

It's the Bridge, Not the Break!

Presenters:

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Reason for the Session?

Purpose of the Session

- The purpose of this presentation is to help wind band conductors have a stronger understanding of teaching strings. The clinicians aim to provide attendees with a understanding of string pedagogy, transferable skills from band to orchestra, and ideas for resources and professional development.



Three Major Areas Will Be Discussed.

1. Overview of string instrument understanding and pedagogy.
1. Transferable skills from band to orchestra.
1. Key resources that are valuable to the band director in the orchestra classroom.



Understanding Strings

Proper setup prepares students for
success...

1. Playing Preparation
2. Right Arm-Hand-Fingers
3. Left Arm-Hand-Fingers
4. Musical Application



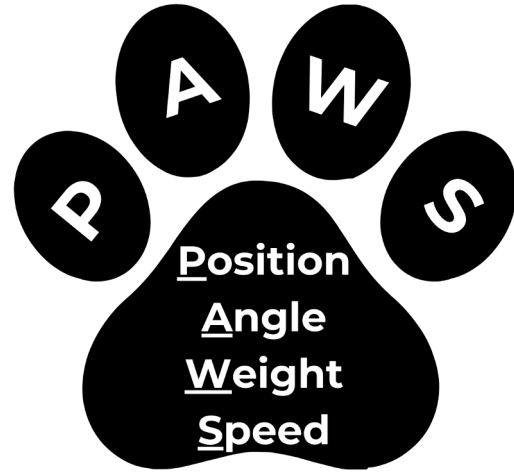
1. Playing Preparation

- Power/weight
- Balance
- Breathing
- Timing - Anticipation



2. Right Arm-Hand-Fingers

- Bowing technique
 - Bow hold
 - Up/Down
 - Circular function
 - Arm opens and shuts



3. Left Arm-Hand-Fingers

- Finger contact (shape, pressure, tension)
- Intonation (tapes, harmonic checking, classroom benefit)
- Tension



4. Musical Application

- Teaching beginners as an ensemble does not change with a different family of instruments.
- Solo playing compared to orchestral playing in sections
- Classroom Management - Strings Edition
 - Tapes
 - Metronome
 - Teacher Instrument
- What does this mean for your rehearsal techniques?




Transferring and Translating Rehearsal Techniques

Use your ears to guide your rehearsal,
but don't forget to translate!


1. Rhythm and Ensemble
2. Intonation
3. Phrasing Articulation
4. Articulation



1. Rhythm and Ensemble

- Correct ensemble playing has two fundamental aspects: individual internal pulse and rhythmic accuracy. These hold true regardless of the type of ensemble.
 - Most rhythm reading pedagogy involved vocalization, and counting out loud.
 - More intuitive to transfer vocalization and singing a rhythm to playing a wind instrument than it is to transfer it to the bow.
 - Beginning string players experience rhythm much more tactically.
 - Learning to air bow or play the rhythms on open strings is a baseline for teaching rhythm and ensemble.
 - Don't teach rhythm in a vacuum - it can also be a vehicle for teaching bow control and distribution.
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Intonation

- Band: first line treatment is to make sure that everyone has the right fingers down and/or are on the right partial.
 - Orchestra: we need to address what position we should be in. This can be communicated through proper marking of parts with fingerings (many educational editions have the fingerings).
 - Pay's dividends to have one put fingerings in your parts. You want to eventually learn to do this yourself.
 - Takeaway: Duration is not your enemy when it comes to string intonation.
 - Asking your players to play the “fermata game” can help them build their ears and left hands.
 - **More TONE better inTONATION** (address the bow usage first)
 - Teaching interval identification is crucial: String playing IS aural skills.
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Phrasing

- Generally, phrasing is much more intuitive for wind players.
- Phrasing (playing dynamic shapes, either notated or interpreted) is less obvious with strings.
- Defining the phrase is the first step. What shape do you want to hear?
- The bowing needs to match the shape when possible.
- Weight, and bow speed are equally or more important to phrasing as the bowing itself.
- Return to singing as a group - if they hear it, there's a better chance they will play it, even if they don't know *how* they are doing it.



Articulation

- Articulation: the length of a given note as well as the character of the attack.
- Band: play shorter in order to improve the ensemble.
- This is the last thing you would want to ask a young orchestra to do.
- Playing fast, short notes (spiccato or “off the string”) is one of the most advanced in the study of the bow. It takes years.
- Play more “on the string”, until the music makes it impossible to do so, has helped my youth orchestras tremendously.
- A “brushy” bow stroke is a happy medium.
- Avoid music with spiccato unless you have the players for it.



Where Do I Go For Help???

- First and foremost, reach out to orchestra friends.
- We did not learn enough in our strings methods.
- Bring in clinicians.
 - Zoom
 - Local Orchestra Teachers
- Take private lessons on a string instrument.
- Take professionals out for coffee or lunch and pick their brains.
- Go to orchestra clinics at your state level conference (and Midwes



Learn the Repertoire

- Method Books
 - Resource Books
 - Warm-Up Routines
 - Modern Composers
 - Traditional Literature
 - String Videos on YouTube
 - Phone a Friend
 - Go to the Exhibit Hall and Ask Questions!!!
- Websites
 - <https://www.newtostringsguide.com/repertoire>
 - <https://listeninglab.stantons.com/omea/145/>
 - <https://www.lucksmusic.com/Content.aspx?c=139>
 - <http://www.orchestralist.net/olist/registry/easyrep.php>
 - <https://www.orchestrteacher.net/pedagogy/selecting-repertoire/>
 - <https://www.astastrings.org/>





Questions?

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