

Engaging students in the ensemble rehearsal.

Engaging students in the decision-making process, defining the musical reason for making the adjustments, and empowering the students to use this acquired knowledge in future musical settings is music education of the highest order.

1. Rehearse in a positive contest:
 - a. Don't rush the eighth notes...."Let's make the eighth notes sound less frantic and hurried."
 - b. Do not play so loud, you're covering the melody! "Be kind to those playing the melody, be sure you are balancing."
 - c. "You are doing exactly what is on your page but.....could we adjust your dynamic to mp in order to have a better balance between the melody and counter line?!"
2. Music should be 80% art and 20% craft.
 - a. Select music that allows for music making and not just note chasing.
3. Practicing vs. Rehearsing
 - a. "Practicing is what you do!"
 - b. "Rehearsing is what we do!"
 - i. Rehearsing is about collaboration.
 - ii. Too often we condition our ensemble that rehearsals are drill sessions.
 - c. Ultimate goal.....100% successful....probably not. When we fall into the practice mode then remind them that we are no longer rehearsing but practicing.
4. "Dynamics are all relative." Composer suggestions.
 - a. Balance, melody, roll, line, etc.
 - b. Use percentages to help students, i.e., "Trombones could you play 20% less at letter D?"
 - c. All Crescendos and Decrescendos are not created equal.
 - i. Notation limits intent. Make music don't recreate notation. Make judgements based on the score.
 1. Perhaps a delay with a sudden expansion....
 2. A decrescendo should happen faster to reveal inside parts.
5. Change up your rehearsal set.
 - a. Ensemble in a circle.
 - b. Rehearse in quartets, i.e., clarinet 1; trumpet 2; tenor sax; bass clarinet; etc.
 - c. Like families, in box, facing director in center.
6. Move percussion to the front of the ensemble to rehearse like lines with winds.
 - a. Percussion are listening from behind the ensemble.....
 - b. Many times, tambourine, triangle, etc., have like rhythmic figures with sections. Have them sit in the wind section for a rehearsal.
7. Listen in quartets and trios.
 - a. Trios.....each side
 - b. Quartets.....
8. Pitch constant
 - a. Diatonic chorales
 - b. Literature
 - i. Variations on Korean Folk Song.....D flat; A flat

- ii. Second movement of Persichetti Divertimento.....E concert in opening.
 - iii. Foundations Book...most chorales are diatonic.
- 9. "The Band that Breathes together plays together!"
 - a. Chamber music habit.
 - b. Conductor habit with various entrances on cue.
- 10. "Blow through notes not at them."
 - a. Unsupported puffs of air become the norm.
 - b. "note maintenance" – constant movement of air in a steady stream to support and maintain the tone for the full value of each note.
- 11. "There is no TUT in band!"
 - a. Again, that unsupported sound that is generated by the tongue.
- 12. "Short notes are like basketballs."
 - a. A basketball that is underinflated looks normal.....but if you dribble it....no air pressure.....it does not bounce.
 - b. Short notes are the same. The air inside the note brings it to life.
 - c. Students tend to blow at short notes therefore the note has no resonance.
- 13. Give notes full value. "Where sounds end are as important as where they begin!"
 - a. Whole note = 5 counts....(rest)
 - b. Half note = 3 counts
 - c. Etc.
- 14. Use melodic percussion to teach note shape and attack for winds.
 - a. Variety of mallet choices determines desirable musical result.
 - b. Imagine the shape of a pitch on a marimba when struck by a soft mallet/medium/hard.....resonance....air after attack.
 - c. Now consider a xylophone.....
 - d. Most importantly we are asking winds to use their ears to model note shape of mallet choice.
- 15. "White notes sustain the music. Black notes connect the music."
 - a. Black notes provide momentum and create line. (counter lines, moving lines)
 - b. White notes support the line, create harmonic content and add richness to the sonority.
- 16. In marches notes followed by rests are played longer than notes followed by other notes.
 - a. Yes, a march needs space for forward motion and style.
 - b. All notes are not created equal! Musical line dictates.
- 17. fp = Zoommm....
 - a. Generally, a harsh overblown attack followed by an unsupported soft sound.
 - i. Out of tune
 - ii. No intensity
 - iii. Poor balance is result
 - b. Procedure for fix....
 - i. Find your best big sound.....tune and balance
 - ii. Find your best soft sound.....tune and balance
 - iii. Say Zoom.....Z is best big.....oom is best soft.
 - iv. Zoommm....mm=lips closed.
 - v. Impossible to do staccato Z.
 - vi. Rehearse fp using Zoommm concept.

18. For best tone quality ask students to “fill the tube!” Blow through the horn not into it.
19. Directional Brass need one reflection point.
20. “Make me worry you are going to rush...but don’t you dare!”
 - a. When music needs drive/energy. It must lean forward. Play on front edge of beat.

Sources, adapted from:

Moore, J. Steven, “How to Play I Band” 125 Tips for a Better Band.

Floyd, Richard, “The Artistry of Teaching and Making Music,” GIA Publications.

Williamson, John, Rehearsing the Band, Meredith Music Publications.