

“To Beat or Not To Beat...That is the Question”

In tribute to one of our most talented, devoted and creative teachers, this clinic is dedicated to the life of Elizabeth A. H. Green and the patient and inspirational leadership she provided for our profession.

**Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic
Wednesday, December 19, 2001**

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- I. Congratulations! You have arrived! Now, where are you going?
 - A. Curriculum, Curriculum, Curriculum!
 - B. Short-Term Goals – Motivational
 - C. Long-Term Goals – Philosophical and Educational
 - D. What does it mean to be musically educated?
- II. Role of Teacher/Conductor, the Dual Roles. “Teach the gray matter.”
- III. Music as craft
 - A. Tone
 - B. Intonation
 - C. Rhythm
 - D. Technique
- IV. Music as art
 - A. All of the above, plus
 - B. Interpretation
- V. Hypothetical questions about the art and craft of music
 - A. Is it possible to have art without craft?
 - B. Is it possible to have craft without art?
 - C. Does wonderful craft create a demand for improved art?
 - D. Does wonderful art create a demand for improved craft?

“A performance based only on the physical reality of the music and lacking the ingredient of a powerful imaginative drive does not ‘come across’ to an audience.” Elizabeth A. H. Green, The Dynamic Orchestra, p. 76

“Acting is a craft: a craft so perfectly refined, it ceases to be.” Sir Lawrence Olivier.

“Technique, wonderful sound... all of this is sometimes astonishing -but it is not enough.” Pablo Casals. Casals and the Art of Interpretation David Blum, p. 1

“I was amazed to find a conductor who was so energetic in the performance of his own compositions sink into the commonest rut of the vulgar time beater.” Richard Wagner about Hector Berlioz. The Great Conductors, Harold Schoenberg, p. 118

“Nothing is so worth the utmost study as the attempt to clarify the meaning of a phrase, a bar, nay more, a single note.” Richard Wagner. The Great Conductors, Harold Schoenberg, p. 132

“In many cases even the rough, literal maintenance of the time and of each continuous bar |1,2,3,4| |1,2,3,4| clashes with the sense and expression.... We are pilots not mechanics.” Franz Liszt. The Great Conductors, Harold Schoenberg, p. 132

“All too often our musical instruction is preoccupied with the literal reproduction of notation, with explicit attention directed to the precise tempo, rhythmic and dynamic marking – plus, perhaps, accents placed on the strong beats to demonstrate that the performer has a good sense of rhythm. Or, frequently, the big consideration is to fill up all the notes with ravishing sound. While quite an accomplishment in itself, all this can never amount to more than a sophisticated craft of reproduction, a kind of xeroxing in sound of the notation. The visual division of music into measure units and barred beat groups contributes to this static framing of the music.” John Krell. Kincaidiana, p. 30

- VI. Transferring responsibility for art to students. “Teach the gray matter.”
- A. Include students in decision-making process. This starts in their first year of instruction. A goal of music education should be to bring our students to a point of becoming musically independent.
 - B. Discuss “to” and “from” musical direction decisions.
 - C. Use an analogy of word phrases and sentences to musical phrases, etc.
 - D. Discuss decisions about what “colors” to use.
 - E. Determine architecture of the piece or the movement. Establish the “peaks and valleys.” Refer to rondo, ABA forms, etc.
 - F. Use historically correct and contrasting styles.
 - G. Use dynamic contrast (beyond what is written).
 - H. Use of subtle rubato when appropriate.
 - I. Work on creative “note groupings.”
 - J. In slow music – emphasize (to the point of approaching elongation) the short notes.
 - K. Emphasize the relationship between melody and harmony. This often means changing dynamic markings or even the scoring to achieve correct balances.
 - L. Work on teaching students to be more sensitive to the conductor. Create the possibility of spontaneity.
 - M. When listening to what we perceive as being a musical performance, try to identify the performers are doing to create musical effects.
 - N. Create musical atmosphere in rehearsals. “Rehearsals are concerts without an audience.” Arturo Toscanini.
- VII. Transferring responsibility for craft to students. Get them to use THEIR ears.
- A. TONE – Tonal concepts are best taught through hearing and imitation – play recordings for your students regularly.
 - B. INTONATION – Teach them how/to whom they should listen. They must know their instrument and the tuning characteristics. Singing is a must. Discuss “just” and “equal” temperament.

- C. RHYTHM/PULSE - A counting system based on the fractional division of the beat is absolutely essential.
 - 1. Counting aloud
 - 2. Hissing and fingering
 - 3. Metronomic pulse from within the ensemble
 - 4. Don't conduct - so the ensemble must play together by providing their own pulse and by listening
 - D. TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT- Scales, scales, scales
 - E. BALANCE - Who has the most important part, etc.
 - F. STYLE - Adjusting and Matching
 - G. SIGHT- READING
- VIII. Conducting Ideas – think of the “art and craft” of conducting the same way you think of the “art and craft” of instrumental or vocal performance. We must practice our conducting.
- A. Body Language – “A physical gesture which brings about an emotional response”
 - B. Horizontal gestures
 - 1. Palms down
 - 2. Palms in
 - C. Vertical gestures – controlling the rebounds
 - D. Two hand independence– what to do with the left hand
 - E. Breathing
 - 1. Beats of preparation
 - 2. Sending and receiving energy
 - F. Beat of one
 - G. Melds
 - H. “Monk” rehearsal
 - I. The beat point (ictus) we show should be the articulation we desire, while what we do between the beats is what we desire from the breath.
 - J. “The Essence of Conducting” - Elizabeth A. H. Green
 - 1. Know the score
 - 2. Use your imagination
 - 3. Get it “to the tip”
 - K. Leave the podium to teach. Invade the players’ space.
 - L. Approach the podium and bring your arms up the way you want the music to sound.
- IX. Creating accountability in a humane manner as a part of student responsibility
- A. Positive peer pressure
 - B. Deadlines for “homework”
 - C. Treat ensemble maturely and they will respond with great maturity

Imagine the musical results if we could ever unleash the collective enthusiasm and genius that is within our students. This can only happen when the students have a strong sense of ownership for their individual growth and their ensemble skills.

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