

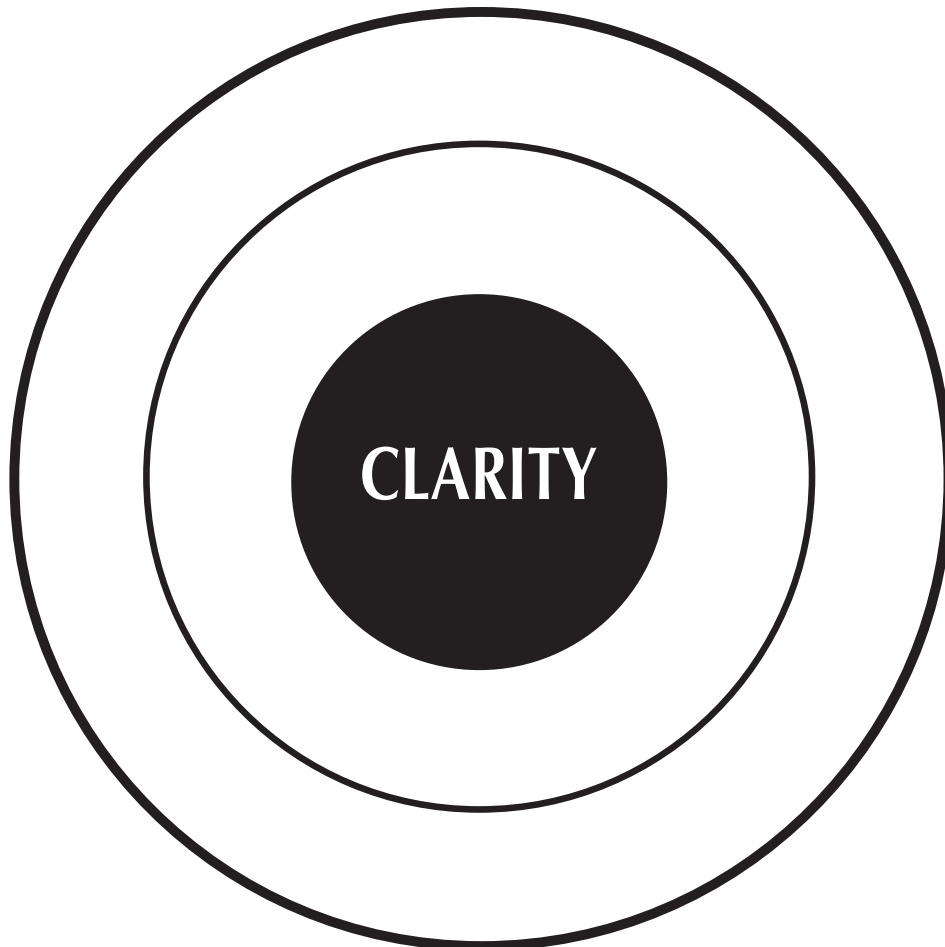
DEVELOPING CONCERT BAND ENSEMBLE CLARITY

2009 Music For All Summer Symposium
David W. Vandewalker, presenting

**Question 1: What concepts are required to establish a
“superior rating” level of performance?**

Question 2: Are the concepts abstract or concrete?

The Clarity Target below should demonstrate the concepts critical in developing a superior ensemble sound. These concepts are largely dependent upon the understanding and mastery of abstract concepts that require daily, systematic reinforcement. Label the target diagram below, using the concepts you believe to be vital in developing a superior ensemble sound. Place the most important concepts closest to the bulls eye.



*Its All About the Clarity- 1
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Developing Ensemble Sound with Resonance and Clarity

David Vandewalker, presenting

THREE SIGNIFICANT POINTS TO CONSIDER:

1. Most people usually _____
2. Students need _____ goals to successfully achieve _____ growth.
3. Performing with excellence is a skill and takes _____, _____, and _____!

Research clearly shows that all students require more time and _____ to learn an _____ concept in contrast to a _____ concept.

In the context of instrumental music, we as teachers have been conditioned to teach the “_____” and then begin to “polish” the performance a few weeks prior to the performance.

Given the research, that process doesn't seem to be a sound teaching practice. Therefore, I propose that teachers develop a concept based instructional plan that includes _____, _____ focused, concept isolated instruction. As time and repetition occur, the conceptual development will become part of the student's performance vocabulary and arsenal of skill.

This information was further reinforced in Daniel Levitin's *This is Your Brain on Music*. He reports current research which demonstrates how the brain processes or “_____” information. The term refers to the brain's ability to retrieve data in large, integrated chunks of information.

MATCHING...

TONE

_____ tone is the core to every ensemble with resonance and clarity.

Provide a _____, either performed by you or a student in the section which best exhibits your ideal concept of tone.

Then, the details must begin...Match:

- a) your _____, the people on either side of you,
- b) your _____,
- c) your _____ (woodwind or brass), and
- d) your _____.

Pay close attention to the three parts of each note:

_____, _____, and _____ or the

_____ of sound, _____ of sound, and
_____ of sound.

The brick has a defined, _____ _____ that is maintained with equal energy through the body or middle of the note to the release point.

Every player must use the model of the brick and must initiate the left edge and release points exactly at the same time.



front middle back/Its All About th

_____ is made simple as well.

Play the center of the pitch and match with your neighbor until the beats (fluctuation in sound waves) go away.

By placing the focus on "matching," notes are simply matched and beatless so there is _____ in the tone and the harmonics are free to vibrate fully.

BALANCE

Balance is similar to the matching of the tone in that you must match the energy or volume of sound to: a) _____,

b) _____

and then, c) _____

To balance a good section sound with clarity, all members must match tone color and energy to sound as “_____ player.”

As players add into the sound, the volume should _____ without the color or tone _____.

BLEND/COLORS

I think of ensemble sound as a paint palette. Each instrument and the registers in which they play, create different sounds that are representative of a variety of colors. Blend is the “_____” with the section sounds through the orchestration of the work.

The color _____, is a mixture of red and blue. The intensity of the color created is dependent on how much red and blue are mixed and how much white or black are added to make the sound lighter or darker.

The _____ as the core sound. This creates a timbre at the heart of the sound, the _____ and _____ must match the energy of the bass clarinet.

When **blending chords**, I quantify the sounds in percentage ratios:

15%	3rd
35%	5th
50%	Tonic 35% lows 15% highs

HORIZONTAL SHAPE

There must be an intentional motion or movement of the line in a horizontal shaping of a phrase or the sound can seem lifeless.

VERTICAL ALIGNMENT

It is my opinion, that the vertical alignment aids in the clarity while the horizontal shape enhances the expression.

ARTICULATION

As I discuss articulation, I am addressing the “_____” or the “_____ of sound.” In short, articulation deals with the start of the note. The key to articulation is consistency and _____.

To keep this part simple, follow these guidelines:

- Match the _____ and _____
- Match the _____ given at the _____ of the sound-
- Match the _____ of air speed on the start of each note
- Make the beginning of every note _____ the previous.
- Match articulation across the _____, _____, _____, and full ensemble!

STYLE

Matching style relates to the “_____” or end of the note. This factor is crucial in the resonance of the ensemble. The release must be vertically aligned and it must have resonance. Many of the issues related to ensemble clarity are related to the lack of attention to detail given the end of the note, or the release point.

Consider quantifying style in percentages:

Tenuto or full value note	Touches the next	_____ % duration of the note
Marcato	Long, lifted note	_____ % duration of the note
Staccato	Lifted note	_____ % duration of the note
Cap accent/heavy stacc.	Rarely use it	_____ % duration of the note

BREATH AND DYNAMICS

How to reinforce proper dynamics while maintaining characteristic tone

Figure A-

BREATHE IN FOR 2 COUNTS; THEN:

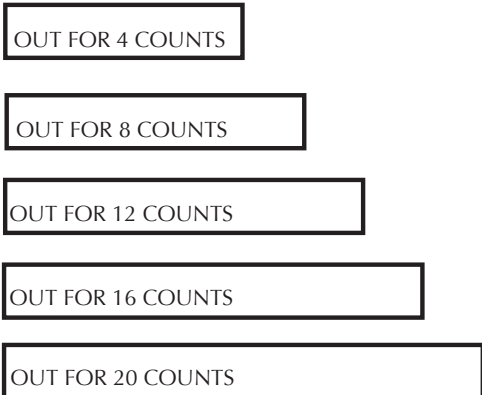


Figure B-

BREATHE IN FOR 2 COUNTS; THEN:



When breathing and playing, work to maintain a steady, fast stream of air, free of surges or decreases in speed. Additionally, avoid storing or tanking up the air between inhalation and exhalation. The throat should remain relaxed at all times.

One of the primary goals of implementation for the *Foundations to Wind Band Clarity* is to provide a means to transfer skills developed through the warm-up into actual music being performed.

The students learn a work to develop musical content which is familiar. The students perceive the work as music rather than warm-up or another line from a method book. Once the work is learned, it can be used for transference of concepts.

5 EXAMPLES

of how to perform the “Adantino” during various lessons in the warm-up setting of instruction



Figure 1: Music as printed on the page



Figure 2: Music performed with notes touching or 100%



Figure 3: Music performed with notes long-lifted or 75%



Figure 4: Music performed with notes lifted or 50%



Figure 5: Music performed with notes lifted or 50% with accents on long notes

SAMPLES OF ARTICULATION PATTERNS

excerpt from Back Invention No. 2

Select and learn a *Clarity Adaptation* to provide a literature-based foundation which will allow the students to focus on the concepts rather than the content.

Determine the desired articulation to be reinforced from the warm-up, then transfer the articulation pattern to the *Clarity Adaptation*. For example if the selections targeted for final transfer has notes that touch and slur 2 notes, tongue 2 notes... rehearse the Bach Adaptation as in Figure 7 and Figure 10.

If articulation in general is an ensemble weakness, then consider practicing the Bach Adaptation with using a five note scales in the warm up. Play through all twelve scales using the first 5 notes in a variety of articulation styles. Transfer the articulation skills in a variety of ways to the Adaptation similarly to the Figures 6-15.

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 13

Figure 14

Figure 15

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RESOURCES

Basic Training DVD

Bravo Music Instrument DVD

Yamaha Harmony Director

Yamah Click Station

McAdams Tuner/Met

Tuning CD

SmartMusic teaching tools

Naxos Recording Library

Harry Fox Licensing

Old Fashion Metronome

Breathing Gym Bk and DVD

Cavalier's Concert IN/OUT

Blue Devil Warm Up DVD

Foundation for Wind

Band Clarity!

Lip Benders

Essential Musicianship

Essential Ensemble Concepts

16 Bach Chorales

Ed Lisk Supplements

Berb extensions

Mouthpiece Upgrades

Clarinet Barrels

Winning Rhythms

Ed Sueta Rhythm Books

101 Rhythms

Arban Studies

Clarke Studies

Flesch String Studies

Scale Variations

Articulation Studies

VOCABULARY

front/middle/release

lifted

left edge

compression

color

100•75•50•25%

50%/35%/15%

listen

match

velocity/speed

notes touch

move through

energize/intensify

call/response

prioritize

bounce/bouyance

ring/ wet/resonant