

“Filling the Tank” with Awareness and Availability
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Important concepts:

1. The brain as a goal orientated machine (psycho-cybernetics)
2. “While” (Listening and moving in multiple levels of **awareness**)
3. Conducting merges the prepared mind and trained body (**availability**)
4. The **product** of how we hear and how we move reflect our **priorities** and **processes**. All can be adjusted and improved!

PRODUCT

Goal of score preparation: Aural Image

The amount of music heard without the music actually sounding defines the quality of one’s aural image.

Goal of movement capacity: Physical availability to deliver expressive intent

The “available” conductor enlightens the members of his/her ensemble through a physical presentation of what is to be heard rather than what is only seen in musical notation.

PRIORITY: Be aware and available to Hear, Move, and Respond

HEAR: Prepare the mind. Know what you **expect** to hear by developing a clear aural image through deep and detailed score preparation. Go beyond tracking for correctness to interpretation. Conducting is the gestural presentation of aural expectation based on this image. All movements should have the intention of eliciting a specific sound.

- Interpretation requires a personal commitment to subjective decision-making equal to any similar commitment to objective ensemble pedagogy.
- Interpretation is ear-driven through the aural image not eye-bound as it transcends the boundaries of notation.
- Interpretation requires the development of a detailed aural image balancing objective information and subjective possibilities.

“The bar line is a door, not a wall.”

Donald Peck, former principal flutist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra

MOVE: Train the body to be fluid instead of fixed. The body must be flexible and free of tension to be physically available to vary the expressive elements of speed, space, and weight to outline the desired musical shape. All movements should have the intention of eliciting a specific sound.

RESPOND from aural expectation (what one expects to hear rather than what is actually heard). Verbal and gestural instruction should be delivered with specific intention (what one feels is necessary to gain the required response). ***Turn objective obstacles into subjective “performance practice” possibilities!***

PROCESS

Score Discovery, Score Analysis, Score Delivery

- Score Discovery: **How** can I get my band to play this? Should my band play this?
- Score Analysis: **What** information does the notation provide (tracking)?
- Score Delivery: **Why** should the notation sound “like this” (interpretation)?

“Everything is in the score except the essentials.”

Gustav Mahler, conductor

“Imagination is more important than knowledge.”

Albert Einstein, genius

(Re)Discovering Natural and Fluid Movement

Move naturally

- Movement is psychophysical process, the body naturally moves with purpose
- Movement should be free of artificial tension and/or habits
- Work to remove redundant patterns of movements that lack specific intention
- Focus on the quality of motion rather than the quantity of motion
- Feel your spine move and note the quality of your breathing

Characteristics of natural movement

- Body: All joints available to move and to balance/counterbalance
- Space: The “kinesphere” or the whole space available through a free range of motion and how that range of motion meets the space in the “work area” (the room).
- Shape: Contour/contrast. All movement has shape qualities (speed, space, weight create a feeling of rising or sinking for example). All movement needs shape flow support (how the whole body supports the intention)
- Effort: More is not necessarily good as quality movement theory means only move what is necessary to achieve the goal

Learn how your body is designed to work naturally

- Establish a fluid and balancing posture: touch the floor exercise
- Establish the height of the plane: touch your belly button exercise
- Establish the position of the elbows: perch exercise
- Develop and understanding of how to use the delivery system naturally
 - Wrist, elbow, and shoulder are not hinges, but ball and joint rotation devices
 - Learn to feel their rotation and not “fire” to open or closed

“I can usually tell if a performer is ‘behaving’ to the music or ‘moving.’”

Anne Halprin, improvisational dancer

“We respond to gestures with an extreme alertness and in accordance with an elaborate secret code that is written nowhere, known by none, and understood by all.”

Edward Saphir, American anthropologist-linguist