



It's Not What You Do, But How You Do It: Ten Tips for More Meaningful Rehearsals

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“Meaningful Rehearsal”

Possible descriptors:

- Better results
- More effective
- More affective
- More musical
- More enjoyable
- More memorable
- Positive atmosphere
- Engaging



LANGUAGE

or

How we say it

#1 - Use “we/us” instead of “I/me”

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Common phrases:

- “Trumpets, I need more of you there.”
- “Clarinets, can I hear you at letter D?”
- “Percussion, give me less snare drum in that measure.”

#1 - Use “we/us” instead of “I/me”

Consider Instead:

- “Trumpets, we could use more of you there.”
- “Clarinets, can we hear your part at letter D?”
- “Percussion, give us less snare drum in that measure.”

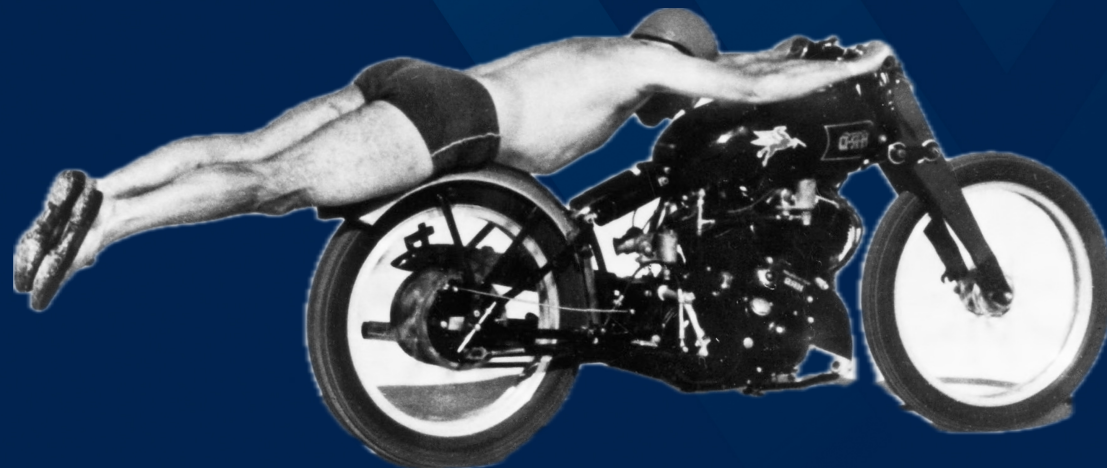
**#2 - The first thing remembered is almost
always the last thing we hear.**

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“Let’s start again at the beginning and be careful not to rush.”

Last thing heard?

Tendency -

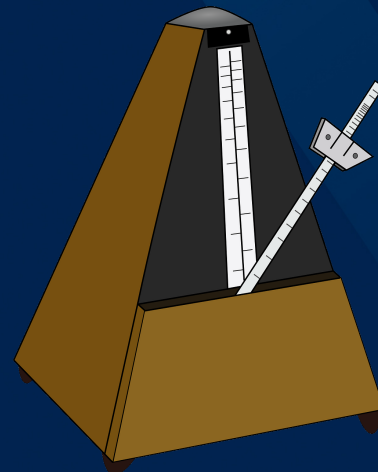


#2 - The first thing remembered is almost always the last thing we hear.

“Let’s start again at the beginning, and be sure to watch so we keep a steady tempo.”

Last thing heard?

Tendency -



#3 - Simple is always more effective.

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Puréed nut spread with a
grape relish reduction
paired with a brioche bun



Peanut butter and jelly sandwich

REHEARSAL STRATEGIES

or

How we teach it

#4 - Answer all of the questions

#4 - Answer all of the questions

- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- Why
- How



#4 - Answer all of the questions

Scenario: The ensemble is out of tune on the last note of *Amazing Grace* by Frank Ticheli.

Comment Option #1 - “Woodwinds we have some intonation problems on the last note. Be sure to listen.”

- Who - woodwinds
- What - intonation problems
- Where - the last note
- When - just now
- Why - ????
- How to fix - ????

#4 - Answer all of the questions

Comment Option #2 - “Woodwinds we have some intonation problems on the last note. This is because your air is changing during your decrescendo. Flutes, your air tends to slow down as you get softer causing the pitch to go flat. Be sure to maintain air speed with either a smaller aperture or an increase in air pressure. Clarinets, you tend to go sharp as you get softer. Avoid tightening your embouchure. Keep your chin down. Let’s try it again.”

#4 - Answer all of the questions

Scenario: You are working on a piece that has an oboe solo, and you cannot hear the solo because the trombones are playing too loud.

Comment Option #1 - “Trombones, please play softer at letter C.”

- Why play softer? How much softer?

Comment Option #2 - “Trombones, please play softer at letter C. The oboe has the melody there, and we need to be able to hear it. If you can hear the oboe line, then you are soft enough.”

#5 - Teach concepts, not concerts

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“Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.”

- Lao Tzu

Concerts should be the logical outcome that demonstrates the application of the concepts that have been taught.





CONDUCTING

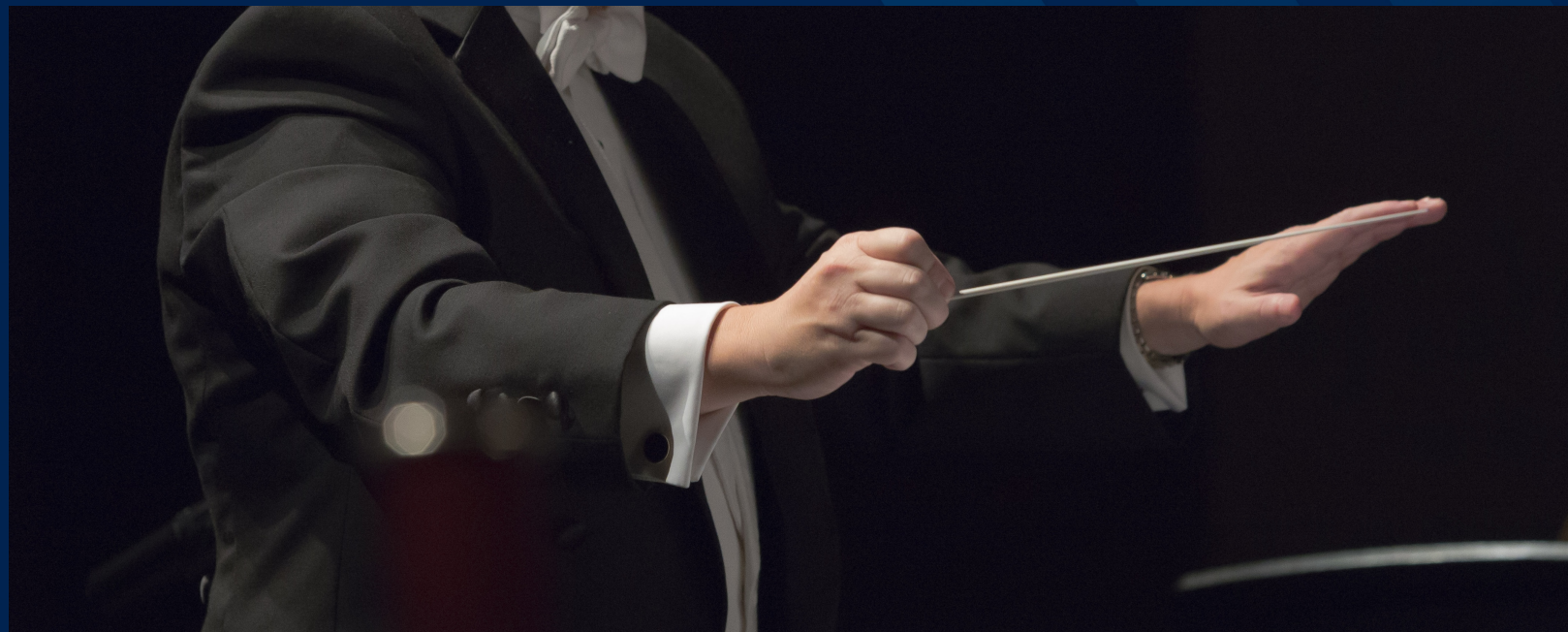
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How we show it

#6 - Conduct the music, not the meter

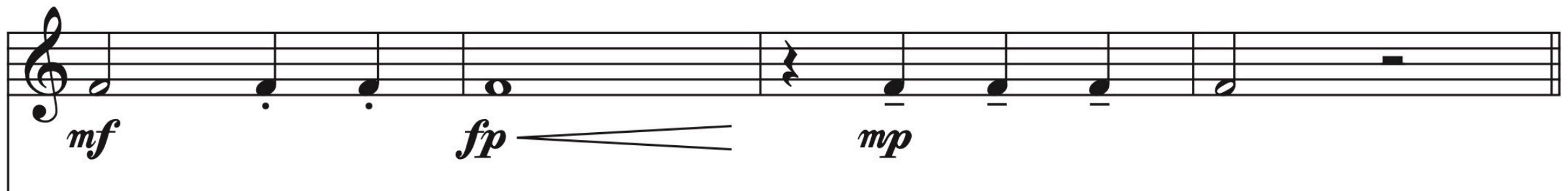
#6 - Conduct the music, not the meter

- Gestures from the podium should be a visual representation of the music to be heard



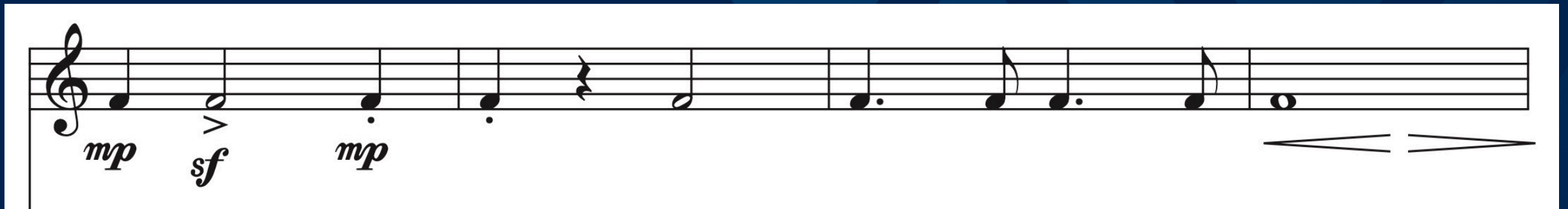
#6 - Conduct the music, not the meter

- **Visual Dictation Exercises**



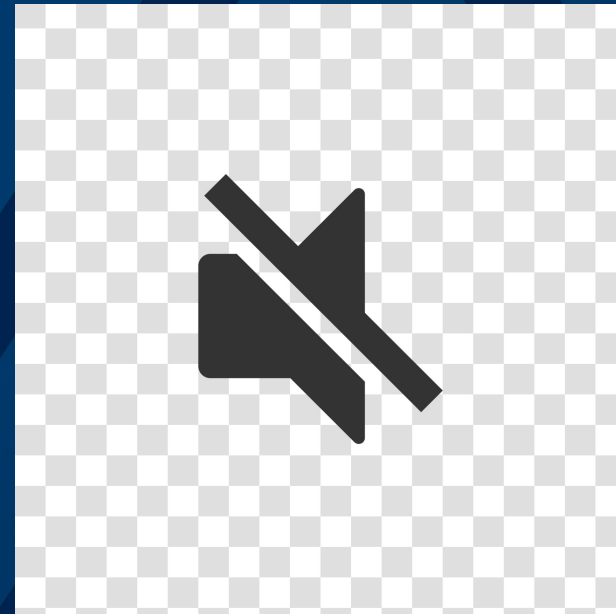
#6 - Conduct the music, not the meter

- Visual Dictation Exercises



#7 - Say less, show more

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Psychologists tell us that communication is:

- 7% words
- 38% tone of voice
- 55% body language

#7 - Say less, show more

Shift to a new paradigm:

- Show it first
- Show it again, if needed
- Draw attention to the gesture, if still needed
- Show if again

Goal is to give gestures meaning and
thereby encourage more watching, i.e.
non-verbal communication

#7 - Say less, show more

Silent Rehearsals

- Conductor doesn't speak
- Performers do not speak
- All communication is done through gesture (no sound)
- Require preparation on part of conductor (palette of gestures)
- Promotes increased focus and communication

#7 - Say less, show more



“Be silent, unless
what you have to say
is better than
silence.”

Salvator Rosa (1615-1673)

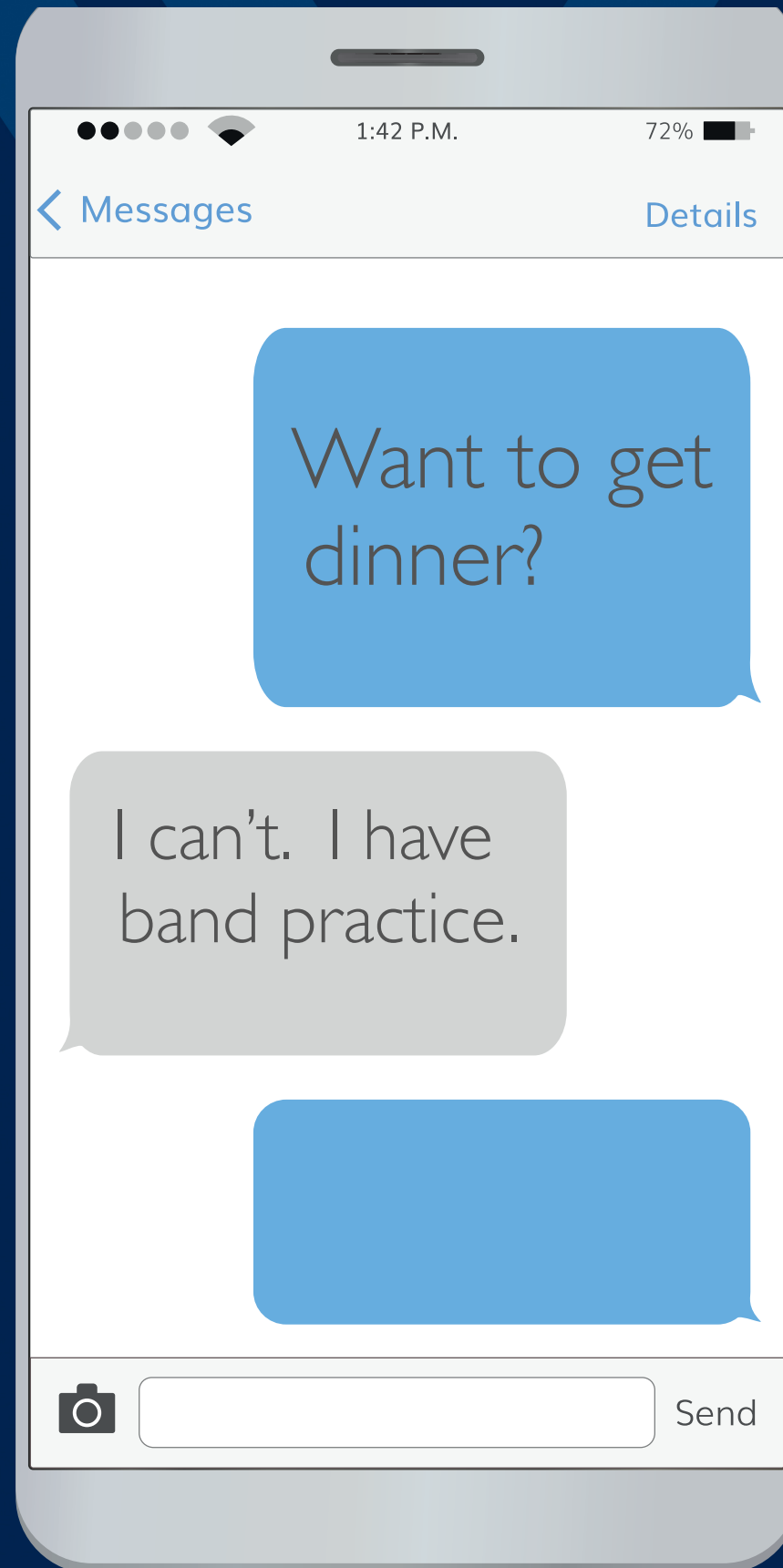
ATMOSPHERE/MOOD

or

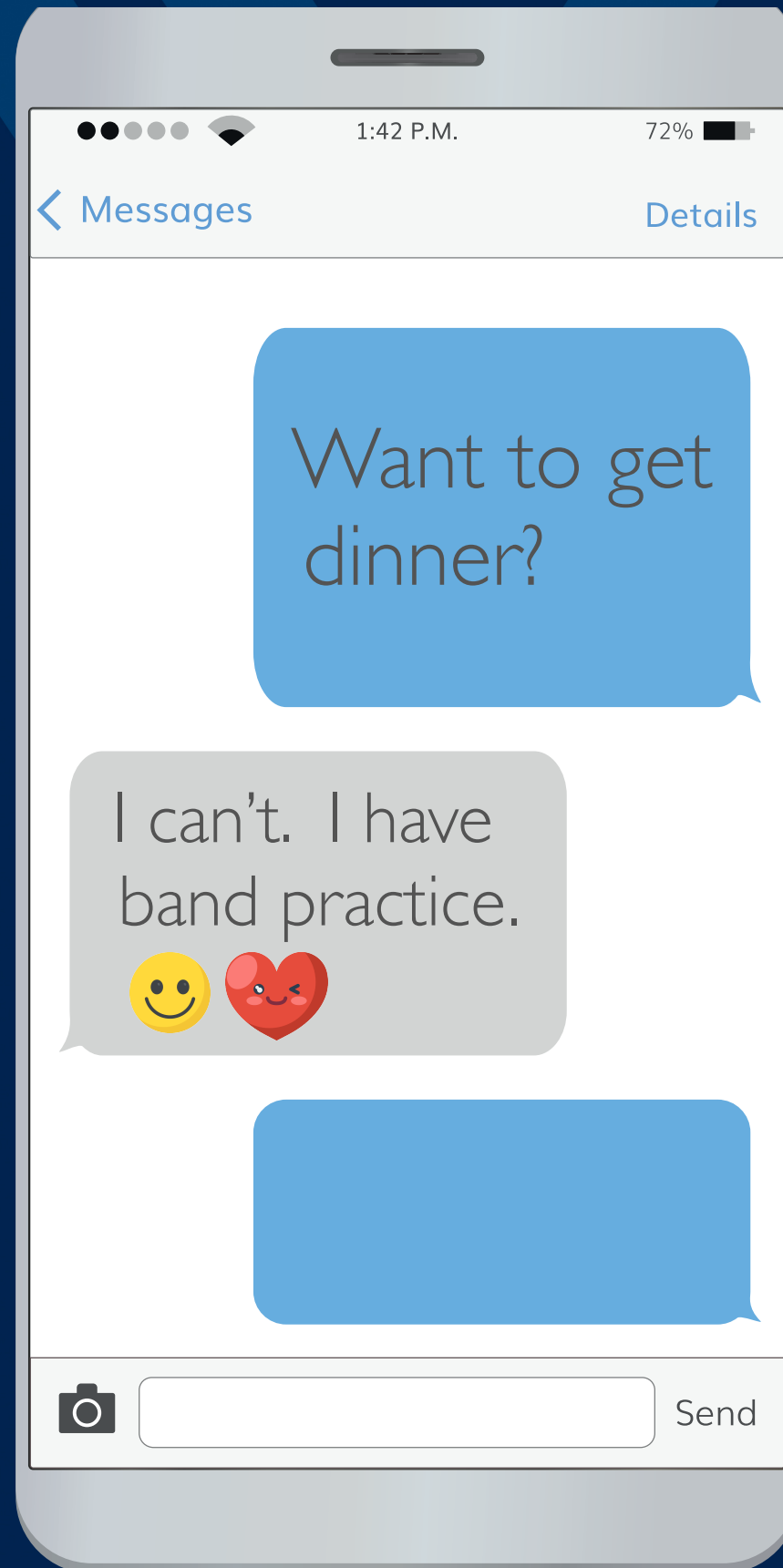
How we feel it

#8 - *Avoid Musical Text Messages*

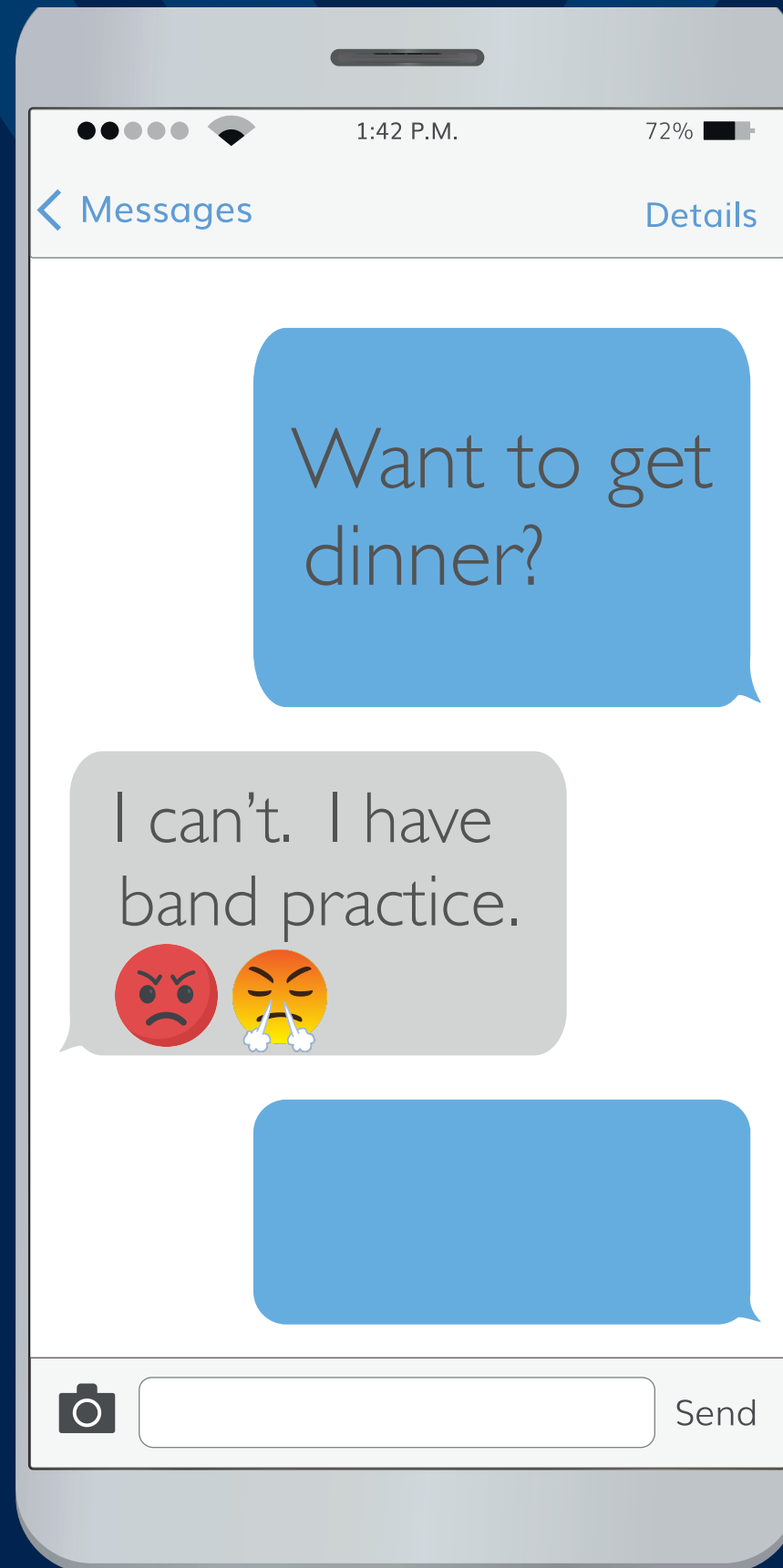
#8 - Avoid Musical Text Messages



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#8 - Avoid Musical Text Messages

- Playing correct notes and rhythms is not the goal. It is the starting point.
- Audiences come to feel a concert, not hear it.
- “If you play something, say something.”
 - - Brian Balmages
- “Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.” - Maya Angelou

#8 - Avoid Musical Text Messages

Step to take:

- Identify the mood the composer is trying to create
- Use a reference word for each section
- Share with ensemble
 - Use word or image to convey
 - Use analogy or story if need be
- Work on mood/feeling from the start (while working on notes/rhythms). Otherwise you have to learn it twice.
- Create an experience for the audience, performers, and yourself



#9 - Give what you expect to get

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“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

#9 - Give what you expect to get

- Avoid mixed signals on podium
- No rehearsals - just performances without audiences
- If you want an engine to go, you have to give it gas
- “Take the music seriously, but don’t take yourself too seriously.” - Paula Crider

#10 - Engage the students

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Video Game Effect

- Must reach the next level
- Must complete a task
- Reward based

In rehearsal

- Set clear goals to reach
- Set identifiable & achievable goals
- Create culture of intrinsic rewards



#10 - Engage the students

Phone/Social Media Effect

- Seeking approval through post likes
- Steady stream of new information
- Sense of community

In rehearsal

- Provide positive feedback
- Vary the pace for increased interest
- Create culture of community



#10 - Engage the students

Encourage dialogue/interaction

- Ask for input/feedback
- Discover what they think
- Learn what they need and/or want
- How do they feel
- Create a safe environment for open exchange

#10 - Engage the students

Create a worthwhile experience every day

- Learn something every day
- Create something every day
- Feel something every day
- Contribute in some way every day
- Leave different than when entering



CODA

Final Thoughts

The success of “what” you do will be determined largely by “how” you do it.

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

- Maya Angelou

The background of the slide features a series of overlapping chevron patterns in various shades of blue, creating a dynamic, geometric texture.

QUESTIONS?



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