

REPENT!!!

Shun These Sins and Make Great Music

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The Seven Sins Fatal to Spiritual Progress

Despite the surprisingly widespread belief that all a player need do is to “play the notes,” this very concept is nonsensical, for as soon as notes are sounded, they have a full complement of attributes: intensity, attack, dynamic level (loudness), warmth, character, direction, length, speed and so on. So, if we assert that we are merely “letting the music play itself,” it can only mean that we are forfeiting a conscious choice of attributes, allowing habitual, automatic ways of playing to overlay and strangle the voice of the composer.

—Ruth Waterman, concert violinist

So, What Are Our Sins?

1. Articulation
2. Dynamics
3. Rhythms
4. Tempo
5. Line
6. Silence
7. Proportion

But Wait, There’s More . . .



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1. Generic Articulation

Music is never mere information.

—Bruce Adolphe

- Let's look at, *sans* markings, staccato, accent, tenuto, and marcato.
- Note shape—the “front end of the note,” the “resonance” of the note, the “resolution” of the note.
- Articulation is expressive musical diction. Precision is a by-product.
- Nuance is essential—a subtle difference in meaning, expression, or sound.
- Articulation must never be generic.

2. Unconvincing Dynamics

The dynamics never sit. They are always in motion.

—Robert Shaw

- Dynamics do not exist until perceived by the listener.
- Our goal is to create artful exaggeration.
- Music is an endless succession of rainbows.

3. Perceiving All Rhythms Literally

The measurability and the accurateness of all notation is only approximate.

—Bruno Walter

- Rhythmic precision must serve, not supersede, musical artistry.
- What are some examples?
 - Distort rhythms to highlight/capture style.
 - Elongate note(s) for nuance.
 - Stretch pulse to emphasize harmony.
 - Blur or delay the release.
 - Approximate value of short notes in dotted rhythms.
 - Delay entrances to add drama.
 - Fact: Deviations are omnipresent!

4. Being Obsessed with Tempo Markings

Musicians know you cannot keep time. Music travels in time and musicians take a ride. Tempo is a liquid like water; it seeks its own level. A good tempo is a discovery.

—Bruce Adolphe

- The blessing and curse of the metronome; it does not always reveal the truth.

5. Absence of Line

Music is not a bunch of separated notes strung together, but rather one note that swims from pitch to pitch on a line.

—David McGill

Live for the line!

—Frederick Fennell

- Actors don't speak their words; they deliver their lines.
- The pitfalls of rehearsing music vertically.
- Make the bar lines disappear.
- Music must tell a story, explore emotions, and take the listener on a journey.

6. Ignoring the Function of Silence in Music

A musician plays through silence.

—Bruce Adolphe

- Music comes from silence (*before* the music), travels over silence (*during* the music), and returns to silence (*after* the music).

7. Failure to Ponder the Role of Proportion

Proportion is the heart of beauty.

—Ken Follett

- Proportion becomes the architecture of our music in dynamics, tempo, note length, articulation, and line.
- Proportion equals relationships between all the above.

Final Thoughts

Play only what is on the page and you will be wrong.

—Mallory Thompson

That was the most accurate performance of my music

(words you will never hear from a composer, according to Frank Ticheli)

***The ultimate sin is to have no opinion
or to make no judgements whatsoever.***

—Richard Floyd

Recommended Reading

Casals and the Art of Interpretation (David Blum)

Meaningful Music (Gregory Rudgers)

Sound in Motion (David McGill)

Steal Like an Artist (Austin Kleon)

What to Listen for in the World (Bruce Adolphe)

In Pursuit of Great Conducting (H. Robert Reynolds)



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The Seven Deadly Sins of Music Making

Richard Floyd

What are our musical sins? Are they obvious or subtle? When do we unwittingly commit such transgressions? And above all, how can we avoid them?

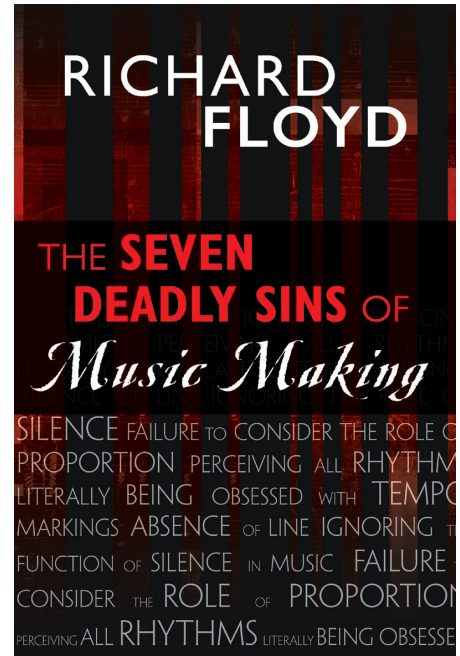
In this sequel to his acclaimed bestselling book *The Artistry of Teaching and Making Music*, master teacher and conductor Richard Floyd makes a compelling case for *The Seven Deadly Sins of Music Making*, which he identifies and expounds upon as the following: articulation, dynamics, rhythms, tempo, line, silence, and proportion.

Using dozens of excerpts from the wind band repertoire to illustrate his points, Floyd guides readers through the thorny landscape of our musical wrongdoings, offering wisdom and actionable solutions that lead to, in the words of the author, “a world of artistic, expressive music making that goes beyond the printed page.”

Though the book addresses the wind band medium specifically, its observations and lessons about music making are universal. Musicians and educators in all disciplines are certain to profit from the nearly six decades of experience Richard Floyd expertly brings to the page.

Richard Floyd has enjoyed a distinguished career at virtually every level of wind band performance. He most recently retired from the University of Texas at Austin and now holds the title of Texas State Director of Music Emeritus. He also serves as Musical Director and Conductor of the Austin Symphonic Band, one of the premier adult concert bands in America. He maintains an active schedule as a conductor, clinician, lecturer, and mentor.

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The Artistry of Teaching and Making Music

Richard Floyd

It is rare to encounter a member of the music education profession who cannot think back to those life-changing experiences that led them to embrace the world of music and make it their life's work. In every case, what brought them to that transforming reality was the way the music made them feel. . . . It was a deep emotional connection that seduced them into the world of music. These are the moments we want to create for our students.

—Richard Floyd

In the context of an ensemble rehearsal, where does real music making begin? How can we also infuse our rehearsals with artistry in order to create deep connections for our students, beyond the correct rhythms, in-tune notes, and proper technique? How can we teach students to ultimately think for themselves?

With more than fifty years of experience, Richard Floyd is a highly distinguished teacher and conductor in Texas and across the United States. Over the years, he kept a journal to document rehearsal strategies that not only improve technique within the ensemble but also achieve artistic, musical results.

The book is a look into the precious pages of Floyd's journal. Each chapter contains inspiration for the conductor and simple, unique exercises designed to achieve artistry in every rehearsal. *The Artistry of Teaching and Making Music* is a book to revisit each summer before the school year begins and as a reference before each rehearsal. It will be a priceless addition to your personal library.

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