

The Midwest Clinic  
An International Band and Orchestra Conference  
Friday, December 17, 2004

Clinician: Joseph Dobos assisted by members of the Lapeer East High School Symphony Band

## “What Is Done Without Joy Is Zero!”

### What is the most important thing that we teach?

- “I’d rather be known as a teacher of people than as a teacher of music.”—William Revelli
- “Our goal is to make the student independent of the teacher.”—Elizabeth A. H. Green
- “What is done without joy is zero!”—Nadia Boulanger
- “Talent without self-discipline is the greatest waste in the world.”—Joe Maddy
- “Time is money”—Jerry Blackstone (Bell to bell teaching—not a second should be wasted.)
- “Idleness is the devil’s work!”—Saint Benedict
- “Do not demand. Expect.” “Telling isn’t teaching!”—Elizabeth A. H. Green
- “Always end a rehearsal with an upbeat mood.”—Elizabeth A. H. Green
- “Preach the Gospel always, and sometimes, even use words.”—Saint Francis of Assisi
- “Teach the way you play.”—William Revelli Bring your instrument to every rehearsal (as did Donald Sinta.)
- “Ah, did you tell them the 1,001<sup>st</sup> time?”—H. A. VanderCook to a very young William Revelli
- “Before going further, let me say that aware audiation cannot take place unless there is an atmosphere of love and care at all times in the learning space.”—James Jordan

### What does every band/orchestra need to experience at every rehearsal?

- “The List”—always before the conductor.
- In no order of particular importance (except for the first one): consistent and beautiful tone, posture, breathing, long tones, hand position, embouchure, instrument angle, ear training, building technic, intonation, blend, attack, release, precise rhythm, dynamic contrast, long tones, inspect reeds, clean mouthpieces?, etc..... The “list” is unending!
- Depending on the age/maturity of the ensemble, some things on the “list” must be mentioned every day. Some things, perhaps, only need to be brought up once a week; once every few weeks. No ensemble—of any age or ability—is exempt from “the list”.
- “It’s not a wrong note as long as it is played with a beautiful tone, in tune, in rhythm, with expression.”—William Revelli

### Short, focused, goal-oriented warm-up activities

- The conductor must stay active and listen. Warm up is not a time to take attendance or allow the latecomers to join rehearsal. This is the most important moment of the rehearsal.
- “Do what I do; do it when I do it.” (Hand clap mimic)
- “It is your job to find the conductor, not the conductor’s job to find you.” Never say, “look at me!”
- “Find beat one.”
- Breathing. “If you lift your shoulders when breathing, you lose all your air. It is like picking up a wet bag of groceries.”—Peter Pears. Drill a hole into the belly button. Now, take a quick breath through that hole.

- “You watch your phraseology!”—Mayor Shinn (in Meredith Willson’s *The Music Man*)
  - —Positive statements leave a long lasting impression. Negative statements and “orders” are soon forgotten.
  - Adopt a new vocabulary: “Be aware of...” “Can you...” “How did it feel when...” “I’m at measure 27, can you be there also?” (*Inner Game of Music*)
- “Observation, diagnosis, prescription.”—H. A. VanderCook

**“To play well, sing well”—Tartini      “He who sings prays twice”—Saint Augustine**

- “Your band will never play in tune until the students can sing whole steps and half steps in tune.”—William Revelli
- Technique used by Imogene Holst (daughter of Gustav) to develop discernment of whole and half steps: Slowly sing the ascending scale to the text: “Alleluia, alleluia.” The half steps are between the “lu” and “ia”. “Be aware of how close those notes feel and sound.” Sing the descending scale to the famous Shakespeare quote: “Full fathom five thy father lies.” Begin the scale with an anacrusis. The half step is always on the “fa” syllable.
- “Every rehearsal should involve singing—even when outdoors in marching band.”—George Cavender
- The interval song.
  - When singing solfege syllables, wrap lips around the vowel.
- *The Swan Sings* (canon) Become physically involved when singing.
  - No one wants to hear a lifeless, flabby tone.
  - “We never sit on a tone; we always spin it.”—Jerry Blackstone
- Use the syllable “bee”. Make the vowels tall. Stretch a rubber band East-West—make it ugly. Now, stretch it North-South—make it beautiful. (Wrap lips around the vowel.)
  - Transfer all vocal techniques to instrumental playing—keep throats open and relaxed. “I like to eat. I like to eat apples and bananas.” (Substitute all vowels in this sentence with the vowel “e” (as in bee); with the vowel “o” (as in toe); with the “u” (as in rue).
- Learn to sing through the instrument.
- Don’t restrict singing to the opening minutes of a rehearsal; it can be interspersed throughout the rehearsal. Save the lips. Break up the routine.
- Sing/play rounds (canons). Any tune will do—even tunes that are not officially canons that “harmonize”. Singing the canon makes us hold on to the pitch.
- Intonation is “toning”, not “tuning”
  - Three step process.
    - Match the tone quality (timbre)
    - Match the dynamic level
    - Match the pitch (When tone quality and dynamic level are compatible, the pitch falls into place.)
  - When you play with your best tone, you are probably in tune.
  - Preside over the intonation process. Try to hear every student’s tone every day. Playing in tune is a habit.
    - “Remember, you have been tuned!” (William Revelli’s final words to the University of Michigan Marching Band at his last performance as Conductor of Bands.)
  - Involve students in the intonation process. Echo (sing) the pitch back to the student. Turn off the strobe!
  - Tune major thirds low; minor thirds high. “Hollow” perfect 4ths and 5ths.

## Music for the soul—as important for the conductor as well as for the students.

- The *Treasury of Scales* by Leonard B. Smith (Belwin)
  - The holy “bible” of tone development, blend, and pitch. All 24 major and minor scales appear in 4 different harmonizations with each featuring a different group of instruments with the solo scale line. Example
  - It is not just a book of endless whole notes.
  - Change—meters, unexpected stops and starts, dynamics, play in reverse order, staccato march style, add percussion parts from the Stone *Stick Control* book or “march” parts from some of the easy Haskell Harr solos, give oboe books to mallet players, alternate choirs on even-odd measures, “snake reading” etc.... The possibilities are endless.
  - Excellent training to develop the “pyramid of sound”—bass voices loudest, soprano softest.
  - Also can be used to develop an “hourglass” shape of sound as needed in many Sousa marches, homophonic writing (*English Folk Song Suite*), etc...
  - Count singing—sing the parts in harmony with a subdivided beat. This internalizes the pulse and makes the players “appreciate” just how long a whole note really is.
  - If a band sounds good playing the *Treasury of Scales*, it really does sound good.
  - Read James Jordan’s *Ear Training Immersion Exercises for Choirs* (GIA Publications, Inc.) The following points are discussed in great detail in this wonderful book.
    - Understand what our students *really* hear. Many students hear only in major.
    - Do not underestimate the power of solfege syllables sung within a harmonic environment. Solfege, when sung not as unisons, but within a sounded harmonic sea, appears to establish immediate context for the singer, regardless of experience level.
    - The importance of the dominant function note.
  - Memorize some of the frequently used lines so that they can be played in situations where there are no music stands—before a concert, at festival warm-up, etc...
- Bach for band
  - *Eight Little Preludes and Fugues* arranged by R. L. Moehlmann
    - Actually, J. S. Bach did not compose these musical gems. All Bach scholars now agree that Bach did not write them. In fact, they were probably composed after 1750—after Bach died. Today, in organ recitals, the *Eight Little Preludes and Fugues* are usually announced as “Attributed to J. S. Bach formerly”. Nevertheless, no matter who wrote them, they are wonderful and indispensable to the training and sensitizing of musicians. See the musical examples pages for excerpts of the band arranged preludes and fugues. The P&F in G minor is especially musical and “dark”.
    - Larry Daehn has arranged the fugues from the P & F’s #IV and VIII. These are playable by a junior high school band. They have not been “watered down”, but they are more safely scored than the Moehlmann.
    - A great introduction to the fugal playing is Anne McGinty’s *Fanfare and Fugue* (Queenwood).
  - Chorales—found in numerous books. *Sixteen Chorales* arranged by Lake. *Bach Chorales for Band* arranged by Richard Thurston (Southern Music)—several “advanced” chorale settings by Bach.
  - *Bach: Air* Arranged by Anne McGinty (Queenwood)
  - *Fantasia in G major* arranged by Leist and R. F. Goldman (Grade 4)
  - *Festival Prelude* arranged by Bob Margolis (Grade 3)
- I never met a slow movement that I didn’t like—or could convince students to like!
  - Tell me a story!
    - “Once upon a time, there were three bears...”
    - Read the telephone book—make it sound like Shakespeare!
    - Use verbal imagery.
    -

- Expression can be taught!
  - VanderCook’s *Expression in Music* (Rubank)
    - “Were you there that night.” Recite this sentence five different ways—emphasizing a different word each time.
    - Long note—strong note; short note—light note.
- The many beautiful folk song settings by Larry Daehn—*Country Wildflowers, While I Watch the Yellow Wheat, Irish Farewell, etc.* (Daehn Publications)
- *Yorkshire Ballad*—James Barnes (Southern)
- *Clouds* Anne McGinty (Kjos/Queenwood)
  - The perfect introduction of slow music for young bands.
  - The “storm scene” in the middle of the piece can be enhanced with rolls on the bass drum and tympani, sheet metal, garbage can lids, darkened hall with strobe light flashing on the ceiling etc....
  - This piece is really an example of French impressionism for young band.
  - Years after performing this piece, references can be made to its style, texture, and tempo. “Doesn’t this piece remind you of *Clouds*?” “Remember how we faded away on the final note of *Clouds*?”
- Gregorian Chant
  - *Kyrie XI*

### **Developing Technic and Coordination (Rhythm)**

- Make scales non-threatening.
  - Patience. Daily application—without fail. Don’t make students hate scales. I do not grade scales. I do provide evaluations.
- Learn all the major and minor key signatures
  - Start with easy, accessible patterns. *Pentascals* and *Major Tetrachords “Round the Circle in All the Keys”* which can be reproduced from the teacher’s book of *Do It For Band* by James Froseth (GIA)
  - Make the hard key signatures fun. Students don’t have to know that what they play is good for them!
    - *College Mascots* This page will make your band “beg” to play in Concert D flat major!
    - *The Other Fight Song* (Concert C Major)
    - *Alleluia* (Gregorian chant that uses all the notes of the scale. Play in different keys. Be sure to sing the *Alleluia*.)
    - *Hallelujah Chorus* (in concert C Major) Handel, arranged by Clair Johnson (Rubank)
      - Not a watered down version. Students like it so much that they will want to play the concert B naturals and E naturals!
- Predictable routines
  - *Basic Training Course, Book 2* by John Kinyon (Alfred) Published in 1972 and is available!
    - Every unit follows the same “plan”.
    - Encourages technic. The warm-up allows the conductor to wander around the band. In the “warm-up” section, line “C” is always a lip slur for the brass. Practical, essential snare and bass drum writing. The etudes (lines 5 & 6) can always be played as a duet.
    - While intended for junior high bands, this book is useful for older students, too. What do you do when you have to start rehearsal in a room that has no heat? Or a rehearsal after a pep assembly? Or a rehearsal after watching 10 minutes of Channel One? The Kinyon book gets the band to move and play.
  - *Hal Leonard Advanced Band Method* by Harold Rusch (Hal Leonard) Published 1963. Still available!

- Intended for high school students. Each unit follows a common plan—Pares type scales and etudes taken from the classic instrumental methods—etudes that are melodic, musical, and appealing.
  - *40 Rhythmical Studies* by Grover Yaus (Belwin Mills Publishing/Warner Bros) Still available!
    - Based on division of measure with easy key signatures. Practical rhythms. Example—13 & 14
    - A daily dose of Yaus is sure to improve reading skills.
    - Friendly approach to rhythm reading (and the chromatic scale!) Example
    - All Grover Yaus books are terrific: *101 Rest Patterns*, *47 Foundation Studies*—this one is similar to the *40 Rhythmical Studies* but with easier material.
  - *May Song* The genius of James Froseth, again! Students will want to master the arpeggios and Alberti bass line. They don't have to know it's good for them! Once mastered, transpose into other keys.
- Band repertoire that develops coordination. (“Two for one”—repertoire that teaches skills and can be used in concert performance.)
  - *Keltic Variations* by Stephen R. Hazo (Boosey Hawkes) Grade 2+, 3
    - From the new “Windependence” series. Would be a great concert opener.
    - Fast triple meter—a deficiency in most bands. Scored tutti. Develops agility and staccato style.
  - Marches—the old fashioned war horses—are the perfect technic building “etudes” for the band.
    - *Freischutz Quickstep* by Claudio Grafullo, arranged by Tommy Fry (Southern)
    - *Emblem of Unity* by J. J. Richards
  - *The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* by George Frederic Handel, arranged by (Hal Leonard)
    - Scales, scales, scales!

#### Must Read Books and Materials

- Larry Teal's *The Art of the Saxophone*. (Summy Birchard)
- *Expression in Music* by H. A. VanderCook (Rubank) Dated examples, but the message is still true.) Dr. Revelli could quote this book chapter and verse as if it were the Bible.
- *Evoking Sound* by James Jordan (GIA) Written for choral conductors but valid for all conductors.
- *Inner Game of Music* by Barry Green (GIA)
- *The Mastery of Music* by Barry Green (Broadway)
- *Conducting A Choir* by Imogen Holst (Oxford University Press) One of the most practical books for conductors ever written. Imogen was the daughter of Gustav Holst.
- *Teaching Techniques and Insights for Instrumental Music Educators* by Joseph Casey (GIA) “Where was this book when I began teaching 33 years ago????”—Joseph Dobos Required reading for everyone!
- *The Modern Conductor* by Elizabeth A. H. Green (Prentice Hall)
- On the internet, *Easier Band Repertoire* (a list of quality high school music) compiled by H. Robert Reynolds: [www.geocities.com/vienna/opera/1276/easylist.html](http://www.geocities.com/vienna/opera/1276/easylist.html)

A final comment from Joseph Dobos: I steal ideas from everybody—John Cummins, William Revelli, George Cavender, John Mohler, Jerry Blackstone, H Robert Reynolds, Leonard Falcone, Raymond Roth, Steven Burns, JoAnn Royce, Raymond Sturm, Elizabeth Green, E Daniel Long, Edward Downing, John Whitwell, John Williamson, and hundreds more! I have been so fortunate to have worked with and known so many great music educators!