

59th Annual Midwest Clinic
Hilton Chicago
Grand Ballroom
December 16, 2005

“TAKING YOUR BAND TO THE NEXT LEVEL:
TEACHING AND DEVELOPING THE INTUITIVE ASPECTS OF MUSICAL
PERFORMANCE”

Clinician: Bobby Adams, Stetson University
Demonstration Ensemble: Lincoln High School Symphonic Winds (Tallahassee, FL)
Alex Kaminsky, Conductor

The **musical level** of any ensemble or performing musician is defined by their **sound** and their **ability to interpret** (re-create) music. To move an ensemble to the next highest level of performance requires improvement in all aspects of sound production and a better understanding about how to interpret music. This clinic will discuss and demonstrate techniques of teaching **higher level listening skills** and ways to develop and increase players’ **intuitive response to music**.

This clinic offers a musical approach to rehearsal and performance in contrast to the more familiar technical approach. Basing rehearsal and performance on **musical concepts does not inhibit technical development**, while **approaching music from the technical standpoint does limit musical growth**. The function of technique is to facilitate music making. “Technique is not about playing large numbers of the right notes in short spaces of time; it is the gift to listeners that allows them to hear with confidence.” This quote is from Bernard Holland, *New York Times* music critic.

Goal: We teach music for the valuable and unique experience quality music affords the learner.

Practice: Rehearsal and performance must be centered on quality music.
Rehearsal and performance must be focused on student learning and achievement.

How music is made: At the most fundamental level, music is made in the way one note moves to the next. Every note in a quality composition has an implied function, and an implied movement that musicians hear as note-tendency. Because it is possible for musicians to hear note-tendency, they can actualize, with their sound, the movement of notes as the composer intended. When every note is allowed to fulfill its desired function, every motive, phrase, section, movement and the composition as a whole comes into being. Hearing what is actually in the music and responding with sound to what is heard is how music is made. In other words, **the music tells you what to do**.

Intuitive learning: Any activity executed “in real time” must be learned and demonstrated intuitively. Learning intuitively is not centered on intellectual knowing, but rather on the experience of interacting with the object to be learned.

Leonard Bernstein speaking about the spontaneity of musical instinct: “Of course, you have to have knowledge, you have to have taste, you have to have background, you should know languages, you should know the literature of the various periods in which the music that we play came forth; but above all that, the main thing that counts is the natural instinct that comes from the spirit.”

Clinic Outline

Teaching about sound:

The band as a unified musical instrument
A flexible band sound
Playing with intent
 Technical
 Musical

Listening to the movement of sound:

Movement is constant therefore change is constant
Hearing the change and making the adjustment at the intuitive level

Interacting with the movement of sound:

Managing the flow of intensity
Creating resistance to control the movement of sound

Teaching the intuitive response:

The musical experience
Act-respond-act-respond
Making music with others
Interacting with the conductor

Interpreting music:

The music tells you what to do
Informing the instinct
Hearing note-tendency
Literature – recreate vs. stylize
Search and discovery
 “I never know what I am searching for, but I recognize it when I find it.”

- Herbert von Karajan

Probing

“When you start going into every phrase and searching for the maximum content that can be conveyed without distortion and gratuitous underlining, you are probing further and further into the heart of the music and touching the composer himself.” - James Levine quoting George Szell.

Do they hear what I hear?

Involving the players in the process of interpreting

“I give my players all the freedom they need to do what I want them to do.” - Herbert von Karajan.

Performing at the edge

Knowing the difference between rehearsal and performance

Becoming one with the music

“Solomon breathed such a magical freshness into his playing that the listener might almost be persuaded that the inspired artist was hearing and reveling in the music for the first time... Interpretation at this level is fundamentally the same art as composition. He not only played – he created music.” - Pianist Gerald Moore speaking of the legendary pianist Solomon.