

# Conducting and Rehearsing “Sensitive” Musicians

*Making silk purses . . .*

*or*

*Watch how and to whom you cast your pearls . . .*

Before we begin:

**First Rule of Sensitivity Acquisition:**

**No one has the right to interfere with the learning, musicality, safety and comfort of anyone else in the rehearsal.**

**Second Rule of Sensitivity Acquisition:**

**The sound of any ensemble is determined by the mental imagery of the conductor.**

**Third Rule of Sensitivity Acquisition:**

**Members of the ensemble will improve the most when convinced of and committed to the goal in a personal way.**

**Fourth Rule of Sensitivity Acquisition:**

**Music is in the sound, not the printing.  
Listening is the ultimate adjudication. Don't be a rock - be a sponge.**

### Looking in the mirror ...

Is the homework done?

Who are the students/players working for?

Spontaneous creativity versus shooting from the hip

Will the real "you" stand up?!

### Ways to show sensitivity in music

Variety of expressive gestures

Complementing versus contrasting the music physically

Do the words and the face agree?

How about the voice?

Are you listening, are you listening??

### Techniques to strive for optimum effectiveness

Make music from silence

Avoid the "countdown"

Velcro eye contact - the impossible dream

Consistency

### Sharing the secret with our students.. .

Practice being sensitive - use the warm up time

Practice styles

Practice rubato

Practice dynamics

A picture is worth a thousand words

### Finale . . .

- 1 The podium personality of the conductor has a tremendous impact on the musicianship produced by any group.
- 1 Gestures should be produced in the way you want the performers to move through their instruments, move the bow across the string or strike the mallet to the bar.
- 1 Effective conducting involves a physical gesture that evokes a musically accurate response.
- 1 Instrumentalists create the sound- conductors monitor, shape and refine it to be our own.

Stephen Pratt  
Professor of Music (Wind Conducting)  
Indiana University School of Music

The Midwest Clinic  
Williford Room - The Chicago Hilton  
8:30 AM - December