

63rd Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic
McCormick Place West, Chicago, Illinois
2:30-3:30 pm, Friday, December 18, 2009

STOP PRACTICING! **Making *Music* in the Instrumental Rehearsal**

Presented by:

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- I. Why this Clinic?
 - a. Our students spend some 150 hours a year in rehearsal and around 6 hours a year in concerts—how are we using our time?
 - b. Are we creating lovers of *music* or lovers of *concerts*?
 - c. Are our students excited about the music or about something non-musical?

- II. The Problem With Practice
 - a. *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art* by Stephen Nachmanovitch
 - i. We often have the idea that we must endure the boredom and struggle of practice now in return for some future reward (rehearsal = boredom; concert = reward)
 - ii. If we separate practice from the real thing, neither one of them will be very real
 - iii. Practice is not just necessary to art—it IS art
 - b. Rehearsals as *music* making experiences, not *concert* making experiences

- III. Bringing Music Making into the Instrumental Rehearsal
 - a. The Atmosphere of Music Making
 - i. The rehearsal space
 1. Orderly and clean
 2. Bright, if possible

- ii. Rehearsal as sacred time
 - 1. Be organized
 - 2. Begin on time
 - 3. Sense of urgency
 - iii. Presence and attitude of the teacher/conductor
 - 1. How do you view yourself?
 - 2. How do your students view you?
 - b. The Tools of Music Making
 - i. Artistically potent music
 - ii. Time
 - iii. Creative and feeling teacher/conductor
 - iv. Creative and feeling students
 - c. Creating Creative and Feeling Students
 - i. Teach them that it is OK to feel and express emotion
 - ii. Share what it is about the music that makes it important or moving to you
 - iii. Create mental pictures or seek to recreate emotions associated with the music
 - iv. Use the theater aspect of music in rehearsal
 - v. Turn off the metronome and tuner during rehearsal
 - vi. Teach students *how* to practice and *how* to rehearse
 - vii. Treat percussion as a *musical* instrument—follow the percussion part (you may be surprised)
 - viii. Allow students to interpret at times
 - 1. Music is supposedly a creative art—do we ever allow students to think creatively in rehearsal?

IV. Conclusion

- a. We must ask our selves what we want for our students.
 - i. Lifelong lovers of music?
 - ii. Students who want to continue to play music in college and throughout their life?
 - iii. Students who are burnt out and stop making music as soon as high school is over?
 - iv. We, as teachers and artists, can make a difference!