

# **THE THREE HATS OF THE MUSIC EDUCATOR: FINDING BALANCE AMONG MULTIPLE ROLES**

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## **THE 63<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL MIDWEST CLINIC**

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Successful music educators must wear multiple hats in their everyday work. This session will examine three roles that quality music teachers assume: the artist, the teacher, and the administrator. The artist is the creative imaginer who dreams up possibilities, the teacher is the communicator who puts possibilities into action, and the administrator is the framework builder who allows the other two to flourish.

Developing strong skills as administrators, artists, and teachers is a recipe for success, while lack of preparation in any one area is a major factor in teacher attrition. Though this session focuses on the balance of tasks that are critical to early-career teachers, and those who teach them (including mentor teachers and teachers of music education courses), all of us benefit from reflection on how we divide our energies during the teaching day.

Session attendees will assess their current strengths and develop an individual plan for balance among the roles in order to support their own career goals. Attendees will reflect upon the multiple tasks that their jobs require, take inventory of how time is spent, strategize ways to better organize and prioritize workplace demands, and discuss ways to protect the creative inner self that provides the motivation for all other work. The presenters will provide practical strategies for development in all three areas by focusing on how our roles as musicians shape the other two.

# THE THREE HATS OF THE MUSIC EDUCATOR

## THE ADMINISTRATOR

Our multiple administrative tasks can be quite overwhelming – particularly in the first year at a new position. It helps to consider that all of these administrative tasks fit into four categories – since it's easier to deal with four categories than hundreds of individual tasks.

### **The Four Categories of Administrative Tasks:**

#### **Equipment**

- Instrument Inventories (check-out procedures, bonds, accessories, repairs, purchases)
- Libraries (database management, filing, photocopies, folders, purchasing/borrowing)
- Textbooks (including warm-ups, scale pages, chorale books, pep band folders, and concert music)
- Chairs, Stands, & Risers
- Lockers for instruments, lockers for clothes, lockers for music and locks to go with them!
- Uniforms for concerts and other performances

#### **Personnel**

- Recruitment & Retention
- Auditions
- Ensemble & Part Assignments
- Attendance
- Evaluation
- Support Staff
- Student Leadership
- Boosters
- Managing Relationships (colleagues, administrators, parents, community members)

#### **Financial**

- Budgets
- Purchases
- Fundraising
- Accounting

#### **Organizational**

- Daily Plans
- Substitutes
- Performance & Curricular Calendars
- Scheduling Courses
- Festivals (hosting & attending)
- Travel (honor groups, tours, conventions)
- Advocacy
- Communication (especially email)

## **Tips for Administrative Success:**

### **Observe!**

- Look to mentors for help. These include (but aren't limited to): current and former ensemble directors, more experienced colleagues, mentor teachers, retired teachers, and university professors.
- Steal from the best (or just share) – grow your circle of “peeps.”
- Read journals for ideas: Music Educators Journal, The Instrumentalist, etc.
- Attend conferences: MENC, State MEA, ASTA, Midwest Convention, Conducting Workshops, etc.

### **Plan!**

Have a plan for the first five minutes of class, which can make or break instruction for the day. Work diligently to develop consistent routines (all of which must be TAUGHT), especially during the first month of the school year. Some common issues include:

- Entering & leaving the room
- Equipment & facility use (including set-up & tear down)
- Distribution & collection of materials
- Communicating the daily plan
- Attendance
- Special circumstances: illness, instrument repairs & accessories, lost/forgotten sheet music or instruments
- Develop a program handbook and/or website. Use these tools as a communication hub and contract between teacher, students, and families.

### **Delegate!**

- Consider which skills each administrative job requires. Use student, parent, and community volunteers for all jobs that they are qualified for. Their combined qualifications exceed ours! (Spend time on a required job skills inventory in order to save time later.)

### **Practice!**

- Begin by organizing your personal life – put your CD collection on iTunes, email folders, develop a personal budget, create a personalized organizer, delve into new technology, anything!

### **Reflect!**

- Reflection is probably the most important action item, but it is also the most overlooked in the heat of the moment.
- Take the time to “debrief” after each activity. The end of a project is the time when we have the most knowledge about how it works. Before leaving it, take notes about what went well and what should be done differently next time. Many activities only occur once per year!
- Opportunities for reflection in the heat of the moment:
  - Keep a journal (“ideas” section of planner)
  - Create stickies – real or virtual! (such as Stickies or Evernote applications)
  - Use a voice recorder (or try Jott & other voice-to-text services)

## THE ARTIST

### **...the most essential role (and source of inspiration for other two)**

In a perfect job, we would spend most of our time wearing this hat (like a worn-in baseball cap).

### **...multiple modes**

As ensemble directors, our primary mode of teaching is through leading groups of musicians by conducting, coaching, and modeling – three modes that each have distinct advantages. In order to do so we must teach from the best musician that we presently are:

- If you are a better singer than accompanist – teach from your inner-singer
- If you are a better oboist than a conductor – teach from your inner-oboist
- If you are a better conductor than cellist – teach from your inner-conductor

# **How wide are the artistic boundaries that my musicianship imposes on my students?**

### **Tips for feeding the artist:**

- Model lifelong learning
- Sing, play, perform
- Take lessons
- Seek honest feedback (audio/video/Dr. Beat!)
- Build a personal score library
- Study works (that you may never conduct)
- Make time for score study/rehearsal prep
- Compose and arrange
- Listen to (any) music
- Go to live performances
- Stay current (NY Times, Grammy's, iTunes, YouTube – all mouse-clicks away!)
- Commit to a physical practice
- Take part in “novice” activities

## THE TEACHER

### **...the communicative role:**

The artist is the creative imaginer who dreams up possibilities, and the teacher is the communicator who puts possibilities into action.

### **...the ultimate balancing act:**

Our aptitude as teachers comes from our musicianship *combined* with our ability to communicate.

## **The Artist's Framework: Repertoire**

### **Philosophy of Programming – Core Principles:**

- Identifying quality literature
- Matching repertoire to pedagogical goals
- Combining works to represent a diversity of selections
- Creating a concert “experience”

### **Two Models for Consideration:**

#### **1. The Masterworks Model**

- Build your own personal masterworks list. What qualities do the works share?
- Create a repertoire journal. (Include notes that are critical!)
- Seek advice. (Word of mouth is the best way to discover new repertoire.)
- Plan an annual repertoire “retreat” with other directors in your region.
- Contact composers directly.
- Develop a core repertory using the rotation principle.

#### **2. Thematic Programming Model**

- Begin with one or two masterworks and brainstorm associations.
- Align artistic and educational goals to produce “concerts that teach.”
- Concerts can (should?) be wildly artistic endeavors, creating a unique concert “experience” for the audience and performers and are not limited to purely musical arts.
- A thematic thread between works will lead the listener on a particular journey. The journey should elicit a response—emotional, spiritual, intellectual, visceral.

## **The Teacher's Framework: Curriculum**

The teacher's framework takes repertoire choices and translates them into student learning (we call this “curriculum”). We do this on multiple levels (year, semester, unit, week, day) and through multiple modalities.

- Meeting objectives from national standards, state/provincial guidelines, or district standards
- Long-term curriculum design
- Learning objectives & lessons plans
- Daily rehearsal techniques
- Assessment techniques during rehearsal

### **...the “myth” of the well-rounded person:**

Our own balance must be personal and intentional.

## RESOURCES

### **Score Study, Conducting, and Interpretation**

Battisti, Frank. On Becoming a Conductor  
Battisti, Frank & Garofalo, Robert. Guide to Score Study  
Blum, David. Casals and the Art of Interpretation  
Copland, Aaron. What to Listen for in Music  
Harris, Fred. Conducting with Feeling  
Lisk, Edward. The Creative Director  
Thurmond, James. Note Grouping  
Wis, Ramona. The Conductor as Leader

### **Education**

Duke, Robert. Intelligent Music Teaching  
Gardner, Howard. Creating Minds: An Anatomy of Creativity  
Gordon, Edwin. Learning Sequences in Music  
Kohn, Alfie. No Contest: The Case Against Competition  
O'Toole, Patricia. Shaping Sound Musicians  
Palmer, Parker. The Courage to Teach

### **Body, Mind, and Soul**

Ackerman, Diane. A Natural History of the Senses  
Adolphe, Bruce. What to Listen for in the World  
Booth, Eric. The Everyday Work of Art  
Colgrass, Michael. My Lessons with Kumi  
Gelb, Michael. Body Learning (Alexander Technique)  
Green, Barry. The Inner Game of Music  
Hanh, Thich Nhat. Peace is Every Step  
Jordan, James. The Musician's Soul  
Nachmanovitch, Stephen. Free Play  
Rath, Tom. Strengthsfinder (Gallup)  
Rilke, Rainer Maria. Letters to a Young Poet  
Werner, Kenny. Effortless Mastery  
Zander, Rosamund & Zander, Benjamin. The Art of Possibility

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**Robert Taylor** is Director of Bands and Assistant Professor of Music at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC, where he conducts the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, teaches instrumental conducting, and oversees instruction in the brass division. He holds MM and DM degrees in conducting from Northwestern University, and a BA in music education from Humboldt State University.

As passionate advocates of music in the schools, both presenters are in high demand as rehearsal clinicians, adjudicators, and guest conductors throughout North America.