

Cultivating Collaborative Musical Expression in Instrumental Ensemble Rehearsals

Kim Fleming

Assistant Director of Bands

Mike Vecchio

Assistant Professor of Music Education

Scan here to join
the presentation

QR code



UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS
URBANA - CHAMPAIGN

[LINK](#)

**What does “expressive”
really mean?**

What does expressive mean?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

Why is expression
important?

Why is expression important?

- **Avoid “Paint-by-Numbers” performances**
- **Students connect meaning through sound**
- **Develop students’ musical agency**

Creating Interpretations

**Interpretation
#1**

**Interpretation
#2**

Session Overview

- **Preparation techniques**
- **Classroom environment**
- **Rehearsal strategies**
- **Student & program outcomes**

Preparation to Inform Expressive Interpretation

In your current music preparation process, what do you look for beyond the “nuts and bolts” of what is on the page?

Poll Everywhere

(Previous question)

Preparation to Inform Expressive Interpretation

- Understanding the “nuts and bolts” of what is in the score is only the first step.
- As you prepare, ask yourself, “Why did the composer make this choice?”

Asking “why” reveals the
composer’s intent

Asking “why” reveals the composer’s intent

Start with what you observe in the score, then
ask “why” to imagine beyond the printed page

Ask “why” to imagine beyond the printed page

- **Form**
 - Why is this phrase length 9 measures instead of the expected 8?
- **Harmony**
 - Why are there more non-chord tones when the phrase returns?

Ask “why” to imagine beyond the printed page

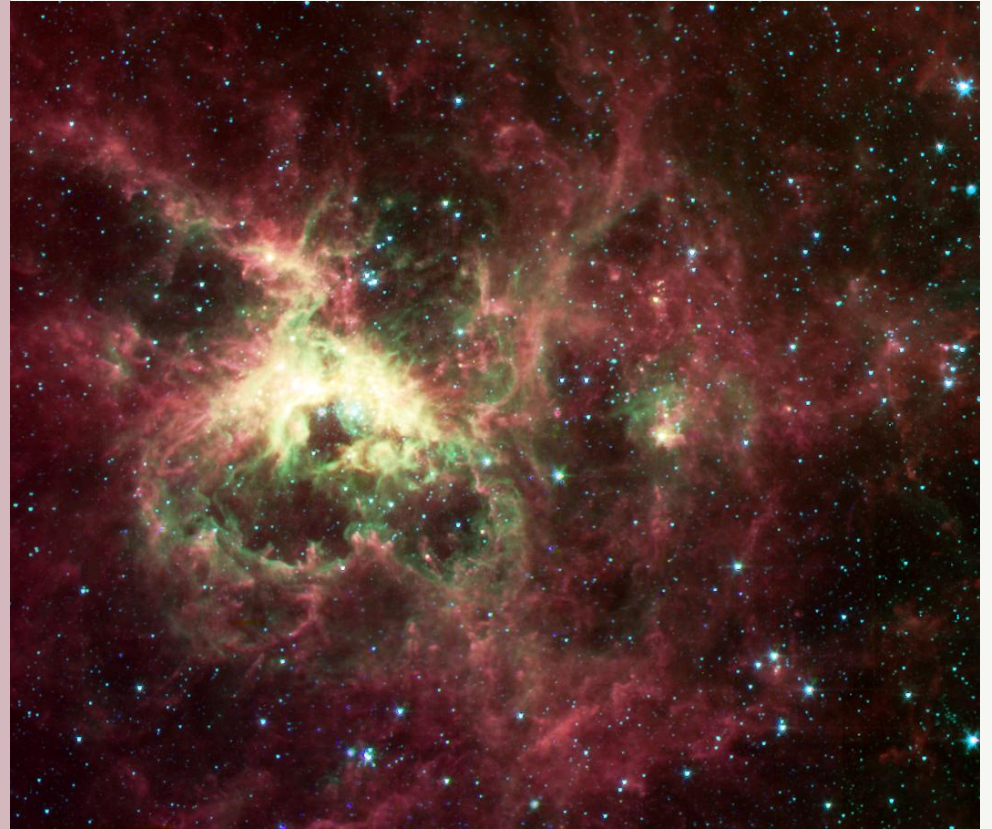
- **Articulations**
 - Why did the composer include accents in m. 45 but not in m. 2 ?
- **Texture**
 - Why is this only orchestrated in the woodwinds in these measures?

Ask “why” to imagine beyond the printed page

- Expressive Markings
 - Why does the opening section have terraced dynamics?

Interstellar Tarantella

Roger Zare



Why do some voices remain on the same pitch while others descend?

Commissioned for the Center Grove Middle School Central Instrumental Music Program, Ashley Carney and Samuel Fritz, Directors

INTERSTELLAR TARANTELLA

Roger Zare
(ASCAP)

Transposed score
Duration ca. 1'35"

Fast $\text{♩} = 126$ **3**

The musical score is for a piece titled "Interstellar Tarantella" by Roger Zare. It is a transposed score for a middle school instrumental ensemble, with a tempo of 126 beats per minute and a duration of approximately 1 minute and 35 seconds. The score is written in 8/8 time and features a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The instrumentation includes Flute, Oboe (optional) or Flute 2 (optional), Clarinet in B-flat 1 and 2, Bass Clarinet in B-flat (optional), Alto Saxophone 1 and 2, Tenor Saxophone (optional), Baritone Saxophone (optional), Trumpet in B-flat 1 and 2, Horn in F (optional), Trombone/Baritone/Euphonium/Bassoon, Tuba, Timpani (optional), Percussion 1 (Glockenspiel), Percussion 2 (Xylophone), Percussion 3 (Snare Drum/Tenor Drum), Percussion 4 (Bass Drum), and Percussion 5 (Crash Cymbals, optional). The score is divided into measures, with a large orange-shaded area highlighting measures 1 through 3. The first measure is marked with a forte (f) dynamic, and the second measure is marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The third measure is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The score includes a variety of musical notations, including eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests. The percussion parts are written on a separate staff, with the snare drum part marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The score is numbered 2, 3, 4, and 5 at the bottom, indicating the page numbers.

Flute

Oboe (opt.)/
or Fl. 2 (opt.)

Clarinet in B $\flat$ 1, 2

Bass Clarinet
in B $\flat$ (opt.)

Alto Saxophone 1,2

Tenor Saxophone
(opt.)

Baritone Saxophone
(opt.)

Trumpet in B $\flat$ 1,2

Horn in F (opt.)

Trombone/
Baritone/
Euphonium/
Bassoon

Tuba

Timpani
(opt.)

Perc. 1
Glockenspiel

Perc. 2
Xylophone

Perc. 3
Snare Drum/
Tenor Drum

Perc. 4
Bass Drum

Perc. 5
Crash Cymbals
(opt.)

Snare drum:
Snare on

Fast $\text{♩} = 126$ **3**

2 3 4 5

Copyright © 2019 by Roger Zare Music, ASCAP

**Why is the last phrase of the opening
section 10 measures long?**

Fl. *f*

Ob./Fl. 2 *f*

Cl. 1, 2 *f*

B. Cl. *f*

Alto Sax. 1, 2 *f*

Ten. Sax. *f*

Bari. Sax. *f*

Tpt. 1, 2 *f*

Hn. *f*

Tbn./Bari./Euph./Bsn. *p* *f*

Tba. *p* *f*

Timp. *p* *f*

Glock. *p* *f*

Xyl. *p* *f*

S. D. T. D. *p* *f*

B. D. *p* *f*

Cym. *p* *f*

Fl. *f*

Ob./Fl. 2 *f*

Cl. 1, 2 *f*

B. Cl. *f*

Alto Sax. 1, 2 *f*

Ten. Sax. *f*

Bari. Sax. *f*

Tpt. 1, 2 *f*

Hn. *f*

Tbn./Bari./Euph./Bsn. *p* *f*

Tba. *p* *f*

Timp. *p* *f*

Glock. *p* *f*

Xyl. *p* *f*

S. D. T. D. *p* *f*

B. D. *p* *f*

Cym. *p* *f*

Fl. *p*

Ob./Fl. 2 *p*

Cl. 1, 2 *p*

B. Cl. *p*

Alto Sax. 1, 2 *p*

Ten. Sax. *p*

Bari. Sax. *p*

Tpt. 1, 2 *p*

Hn. *p*

Tbn./Bari./Euph./Bsn. *p*

Tba. *p*

Timp. *p*

Glock. *p*

Xyl. *p*

S. D. T. D. *p*

B. D. *p*

Cym. *p*

Why is this the first time the composer includes accents?

5

22 23 24 25 26 27

28 29

Asking “why” poses meaningful questions through which students will discover musical answers

Divergent Thinking

- **Avoid rehearsals based on a singular interpretation**
- **Promote students' musical agency**

Classroom Environment

- **Safe environment to nurture expression**
- **Overcome fear of failure**
- **Cultivate curiosity and vulnerability**

In what ways do you involve your
students in making
interpretive decisions in your
ensemble rehearsals?

Poll Everywhere

(Previous question)

Rehearsal Strategies

Rehearsal Strategies

- **Character**
- **Text**
- **Imagery**

Character

Character

- Is this music a **song** or a **dance**?
- Sets the context to explore the answers to the “why” questions

Love & Nature

III. Slow Burn

Gala Flagello



Poll Everywhere

Song/Dance slider

Example “why” questions:

- Why are there accents on unexpected beats?
- Why is the motive passed rapidly between different sections of the ensemble?
- Why does the contour of the melody change between statements?
- Why is there a sudden diminuendo before the final cadence?

Character

- Asking “Is this a song or a dance?” helps set musical context
- Fosters connection between style and expression

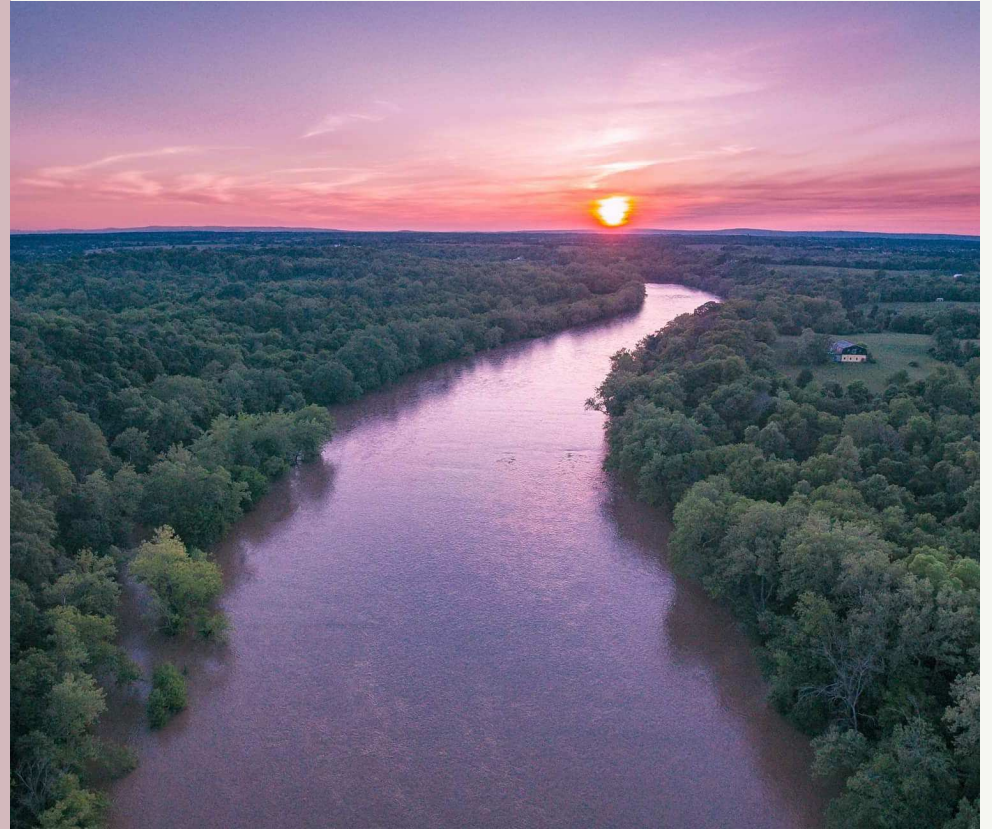
Text

Text

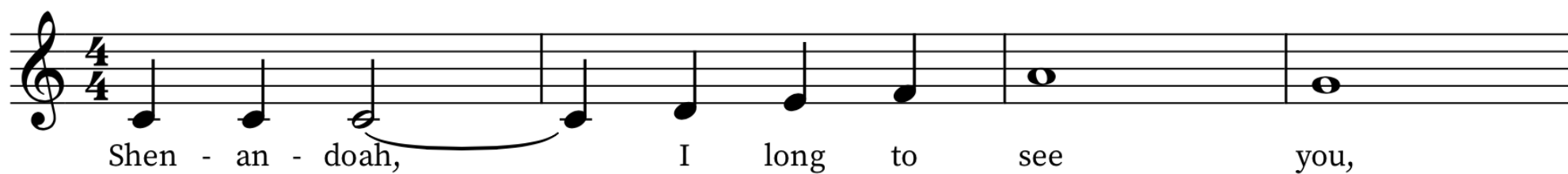
- Folk Songs & Choral Transcriptions
- How can the text provide musical answers to our “why” questions?

Shenandoah

Omar Thomas



**Oh Shenandoah,
I long to see you,
Away, you rolling river.
Oh Shenandoah,
I long to see you,
Way, we're bound away
Across the wide Missouri.**



B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B♭ Cl. 3

B. Cl.

This musical score is for four brass instruments: B♭ Clarinet 1, B♭ Clarinet 2, B♭ Clarinet 3, and Bass Clarinet. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4. The score consists of 12 measures. Measures 1-4 are in 4/4 time. Measures 5-6 are in 2/4 time. Measures 7-8 are in 4/4 time. Measures 9-10 are in 2/4 time. Measures 11-12 are in 4/4 time. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and half notes), rests, and dynamic markings such as ff (fortissimo) and ffz (fortissimo with crescendo). There are also slurs and ties indicating phrasing and sustained notes.

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B♭ Cl. 3

B. Cl.

This musical score is for the same four brass instruments as the first block. It continues the piece in 4/4 time. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and half notes), rests, and dynamic markings such as ff (fortissimo) and ffz (fortissimo with crescendo). There are also slurs and ties indicating phrasing and sustained notes.

Example “why” questions:

- Why are there meter changes in the second half of the phrase?
- Why are some notes elongated?
- Why is this phrase played only by the woodwinds?
- Why is the opening phrase marked *mp*?

Text

- Singing and analyzing text deepens interpretation
- Removes technical distractions to focus on expression
- Enhances overall musical understanding

Imagery

Imagery

- Inspired by art or color
- Programmatic works
- How can imagery provide musical answers to our “why” questions?

Parhelion

Roshanne Etezady





Poll Everywhere

Why questions that allow students to connect imagery to interpretation

Example “why” questions:

- Why are the themes passed between different sections?
- Why do the accents align with the suspended cymbal?
- Why are there repeated dynamic swells?

Imagery

Visualizing the composer's inspiration
connects students' imagination to
expressive possibilities

Rehearsal Strategies

- **Character**
- **Text**
- **Imagery**

**How do you know
if you reached
ALL
of your students?**

Reaching All Students

- **Think-Pair-Share**
- **Collaborate in small groups**
- **Chamber music**
- **Sectionals**

Check for Understanding

- **Formative Assessments**
 - **Exit slips**
 - **Journal entries**
- **Summative Assessments**
 - **Performances**
 - **Presentations**
 - **Podcasts**

Outcomes

- Promoting divergent thinking and encouraging curiosity
- Developing students' musical agency
- Lifelong musicianship

Questions?

Mike Vecchio

vecchiom@illinois.edu

Kim Fleming

kflem@illinois.edu



**UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS**
URBANA - CHAMPAIGN