

# **Band Rehearsal Techniques and Gestures: What are We Saying? What are They Thinking?**

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This topic is specific to corrections in rehearsal, both musical and technical. Including suggestions on gesture, this session uses a live ensemble to foster a more non-verbal, music-centered setting. This clinic uses a live ensemble to demonstrate relationships between gesture and sound, but more specifically, it deals with sensitizing the ensemble to gesture through minimizing unimportant gestures and developing ensemble independence of pulse so gestures that ARE used can be more meaningful.

## I. Repetition versus Variety

- What is the routine?
  - Warm-up?
  - Attendance?
- What is unpredictable?
  - Specific musical choice?
  - Tuning procedure?
  - Seating?
  - Proximity?

## II. Independence of Players and Sensitizing the Ensemble

- Non-conducting
  - Puts responsibility on those that make the sound
  - Allows conductor to “coach” ensemble as a “fly on the wall”
  - Allows teacher proximity with “distant” players
- Establishing the internal pulse within the ensemble (people are uncomfortable with silence)
  - “Mr. Snare Drum” fills up silence
  - Pulse rides somewhere above the ensemble; conductor puts it there, ensemble keeps it there
- Keeping the internal pulse:
  - “Listen for who is in charge?” (helps balance and blend)
  - Isolate fragments that make a musical line
- Intonation and style (Many times, the percussion are in charge)
  - When can percussion not adjust pitch?
  - When can percussion not adjust articulation?
  - Find the model

## III. Efficiency

- Before you stop the ensemble:
  - What is the problem? (may not need to tell them this)
  - Will it get better with another repetition, or do they need more help?
  - What is the correction?
  - Where will you restart?

- Pretend you are a member of the ensemble
  - The band as a big chamber ensemble: breathe with them
  - Assuming you are on-task as a player, what would you want to do in rehearsal?
    1. Successful performance: do it again
    2. Unsuccessful performance: try it again
    3. Don't understand: explanation
    4. Bored: go to something else
  - Drill in rehearsal: Isolate the problem, then back up for varied repetition

#### IV. Awareness

- The sanctuary
- Use silence as a tool for attention
- Conducting sound and pitch

#### V. Level-appropriate literature

#### TODAY'S MUSICAL SELECTION:

Calhoun, Bill. In a Quiet Place. New York: Carl Fischer, 2009.

Gillingham, David. Century Variants. Greensboro, North Carolina: C Alan Publications, 2009.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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