

The Art of Expressive Conducting Conducting from the Inside Out



Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic
62nd Annual Conference
Chicago Hilton



Presented by
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Waubonsie Valley High School Wind Ensemble

Aurora, Illinois

Dr. Stephen Daeschner, Superintendent | Mrs. Kristine Marchiando, Principal
Mr. Mark Truckenbrod, District Music Coordinator

Piccolo

Maya Merriweather*

Flute

Aparna Srinath
Whitney Heitzman
Brianna Zrinsky*

Oboe

Leandra Knapp
Zak Schmidt

Bassoon

David Chesworth

Clarinet

Brian Caputo*
Katie Cluver
Sarah Graden*
Emma Tucek
Lizzy Yorka

Bass Clarinet

Samantha Fuchs
Nate Lawdenski*

Alto Saxophone

Brent Ito
Eric Wu*

Tenor Saxophone

Natalie Yi*

Baritone Saxophone

Tyler Rosenblume

French Horn

Shaneen Chicano
Kelsey Fisher
Parker Nelson*
Erika Martinez

Trumpet

Aaron Davis
Reuel Erastus-Obilo
John Horan*
Phil Jones*
Jack Moore
Dan Pang*

Trombone

Shenil Dodhia*
Patrick Hockberger*
Ryan Kinnavy
John O'Neill*
Kevin Schmitt

Euphonium

Brian May*
Mihir Surati*

Tuba

Kevin Kallas
Josh Nair

Percussion

Matt Battaglia
Alan Bringman
Kelly Fosse
Sam Kowalski
Katie Palmer

* denotes IMEA District IX participant

Chester

William Schuman

*Let tyrants shake their iron rod, And Slav'ry clank her galling chains,
We fear them not, We trust in God, New England's God forever reigns.*

*The Foe comes on with haughty stride, Our troops advance with martial noise,
Their Vet'rans flee, before our Youth, And Gen'ral's yield to beardless Boys.*

*What grateful Off'ring shall we bring? What shall we render to this Lord?
Loud Hallelujah let us sing, And praise His Name on Ev'ry Chord.*

The composition *Chester* is based on a popular tune of the American Revolution. The song *Chester* appeared in 1778 in a book of tunes and anthems composed by William Billings called *The Singing Master's Assistant*. *Chester* was so popular that it was sung throughout the colonies from Vermont to South Carolina. It became the song of the American Revolution, sung around the campfires of the Continental Army and played by fifers on the march. William Schuman took *Chester* and two other popular tunes from Billings' *The Singing Master's Assistant* and turned them into a three-movement composition known as the *New England Triptych*. Originally composed for orchestra in 1956, Schuman later arranged the work for concert band.

O Magnum Mysterium

Morten Lauridsen/trans. H. Robert Reynolds

*O Magnum Mysterium
O great mystery, and wondrous sacrament,
that animals should see the newborn Lord, lying in their manger!
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear the Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia!*

—Translation by Ron Jeffers. Used by permission.

Composer Morten Lauridsen is most noted for his vocal compositions, which are regularly performed by ensembles and artists throughout the world. His 1994 choral setting of *O Magnum Mysterium*, translated to "O Great Mystery," has become one of the world's most performed and recorded compositions. About his setting, Lauridsen writes, "For centuries, composers have been inspired by the beautiful *O Magnum Mysterium* text with its depiction of Jesus' birth amongst the animals and shepherds." His work is marked by quiet passages of reflection, the use of interesting harmonies, and an ultimately joyful climax towards the end of the piece. Noted band conductor H. Robert Reynolds has arranged the symphonic wind version of this popular work with the approval and appreciation of the composer.

Music at Waubonsie Valley

Music is an elective at Waubonsie Valley and serves over 1,000 students. Curricular courses include seven choirs, six bands, five orchestras, Introduction to Music Theory, and Advanced Placement Music Theory. All performing groups are ability-grouped. Co-curricular offerings include marching band, pep band, three jazz bands, two jazz combos, percussion ensemble, two steel drum bands, two show choirs, chamber singers, mosaic choir, strolling strings, and musical theater. The students also have access to a state-of-the-art 16-station MIDI lab. Waubonsie Valley was named a Grammy Gold Signature School by the Grammy Foundation in 2007.

The WVHS Wind Ensemble is an auditioned band that meets every day for forty-five minutes. Students are expected to rehearse in student-led sectionals and chamber music groups that meet once a week during their option period. Students also rehearse with the Chamber Strings once a week to perform full symphonic repertoire. The band has performed at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, IMEA All-State Conference, University of Illinois Superstate Festival, and the Music for All National Festival.

Josh Chodoroff, Director

Josh Chodoroff has taught in District 204 for eight years. He spent two years at Granger Middle School before joining the Waubonsie Valley staff in 2003. Mr. Chodoroff conducts the Wind Ensemble, co-conducts the Symphonic Band and Pep Band, directs the Jazz Band and Marching Band, and runs various wind and percussion technique classes. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA, where he earned a bachelor's degree in music education. While there, he studied trumpet with David Bilger, Principal Trumpet of The Philadelphia Orchestra, and piano with Dr. Charles Abramovic. Mr. Chodoroff is currently completing his master's degree in music from Northern Illinois University. He currently resides in Montgomery with his wife, Jamie, and their son, Ethan.

WVHS Music Faculty

Mike Dwyer, Department Chair
John W. Burck, Department Liaison
Caitlyne Burgess • Chris Dandeleo • Ines Kurtovic
Mark Liu • Betsy McCann • Mark Myers
Deborah Schmaltz



The Art of Expressive Conducting: Conducting from the Inside Out

When the conductor opens a score, s/he becomes aware of the efforts of a composer to portray in musical symbols the inspiration, imagination, and creativity that stimulated the composition. It is the obligation of the conductor to make a sincere effort to understand and protect the composer's creations while bringing the strength of the conductor's own artistry to the realization of the composer's intent. This is not always an easy assignment. Many deceased composers left little in the way of information that could be used to gain insight into their works. Others provided contrasting information. It is only through direct contact with a composer that the conductor can be confident in understanding artistic intent. But with every composer/conductor interaction, the conductor gains insight into the creative mind that creates music. This insight is then used to revisit composers of the past in an effort to form an artistic collaboration with their music as well.

Knowledge of the score fuels all aspects of a conductor's responsibilities: teaching, leading, interpreting and moving in rehearsal and performance. Of particular interest is the aspect of interpretation. It is the responsibility of the conductor to digest all of the information provided by the composer and then form a "point of view." The point of view becomes the personal collaboration between the composer and the conductor to realize the inspiration of the music. It is the way in which the conductor internalizes the music and is able to passionately communicate it to the ensemble. It is the artistic opportunity. It is the source of conducting from the inside out.



The Path of the Artist

I have had the opportunity to work with instrumental ensembles throughout the United States and around the world. It has been a joyous experience meeting and making music with students who love being together in purpose and in performance, but I have constantly been reminded of the different levels of commitment that can be found.

LEVEL 1 – PARTICIPANT

The common level of commitment is that of the participant. The music participant enjoys the experience of getting together with friends and engaging in the events. The participant is conscientious about rehearsal times, works to learn the music in rehearsal, and is interested in being a good section member. The participant likes music with a good beat.

LEVEL 2 – PLAYER

The next level is that of a player (or singer). The player/singer is a person who loves music because it gives him/her a chance to play. The player wants to play a lot and practices to achieve range and technique that can represent a great sound whenever the player plays. The player arrives early to practice his “licks” and wants great parts to play. In fact, the player judges music based on her/his part. If it’s a good part, it is a good piece of music; if it’s a bad part, it is a bad piece of music. The player likes solos and strives to be heard. The player loves her/his instrument and enjoys getting together with other “players.” The player will learn her/his part outside of rehearsals so s/he can sound good in rehearsals.

LEVEL 3 – MUSICIAN

The third level is that of the musician. The musician plays her/his instrument well and shows up to rehearsals with her/his part mastered. The musician loves chamber music and ensemble because of the opportunity for musical collaboration. The musician does not come to rehearsal to learn her/his own part; the musician comes to rehearsal to learn everyone else’s part. In that way, the musician is learning how to play together by concentrating on intonation, articulation, phrasing, blend, balance, and style. The musician is about listening, learning, and collaborating with other musicians. The musician evaluates whether or not a piece of music is good by the sounds that are created by everyone and enjoys listening as much as playing. The musician likes being a contributing part of every rehearsal through collaboration.

Level 4 – Artist

The fourth level is that of the artist. The artist has all the skills of the player and the musician, but the artist is also a creator. The artist comes to every rehearsal prepared in every way and leaves every rehearsal with new goals. The artist loves great music making and loves to bring expression and inspiration to the performance. The artist has imagination that is fueled by opportunity. That opportunity might come in a solo passage or in an approach to style that amplifies the intent of the piece. The artist is a collaborator with the other members of the ensemble, with the conductor, and with the composer. The artist is intuitive and original, but only uses those skills in pursuit of the most beautiful performance possible. The artist evaluates whether or not a piece of music is good by how it is composed and what it expresses. The artist has the potential to elevate the listener's perception of an average piece through an extraordinary performance. The artist loves music because music fuels her/his soul.

If it were only about choosing a level, then all performers and conductors would be artists. But it is not about choosing: it is about growing, listening, and surrounding oneself with great music, great books, great art, and great people. It is about informed intuition. It is about learning theory so the architecture and harmonic language can be heard in every melody. It is about knowing performance practice and style of music of all periods. It is about listening to challenging pieces by imaginative and original composers, and pushing the envelope of personal preference. It is about reflection on life, death, pain, celebration, passion, grief, and nature to understand and experience those things that inspire meaning in art. It is about learning to be at home in solitude and seeking it out. It is about beauty and spontaneity and imagination and spirituality. It is attempting to approach every sound and every silence every day as if it matters, because it does. It is recognizing that the pursuit of perfection is a lifelong goal and that it is unattainable. It is knowing that the artist's life is not about a destination—it is about the journey.



Score Preparation for the Instrumental Conductor

Score study is an artist teacher/conductor's preparation on a work prior to the first rehearsal, which directly relates to the successful music experience of each ensemble member.

PREREQUISITE STUDY OF THE CONDUCTOR

- ◆ Knowledge of music history, performance practice, style, and the resource materials necessary to supplement that knowledge (i.e., access to *Grove's*)
- ◆ Familiarity with musical forms and compositional techniques, including harmony, melody, rhythm, orchestration, and instrumentation; knowledge of all transpositions and clefs
- ◆ Aural skills development, including the ability to sing and identify intervals, melodic line chords, and arpeggios and rhythms
- ◆ Listening to live performances and recordings of great artist performers in all venues and on all instruments and voices
- ◆ Most importantly, achievement of a high artistic level as a performer on a solo instrument or voice

GOALS OF SCORE STUDY FOR THE ARTIST TEACHER

- ◆ Discover the composer's intent.
- ◆ Develop an aural concept of the work. (You must compare the ideal with what you hear.)
- ◆ Develop *your* interpretation.
- ◆ Empathize with the spirit of the music.
- ◆ Anticipate potential problems.
- ◆ Develop teaching strategies.
 - Technical difficulties (e.g., alternate fingerings, bowings, etc.)
 - Rhythm
 - Intonation
 - Balance
 - Articulation
 - Dynamics
 - Style
 - Expression
 - Phrasing
- ◆ Locate potential conducting problems.
- ◆ Study scores that you are not currently rehearsing for personal growth and musical depth.

GATHERING INFORMATION

- ◆ Gather information about the composer, including when and where born, teachers and other influences, where he/she lived, other compositions, writings about life and music.
- ◆ Gather information about the composition, including composer or publisher notes, research documents, articles or books published referring to the work, inspiration for the work, who commissioned, for what occasion, and who and when premiered.
- ◆ Look through the score to learn the written language of the composer (i.e., translate all words and know their meaning as it relates to music).
- ◆ Listen to recordings early in the process to get a general (not specific) image of the work.

Identify the absolute information. (Mark on score or on separate page.)

- ◆ Identify all dynamics, including accents.
- ◆ Identify all tempi, including accelerandi and ritardandi indicated by the composer.
- ◆ Identify all performance instructions (e.g., dolce, cantabile, with mute, solo, soli, tutti, etc.).
- ◆ Identify all instruments and mallets referred to in the percussion parts.
- ◆ Identify all indications of style, mood, or programmatic reference.

Look for what's new. How does the work reveal itself?

- ◆ Examine instrumentation.
- ◆ Identify harmonic vocabulary, development, and modulation.
- ◆ Identify melodic material and melodic fragments.
- ◆ Identify large sections and phrase structure.
- ◆ Identify rhythmic activity and composite rhythmic structure.
- ◆ Look for style and mood changes indicated and implied.
- ◆ Examine all contrasts in dynamics.



Building a Non-Verbal Vocabulary

- ◆ Hinges that communicate:
 - Head
 - Shoulder
 - Elbow
 - Wrist
 - Fingers
 - Posture, pose, carriage (chest)
- ◆ Eye contact:
 - The eyes are the smallest and most permanent ambassadors of the human spirit.
 - Eye contact must precede specific gesture.
- ◆ Facial expression:
 - Source or facial expression (feelings, attitudes, thoughts, reactions, concentration, empathy)
 - What parts of the face create expression
 - Effect of facial expression on gesture
- ◆ The plane (fixed and variable)
- ◆ Preparatory and the breath
- ◆ Ictus
- ◆ Rebound and resonance
- ◆ The baton (ictus)
 - Paper etude
 - Paintbrush etude
- ◆ Energy—the common denominator between movement and sound
 - Legato, staccato, and everything between
 - The use of space: when too much becomes not enough (staying in the curve)
 - Active and passive gesture (leading and monitoring)
- ◆ Left hand—the sense of touch
 - Poise and fingers
 - Front and back of hand
 - Turning pages
 - Describing the sound
 - Problems with closed fist
 - Moving toward or away from ensemble
- ◆ Releases—the journey to silence
 - Preparatory, ictus, rebound
 - Conducting releases with same intent as beginnings
 - Quality of resonance
- ◆ Left and right hands combined
 - Avoid crossing
 - One or other closer to ensemble
 - Create open area in front of chest (imagine a beach ball)

The bottom line...Look like the music.



Conduct in Music—Not Just in Time

In art, the hand can never execute anything higher than the heart can inspire.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Look like the music.

INTERPRET MUSICAL TERMS AND MARKINGS.

- ◆ Make specific *decisions* regarding all composer markings, including:
 - Articulation
 - Accents
 - Tempi
 - Time signature (how does it relate to the real beats in the bar)
 - Evocative words
 - Style
 - Tone

CONDUCT TO COMMUNICATE TO THE ENSEMBLE AS INDIVIDUALS AND COLLECTIVELY.

- ◆ Phrase shape
- ◆ Destinations
- ◆ Tone color produced
- ◆ Line shape
- ◆ Dynamic interpretations
- ◆ Releases and endings
- ◆ Note shape
- ◆ Balance established by conductor
- ◆ Rubato

LEAD BY EMPOWERING RATHER THAN CONTROLLING.

- ◆ Encourage collaboration
- ◆ Empathize with composer's intent
(no composer was inspired by meter)
- ◆ Recognize and encourage internal pulse

REACT TO THE SOUND YOU HEAR.

- ◆ Listen and evaluate what is right and what needs to be altered.
- ◆ Interact with the reality of the moment.
- ◆ Monitoring (passive) vs. altering (active)
- ◆ Compare your ideal to reality.
- ◆ Allow the players to correct and only intercede when a repeated error suggests a misreading of the part.
- ◆ Insist upon a response. (All conducting gestures require a response.)
- ◆ Eyes and ears must work together. (Let your ears draw your eyes.)

SENSITIZE YOUR ENSEMBLE TO YOUR EXPRESSIVE GESTURES.

- ◆ Watching you is not enough if there is no expectation of interaction (like watching TV).
- ◆ Expressive movement and words (to teach the connection of movement to expression)
- ◆ Expressive movement without words (to solicit an expressive response non-verbally)
- ◆ Use expressive gestures from the beginning (invite the tuning note, shape the warm-up, etc.).

**Refuse to compromise...don't give up
when the music within you requires a response.**

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS 101

What does the music look like?

