" method for success in every situation

Student-oriented delivery and approach

Established direction and trust between students and instructors creating a secure learning environment

Fanaticism achieves results.

"The actual arrival at a goal always creates a turmoil unconnected to any previous imaginings."

Certain principles always seem applicable to me.

Seek the most simple form of truth through music

Strive for logic and consistency

Focus on a sequential progression of acquired skills

NEVER establish a "ceiling of learning"

Be and trust yourself

ALL students matter

"We are in the business of making beautiful things. Period! The University of Southern California, where I teach, places great emphasis on the crafts of counterpoint and orchestration, but I remind students that these skills are no guarantee of artistic music. You have to add this to all of the things that are difficult to teach: intuition, a sense of wildness, courage, and a love of mystery." - Frank Ticheli

EDITORS NOTE: I know many of you had valuable contact with Marcie as a clinician and/or colleague. We welcome any and all feedback and elaboration on her presentation outline above based on your personal memories of her impact on your professional development. The hope is to republish, as a tribute to Marcie, the above in a future issue, including all of your recollections and details. These may be sent to kdye@mac.com.

- K. Dye

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

THOUGHTS OF OUR FUTURE MUSIC EDUCATORS

Insight for Young Directors: A Conversation with O. T. Ryan

- Elissa Rice

"During 43 years, hundreds of kids have been through the band halls. My goal was to give them an opportunity to develop two traits, responsibility and persistence. If those two traits are present, everything will fall into place. I was giving them the opportunity to grow up. I never felt I had to justify what I am doing." – O. T. Ryan

As we sit across from each other in an ensemble room in the music building that bears his name, I can't help but wonder, "What has O. T. Ryan figured out that so many band directors haven't?" The thing is that O. T. Ryan is 81 years old and retired more than fifteen years ago. Instead of basking in his retirement with leisurely golf games or regular fishing trips, he comes to the high school every single morning, rain or shine, to work with the band students. This question has been lingering on my mind since I met Ryan eight months ago. It is what brings us together on a cool April morning to talk about his years as a band director, and maybe, a few things he has learned along the way.

What can young music educators learn from the life and career of O. T. Ryan? As a young music educator, I often hear warnings of and stories about "band director burn-out." This occurs when talented musicians develop resentment towards their career and, in some cases, leave the field altogether. After only three years as a full-time band director, I can easily see how people lose sight of their love for band and the reasons they entered the field at all. O. T. Ryan was born on August 12, 1947, in Livingston, Texas, but spent most of his school years in Lubbock, Texas. His interest in band was sparked when he saw the Lubbock High School band marching in the street. In sixth grade he signed up for band. His first band director was Joe Hadden, whom Ryan later followed to Texas Tech University. After graduating from Lubbock High School, Ryan enlisted in the United States Navy from 1944-1945. Upon returning from the Navy, Ryan enrolled in classes at Texas Tech where he earned both a Bachelor and Master of Music Education.

After graduating from Texas Tech in 1950, Ryan became the junior high school band director in Plainview, Texas under "Chief" Davidson. Also in 1950, Ryan married his wife, Pat, at First Baptist Church in Plainview, where they are still members. Pat also had a long career as an educator, teaching elementary school in Plainview for 20 years. The Ryans have four children, who all went through the Plainview High School band program. In recent years, their family has grown to include ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Ryan served as Chief Davidson's assistant until Davidson's retirement in 1964, when he was promoted to Director of Instrumental Music and Director of Bands in the Plainview Independent School District. He remained in this position until his own retirement in 1993. During his 43-year career, O. T. Ryan maintained a total enrollment of 750-900 students in thePlainview instrumental music program, one of the largest in Texas.

His marching bands received 29 consecutive "Superior" ratings at University Interscholastic League (U.I.L) competition, a streak that is still going. Currently, it is up to 71 after the 2008 marching season of the "Powerhouse of the Plains" band. Bands under his directions received 137 first division ratings and 33 Sweepstakes awards, the highest rating given by U.I.L.

Music scholarships were established in Ryan's honor by the Plainview High School class of 1972. He also served as President of Texas Bandmasters Association in 1976 and was named "Bandmaster of the Year" in 1982. In 1983, he was selected for the American Bandmasters Association. Ryan has served as an adjunct music professor at Wayland Baptist University and guest conductor for the Plainview Symphony. In 1993, Ryan was chosen as Plainview's "Man of the Year." He was also named to the Plainview Centennial "Circle of Honor" in 2007.

In addition to an impressive career in music, Ryan has been an active volunteer with Meals on Wheels, Hospital Auxiliary, and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). After retiring from Plainview High School, Ryan became the U.I.L. Region 16 Executive Secretary, a position he held until 2007. At that point, he returned part-time to work with the Plainview High School band in the Ryan-Davidson Music Building. He arrives on time, every morning, to help the band directors and students.

Upon examination of the nearly hour-long interview, five major themes emerge. These themes offer insight into the longevity of O. T. Ryan's life in band as well as offer both direct and indirect advice for music educators, particularly those in the early phases of their careers.

Get Along

"I think the first thing that you better learn is to get along. Some people come out on their charger and think they're going to change the world. Well, OK, if you can do it and get along." –O. T. Ryan

Both on-record during the interview, and off-record in our personal interactions, O. T. Ryan often emphasizes the importance of "getting along." This is an important life skill for anyone, but is particularly significant in a field that involves a high degree of specialization and large numbers of students. Teaching band requires expertise in woodwind, brass and percussion pedagogy. Successful band directors also must be proficient in score study, conducting, have a broad repertoire of wind band literature, marching techniques and many other technical and musical skills. This is an enormous amount of material, and can best be handled as a team, each director contributing his or her strengths and gaining from the strengths of the others. Through this collaboration, students will receive the highest possible music education. When music educators don't work well with others, it is the students who ultimately suffer.

Getting along is difficult professionally because it requires the abandonment of ego. Music teachers who work as part of a team do not always get to choose how concepts are taught or situations are handled. It is essential that each member works toward the common goal, and contributes to the whole, regardless of their personal opinions. Ryan specifically describes this collaboration in the interview. He speaks often and highly of the influence of Chief Davidson on his teaching. This relationship will be explored in more detail in a future section. The current importance of Ryan's relationship with Davidson is that they had to work together in every way just to get by.

He also shares how they found help when Plainview only had two band directors (there are currently eight), before on-line resources such as YouTube were available and private lessons simply were not standard. During these times, Ryan would often call percussionist Paul Lovett in Chicago for help. Lovett would give him private lessons over the telephone, playing snare rolls and rudiments on pie pans. In his words, "we helped each other. If it hadn't been that way, I couldn't have survived."

The idea of getting along also applies to other professional relationships, specifically those between teacher and administrator. Administrators can be a great friend to music educators by acting as an advocate for music, the teachers and the students. Onthe flip side, a tense or strained relationship with a school administrator can truly harm the students, the band program, and even the employment environment

On the flip side, a tense or strained relationship with a school administrator can truly harm the students, the band program, and even the employment environment and status of the educator.

Be Flexible

"Every kid is a different situation, every band is a different situation and you have to be in tune to what's going on enough to realize how to adjust to it. That's what it is, every kid, every thing, is different. . . always keep flexible, always keep learning. Always be careful about how you say, 'This is the only way,' because with another kid it might not be the only way. So always keep flexible, always get along." – O. T. Ryan

Although the two pieces of advice to "get along" and to "be flexible" are very similar, I hope to draw the distinction here. For these purposes, getting along refers to professional relationships such as working with other band directors and school administrators. Flexibility refers to decisions directly influencing the students, either as a group or on an individual level. Both are incredibly valuable and sometimes difficult attitudes to maintain.

Professionally, it requires the abandonment of ego at times, in order to comply with the team philosophy or goal. In the classroom, it requires both planning, and departure from that plan. Ryan describes his ability to maintain flexibility through lesson planning for the entirety of his career. "I made a lesson plan each day for all of my years. I don't think I ever followed that lesson plan once, but I had an idea of what I was supposed to do, what I needed to do." Often young teachers will remark at how often they must depart from their lesson plans. It is essential to note that having goals and a plan for each rehearsal allow for maximum assessment and flexibility, thus offering the best education for students.

Flexibility is also necessary in interactions with students. There is no one size fits all approach to classroom management or motivation. One may notice that each year their band has a different personality, set of strengths and challenges. Even within a single program, there will be great variety. This is very easy to see through sectional rehearsals. No two sections or classes will be exactly the same, and this requires flexibility on the part of the educator.

Find a Mentor

"I got a real good basis on band, how to teach band, through [Chief Davidson]. He'd let me go, and I'd head off into the wrong direction, and he'd pull me back. . . There's no way that I could have thanked him enough for all of the things that he did. I can't say enough about working under him." – O. T. Ryan

Ryan speaks highly of the fourteen years he served as Chief Davidson's assistant before being promoted to Director of Bands. He gives a lot of credit to Davidson for his own successes as a director. He shares how cutting edge Davidson's rehearsals were, especially in his use of technology. Ryan also describes how Davidson taught him how to hear intonation and tune his bands.

Finding and developing a relationship with a strong mentor is incredibly important for educators, particularly young educators. This is very compatible with Ryan's advice to "get along." Recognizing that even a world-class music education is incomplete is an invaluable lesson. Although he repeatedly acknowledges significant advances in music teacher training, Ryan makes the distinction between studying music education and practicing music education. "When you get out, it's a whole other thing because suddenly it's not what you do, it's what you get the kid to do, and there's a BIG difference." For any educator, it takes time to practice these skills and hone teacher intuition and decision-making. Strong mentors can help to bridge this gap and guide young educators to make effective decisions sooner.

There are many reasons why young educators do not develop mentor relationships with more established directors. Some may feel that it is a sign of weakness to ask for help. Others may be isolated if they are in a rural community, or a school where they are the only director. There also may be teachers who are afraid of imposing on the time of older or retired directors. I believe this is a common misconception, and that more experienced directors usually would be honored to act as a mentor for a young teacher.

Family and Band

"And all my kids came through the band with me and it was ok. . . They only thing different about them is they called me 'Daddy' instead of 'O.T.' (laughing). They came through alright. . . They weren't an embarrassment to me, I might have been to them, don't get me wrong! But they adjusted to that so I was glad they were there." – O. T. Ryan

Finding the balance between maintaining a healthy family life and successful career can be difficult for any person. Band directors are no exception. O. T. Ryan has been married to the same woman for the last 59 years. Certainly, Pat is very understanding of the time required of a band director. As I prepare for the interview, I can't help but think that there must be more to it.

The Plainview High School Band has not always been a part of the school, beginning as a town band without funding from the school district until the 1960's. During the first ten years of his career, Ryan describes how the band and its directors had to fundraise all money required to buy instruments, uniforms, music, or to take trips. Ryan expresses lingering resentment towards the time spent away from his family during the years that he regularly worked twelve-hour or longer days. Perhaps the fact that it bothers him is exactly what helped him and Pat to accommodate this schedule with their family.

One such accommodation Ryan found, when there are not enough hours in the day, is to combine family and band. Ryan shares that all four of his children participated in the Plainview High School band while he taught there. He speaks fondly of those years, not because of their musical achievements (none are professional musicians), but because of his family being with him. Pat Ryan still accompanies O. T. to Plainview Band events such as the holiday party and band banquet. It seems that the combination of having an understanding spouse and the ability to include his family in band events helped Ryan to balance a successful band career with a successful family life.

Teach Life Skills Through Music

"By the way, I've lived long enough to have a lot of ex-students. You know they have these reunions. They don't ever mention the music they played! One of them mentioned it, one time. They always say, 'I learned how to survive in the world and how to do good with my job and to try and get along.' They don't ever say, 'Oh, I'm so thrilled that we played this music.' I was amazed at that. I didn't ever know that they paid that much attention to it. But they did." – O. T. Ryan

O. T. Ryan is incredibly passionate about the value of music education. He can "talk shop" with the best of them, and often does. Evidence of this can be found in the transcript of the interview found in the Appendix. For the purposes of this paper, it is important to note that Ryan feels profound pride in the non-musical skills taught through participation in band. These life skills are the same that Ryan values professionally: "Be on time. Do your best. Get along with people." Certainly, few people would argue with the value of those three statements.

Ryan describes specifically how these skills are taught during band rehearsal. "It's always important to always demand that the student develops a habit of doing the best that they can. I also think it's a habit. They can either learn to play in a slovenly way, miss a note, don't worry about it. Or they can say, 'Uh oh, I missed a note, I better fix it.'" Musically, this is also immediately valuable. When a music teacher is not constantly fixing notes and rhythms, he or she is able to truly teach music. Through these experiences, students develop skills that can be carried into any future career, in or out of the music profession.

These lessons are taught, even if not explicitly stated, in music classrooms across the world. Many bands adopt the motto "If you're early, you're on time. If you're on time, you're late," which is a good example of teaching life skills through participation in band. Likewise, good teachers everywhere expect students to do their best. Very few teachers encourage students to conflict with their peers and teachers. I believe the difference between these teachers and master teachers, like O. T. Ryan is that the master teachers are conscious and deliberate about sharing these lessons with their students.

Conclusion

Clearly, much remains to be learned from men and women like O. T. Ryan. These master teachers who have made it to the end of their careers, and continue working to help young educators provide valuable music education to today's youth. No professional journey is without difficulty, but heeding the advice of these seasoned veterans can assist young educators to successfully and happily navigate this journey.

Elissa Rice is pursuing the Masters in Music Education while a Teaching Assistant at Texas Tech University. She received her BME from The University of Oklahoma and taught as a middle school band director in the Frisco Independent School District for three years.

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Become Your Own Best Teacher: A Guide for the College Music Major

- Dr. Lisa Garner-Santa

Discovering the Teacher Within

Having a teacher who is knowledgeable and inspired is an important component to staying motivated, but ultimately the motivation to develop as an artist must come from within. As a student you will be responsible for guiding your learning. You will have opportunities to choose activities that support your growth, seek knowledge that supports your interests, and practice in ways which develop your own unique sense of musical expression. You will spend a few hours a week under the guidance of your applied teacher, but you will spend the other 165 hours (minus 56 hours, give or take a few, for sleep!) of the week being your own best teacher. It is important to understand that progress and growth in any discipline is the responsibility of the one engaged in it. Your external teacher can provide inspiration, enthusiasm, perspective, and other types of input, but ultimately it is the teacher within that must process and apply that input, supplement it with additional material (listening, research, individual inquiry), and evaluate and re-evaluate progress and purpose. Knowing your intentions and following through with consistent action is an important aspect of the creative process and is necessary to efficiently and effectively develop technical skill and musical creativity. However, it is also equally important to understand and accept that technical and creative goals may change as you learn more about the process and about your unique self.

Staying Motivated

"Know Thyself!"

In order to stay motivated to practice, it's a good idea to reflect on what has motivated you to this point, the point where you have decided to pursue music as a career, and to invite those aspects into your planning. Here are some questions that may help you discover what sorts of things inspire you to practice. This is by no means an exhaustive inquiry. Invite additional reflection. Write your responses down and share them with your teacher.

What is it about music that has led you to pursue it as a career?

When do you feel inspired to practice?

What time of day do you enjoy practicing?

Where do you enjoy practicing?

How long can you practice without losing interest?

If you were registered for an upcoming competition or audition, would you feel inspired to practice?

If you had a recital or performance date planned in a few weeks would you feel inspired to practice?

If you had a technical or musical goal for the week would you be inspired to meet it?

If you had a date with a practice partner would you be inspired to practice?

Are you intrigued learning new pieces?

Do you enjoy uncovering and discovering musical details by applying techniques of music theory?

Do you enjoy reading about the historical context in which a work was written?

Which musical artists do you find inspiring? (Don't limit your answers to flutists or to classical musicians.) What is it about their performances that inspires you?

Do you have other ideas or thoughts about what motivates you?

Set Mindful Goals

As a university teacher in Texas, I often find that I am assisting students with recovery from "All-State Syndrome." This disease manifests itself in the individual as the tendency to directly relate self-worth to the placement outcomes of auditions. Audition placement (for example "winning first chair") has been the primary motivator throughout the development of many young flutists. It has earned them recognition through achievement (certainly a worthy reward) and has probably given them many opportunities for "sparkle time" (those moments when they get the big solo in the orchestra or band. And honestly, who doesn't love and need a little "sparkle time"?!). But choosing a career in music really requires a completely different mindset. At some point you will reach the top, the place where you've won first chair (or a chair) in an orchestra, the place where you are the music educator (the one chartering the bus for the band trips instead of the one on the bus goofing off), or perhaps some other career place that provides "job security."

A Guide for the College Music Major, cont.

Chair tests and auditions will be a thing of the past. So, without the audition, what is going to be the motivating factor to practice? Music is not a competitive sport (just think of what would happen to an ensemble if everyone were vying for higher, faster, and louder) but a collaborative art (interaction with others, both musicians and audience, to create a musical experience). A shift must happen. To be successful (and happy) in a career in music you have to shift from attachment to winning to an acceptance of the creative process, which by the way, never ends. That's what makes it so wonderful! Take on the responsibility of becoming a great "artist," not only a great "instrumentalist or singer." What does that mean? Well, reflecting on that statement will lead you to some interesting thoughts, and most likely questions, about your own ideas related to musical artistry.

So with all of this in mind, is competition a bad thing? Not at all. Performance opportunities motivate us (or at least the majority of us) to practice, and it is only through practice (whether physical or mental) that we can nurture our abilities to create, to get outside of our "music box" so to speak. Using competitions, from placement auditions to young artist competitions, as performance deadlines has great value. You just have to be thoughtful about setting mindful goals related to competitions.

"Winning" an audition or competition as a "goal" can certainly be motivating. This is what drives athletic performance. We can all confirm that by watching a few moments of any year's Olympic Games. However, being too attached to winning can cause feelings of defeat and, if winning is generally the only goal, losing can have a significant and detrimental impact on self-esteem. Realize that "winning" as a goal places much of your success in the perception and/or judgment of others.

Lets look at a standard flute placement audition as an example. You've "worked really hard" on the audition material with the aim of "winning first chair!" As expected you are a little nervous as you walk into the room (which was much colder than expected) and behind "the screen" (unfortunate because you love interacting with your audience). You play, in your opinion, very well (even though the cold temperature did impact the intonation on the opening slow excerpt). You feel good about your performance. After the results are posted, you notice that you are listed as third chair instead of first chair. Because you didn't win first chair, your stated goal, you view the experience as a failure and become resentful of those who placed ahead of you. You feel bad about your audition and the audition process.

What happened? Well, Judge #1 liked your beautiful tone and had you placed 1st because tone means everything to Judge #1. Judge #2 docked you for a lack of rhythmic precision and had you placed 3rd. Judge #3 prefers a thicker tone with more edge and also felt that your issues with intonation were significant and placed you 5th. Is Judge #1 right and Judge #5 wrong? Or vise versa? Well, there is no right or wrong. Each judge has different preferences and perceptions based on their individual experiences with music, and you, whether you like it or not, can't control any of that. You can only offer the performance you have prepared and choose to accept the outcome, whatever that may be.

A Guide for the College Music Major, cont.

Let's look at the same audition from a different perspective. Let's say the goal is "to perform the audition with a beautiful tone" rather than "winning." For you this is a big deal because you are incorporating an embouchure change. You have patiently worked through the airy uncontrolled sound that often accompanies the beginning of such a courageous process and now you are starting to reap the rewards. Your tone is what you consider beautiful (clear, full, and free) but you are still working with refinement in regard to intonation. Although you were nervous, you didn't revert to the old embouchure under pressure. You focused on keeping the embouchure working but relaxed and were able to totally "get into" the sound you were creating. When the results are posted, you see that you placed 3rd. That will offer you the opportunity to perform with the top ensemble. That will be very exciting. You perceive the experience as a great success.

Rather than using winning as THE motivator in your practice, a better option would be to mindfully set attainable, skill related goals in combination with your creative goals. And, is it possible to view everyone as a "first chair? " Is there a limit on the number of people that can play the right notes in the right places, beautifully in tune, in the right style, with a great sound and full of heart? Absolutely not! Anyone who has the patience and perseverance to develop the qualities of a great musician can. This is known as abundance mentality.

Summon Intention as a Guide to the Creative Process

Acknowledging your intentions for your practice can be a very powerful tool. Basically, it is useful (perhaps even pertinent) to know why you are practicing, beyond the fact that your teacher told you to do so. Below are some questions to help you clarify the intention of your practice sessions. Revisit your intentions frequently. Watch how they serve you and how they change. Also be willing to let them go and create new ones if you discover they are no longer serving you. Consider both long-term and short-term intentions. Be as specific as possible.

What are your long-term musical intentions? (Basically, what do you want to be when you grow up? Go ahead and dream big!)

What are your musical intentions for the semester? (Specific areas you'd like to develop, recitals, repertoire, competitions if that appeals to you, articles to read or write, recordings to listen to or make…anything goes, don't limit your responses.)

What are your musical intentions for the week?

What are your musical intentions for today's practice session?

Developing a Personalized Daily Routine

I am often asked by students, "How long should I be practicing everyday?" My initial response is "Fantastic! You are practicing every day!" It is common knowledge that several periods of shorter practice spaced at close intervals are more beneficial than, single long, isolated periods of practice. 30 minutes a day produces much better results than a single 3½-hour session once a week. Now don't get too excited; I'm not suggesting that 30 minutes a day is a sufficient amount of practice time for a college music major. While 30 minutes a day yields very quick results for a beginner and may have even served you in high school, in order to develop the technical

skills, creative insight, and musical intuition to succeed in a career in music, it is going to take a bit more (no, A LOT more) of a daily commitment.

This time in the life of a developing musician is often referred to as "paying dues." So, how long should you be practicing everyday? There is no hard and fast rule about this. How much you "should" practice everyday will depend on what your individual goals and intentions are and how efficient you are in your practice.

If you are smart about how you organize your practice time, you may be able to accomplish in one hour what would take someone else, disorganized and mindless in his or her practice, three or more hours. That is why creating intention, as part of the practice process (knowing why you are practicing) is so very important. The amount of time you practice will be unique to you and more than likely it will change over a period of time (increase for some, decrease for others).

However, it is wise to set aside specific times for your practice. The body and mind respond well to routine. You are more likely to develop consistency with your practice if you have regularly scheduled practice times. It is also best to break your practice up into two to three sessions a day, rather than to have one long session once a day. There are a couple of interesting scientific studies that support this. One is that memory retention is best if the input is repeated within 6 hours. (Optimally, you would schedule your practice sessions 6 hours apart, for example 8am, 2pm, and 8pm.) Another is that the ears' ability to discern fine pitch differences diminishes greatly after 15 minutes. (Ever wonder why the pitch seems to spread in the orchestra pit by the end of a 3-hour opera?) Taking short breaks during your practice session can be beneficial for this reason among many others. Try to have at least a 5-minute break every 30 minutes. Insert short stretching and breathing breaks to keep the body and mind clear of physical and mental tension.

So I still haven't given you any answers to, "How long should I be practicing everyday?" Well, as mentioned, there are no definitive answers, but I do have some guidelines that I will suggest. For a music education major I suggest 2 hours a day and for a music performance major I suggest 4 hours a day. For some of you these numbers will seem high and for others they will seem low. It will depend on what your current commitment is, as well as, how efficient you are in your practice. I will say that there have been many times when I've asked a student, "So, how is your practice going? Are you getting in four hours a day?" and I get a blank stare in response, followed by, "I just don't have that much stuff to practice. What do I do with four hours of time?" That is a great question. You don't want to be watching the clock as you hold the flute up to your face just filling time to meet a perceived practice time requirement. (You might as well just put the flute in its case and go watch the sunset. That would be more productive!)

But, filling two to four hours of time is actually not that hard to do, not if you are really mindful about what and how you are practicing. The time will fly by if you are engaged in your practice, and if you are not, then you need to be looking into why.

Here are some basic guidelines for a two and four hour practice. Remember, that you can break these up into any combination to create shorter practice sessions, and you can extend or reduce the time in any area to meet the personal intentions of your practice. Don't forget to include active listening, score study,

and historical research or other hands off approaches to developing musicianship. These all count as practice too. (However, ensemble rehearsal doesn't really count as personal practice, though it is an incredibly important part of our musical growth.)

Music Education Major General 2-Hour Practice

Tone Development/Intonation 10 minutes
Vibrato 5 minutes
Articulation 5 minutes
Technique 30 minutes
Repertoire 40 minutes
Etudes/Excerpts 20 minutes (This can include ensemble music)
Sight Reading 10 minutes

Music Performance Major General 4-Hour Practice

Tone Development/Intonation 20 Minutes
Vibrato 5 minutes
Articulation 15 minutes
Technique 60 minutes
Repertoire 90 minutes
Etudes/Excerpts 40 minutes (This can include ensemble music)
Sight Reading 10 minutes

Based on the reading and inquiries above, build your weekly practice schedule and individual daily practice routine. Consider what motivates you, what times of day you enjoy practicing (realize that you may have to practice occasionally at your least favorite times), what your schedule will accommodate, and what your long and short term musical intentions are. Be as specific as possible.

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