

Do You Hear What I Hear – The Sequel !

Putting on your Musical Makeup

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Featuring

The Michigan State University Wind Symphony
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Interpretation

*Interpretation is a strange concept:
When a musician is convinced of what
A piece should be, how it should sound,
What it means,
When a musician feels she has discovered
The essence of a work,
She identifies with it, embodies it,
Then she does not think that her performance
Is an interpretation:
It is the piece as the composer meant it to be.*

An interpretation is what other musicians do.

Bruce Adolph

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The art of interpretation is not to play what is written

Pablo Casals

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There are no musical notations that represent feelings

Sir David Whitwell

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Play from the soul, not like a trained bird!

C.P.E. Bach

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The challenge for a musician, as for an actor, is to match the expression with the deeper meaning of the text, to be in tune with its underlying essence.

Ruth Waterman

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The printed notation is not music.. It is nothing more than code

Richard Floyd

I The Curse Of The Written Score - Our Obsession

The written note is like a strait jacket, whereas music, like life itself is constant movement, continuous spontaneity, free from any restrictions. Pablo Casals

There are so many excellent instrumentalists who are completely obsessed by the printed note, whereas it has a very limited power to express what the music actually means. Pablo Casals

Interpretation is therefore not an indulgence - something added to the written text; the very instant the bow touches the string, it comes into play, whether we are conscious of it or not. 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

II From The Beginning Ponder Expressive Qualities Either Evident Or Implied In The Score

- A *The ear can't hear what the mind can't imagine.*
Gunther Schuller
- B Search for words that capture the mood of the music. Is it playful, somber, intense, sad, happy, restless, celebratory, tragic, regal, majestic, noble, gloomy, mysterious, joyful, lovely, tender, angry or.....?
- C Consider: Is this piece a fantasy with a free and fluid rhythm? Is it a march with a strict regular beat? Is it a dance with its own personal lilt?
- D Or simply ask the question. "Is the music singing or dancing?"
- E Seek an emotional connection from the very beginning but be open to change and evolution.
- F Faces can be fun and sometimes help to spark the imagination.

III Approach The Written Score In The Same Fashion You Would Approach Written Text

A A Horse! A Horse! My Kingdom For A Horse!

B There Is Andrew Jackson! He's Standing Like A Stone Wall!

IV Putting On Your “Musical Make-Up”

A Our options are:

- 1 Louder or softer
- 2 Heavier or lighter
- 3 Longer or shorter

B All are meaningless until perceived by the listener.

Uniformity of sustained volume breeds monotony. Remember that the human ear is insensitive to anything less than a 25% difference of energy. Science and Music – Sir James Jeans

V First And Foremost. Find The Musical Line

When the technical problems of finger dexterity have been solved, it is too late to add musicality, phrasing and musical expressing. That is why I never practice mechanically. If we work mechanically, we run the risk of changing the very nature of the music. Daniel Barenboim

Live for the line. Frederick Fennell

A Line is much more than melody

- 1 Seek a continuity of feeling
- 2 Consider the melodic curve
- 3 Look for musical destinations

B In general white notes sustain the line and black notes connect the line.

C With rare exception there will always be dynamic inflections not marked in the score.

VI Essential Truths

- A Beauty exists in curves...soft shapes
- B In general music is an endless succession of rainbows.
- C All music has a heart beat. We must find it.
- D Thoughts on Repetition.
 - 1 Repetition...yes! Duplication...no!
 - 2 In general repeated notes or a repeated design must not be equal
 - 3 A repeated single note or phrase is similar to the repetition of words or phrases in speech. They can't remain the same.
- E Rhythm is not always finite.

The measurability of musical rhythm, and therefore the accurateness of its notation, is only approximate. Divergence from the arithmetical exactness occurs mainly in the case of the short notes in dotted rhythms, which an interpreter of lively rhythmic sense feels a little shorter, and therefore places a little later than prescribed by notation.
Bruno Walter

- F On Rubato –
 - 1 *One must feel a certain logic...not a disorderly fantasy.*
 - 2 There has to be an awareness of proportion.
- G On Ritards – Never too slow too soon. Proportion is essential.
- H Articulation = Instrumental Diction
- I Rests must be viewed as energy filled silence. They are an essential part of the music.
- J Accompaniment – *the sounds in which a theme is clothed*

VII Rehearse With A Musical Motive

- A There is no reason to play in tune unless it enhances the music. There is no reason to introduce style unless it enhances the musical content of the work at hand.
- B It is crucial that we make musical decisions first and then make pedagogical decisions that serve to enrich the musical content.

VIII Creating A Musical Journey

