

# A New Approach to Developing Musicianship: Drawing the Common Thread Throughout Your Rehearsal Using the Right Materials and Teaching Strategies

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## *Introduction*

*Tempus Fugit*

James Curnow

## *Musicianship*

What is a Quality Performance?  
Defining Musicianship

## *Developing Student Musicianship*

Teaching Materials  
Principles of Instruction  
Rehearsal Techniques

## *Effective Warm-Up Materials*

Variety of Materials  
Easy to Play  
Musically Interesting

## *Principles of Instruction*

Clear Objectives  
Eliminate Routine  
Common Threads

## *Rehearsal Techniques for Blend and Balance*

Establish the model  
Unison Techniques  
Multiple Part Techniques

## *Conclusion*

*Fanfare and Flourishes*

James Curnow



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5:30 p.m.  
Grand Ballroom, Hilton Towers

## **Key Points to Warm-Up Materials**

The daily warm-up should be the first thing you do *every* day!

The warm-up should be a minimum of 10 – 15% of your rehearsal time.

By utilizing “easy to play” exercises, students can concentrate on the fundamentals of tone production, ensemble playing, and over-all musicianship.

Use a variety of exercises and materials, including chorale books, long tone patterns, unison scale-like exercises, etc.

Use musically interesting material. The students should enjoy playing the exercises, or studies, and be thinking about how to play the warm-ups musically.

## **Principles of Instruction**

Have a clear objective for each composition or exercise that you play. Typically these are performance concepts like blend or balance.

Create a dynamic interaction between you and your students. The three critical steps to teacher – student interaction are:

1. Students are playing and the teacher is conducting a musical excerpt.
2. While the students are playing, the conductor/teacher should be listening, analyzing, and assessing their performance.
3. The conductor/teacher provides verbal feedback to the students. To help facilitate the pacing and clarity of instruction, your feedback should address Where, What, Who and How.

Have depth to your instruction by embedding “Common Threads” throughout a rehearsal. That is, give continuous reminders throughout the entire rehearsal about performance concepts addressed in the warm-up. Student learning comes from the depth of their experience.

## **Three Keys to an Effective Rehearsal**

Sheer repetition won't improve anything that is to be long lasting. Learning is about problem solving. Learning is also application of a concept to another context. Use “varied repetition”, which is addressing the same concept through different strategies, to improve student learning.

Your rehearsal techniques, or teaching strategies, must facilitate student learning. Students learn by doing. In a music ensemble rehearsal, students primarily play their instruments. However, there are other student activities, such as listening, analyzing and responding.

Both the conductor and the students need to be actively engaged in the process. There has to be a thoughtful process while the students are playing.

# Purpose of the Daily Warm-Up:

There are many applications of the daily warm-up, and the director must be thoughtful about its purpose and content each day he or she steps up to the podium. It is important to eliminate any routine, or the perfunctory nature of the warm-up. The warm-up should engage students physically AND mentally. In order to do so, provide variety to the content and structure of the daily warm-up, as well as the various purposes that can be addressed during this critical initial activity. The following outlines many of the possible purposes that can be addressed in the warm-up:

## *I. Mental Focus*

- a. Helps focus the students' attention to the band rehearsal
- b. Helps change student motivation from individual effort to group effort

## *II. Physical Preparation*

- a. Playing a wind/percussion instrument is a physical activity
- b. The body must be properly prepared before playing for a significant amount of time
- c. Embouchure muscles, breathing apparatus, and hands/fingers must be addressed

## *III. Practical*

- a. Assists in starting the daily rehearsal
- b. Establishes order and discipline to the rehearsal
- c. "Conditions" appropriate student behavior through a cumulative effect of daily repetition
- d. Establishes a standard of achievement for performance of repertoire.

## *IV. Pedagogical Concepts*

- a. Fundamentals of instrumental techniques (i.e. posture, instrument carriage, and hand position)
- b. Fundamentals of tonal production techniques (i.e. breathing, embouchure, and tonguing)

## *V. Performance Concepts*

- a. Teaches the concept of uniformity that is applied to performance of literature
- b. The daily warm-up is the best method for development of proper ensemble sonority through the concepts of blend and balance

## *VI. Aural Skills*

- a. Helps develop awareness of unison intonation
- b. Helps develop awareness of harmonic intonation
- c. Helps develop general listening skills

## *VII. Rehearsal Techniques*

- a. Establishes the working relationship between the conductor and the players
  - Manipulation of sound by the conductor to achieve desired effect
  - Student response to non-verbal and verbal interaction
- b. This practice is then transferred and utilized for rehearsing concert literature