

String Orchestra Conductors Workshop

Timothy M. Smith, Clinician

with the

Homestead High School Chamber Orchestra

John Burn, Conductor

and conductors

Ken Nakamoto – San Jose State University/Gunn High School

Helen Grotans – Borel Middle School

Esther Hollander – Lowell High School

Mary Dougherty – Berkeley High School

Mike Pakaluk – Lynnbrook High School

Session Repertoire

Ave Verum Corpus – W.A. Mozart/arr. Elliot Del Borgo

Contra-Dance No. 1 – L. van Beethoven/arr. Fredrick Mueller

Symphony No. 1, Mvt II – Gustav Mahler/arr. Sandra Dackow

Concerto Grosso Op. 6, No 1. Mvt IV – G.F. Handel

The Red Pony – Aaron Copland/arr. Erik Morales

California Music Educators Association

Bay Section Winter Conference

Chabot College

Friday, January 11, 2019

2:00-3:20P

(The following is reprinted from my 2016 conducting session handout...it still applies!)

FACT

The entire concept of impactful conducting is predicated on the presumption that every member of an ensemble is:

- 1) visually attentive
- 2) responsive, and
- 3) understands the correlation between gesture, physical reaction, and result

FACT

Beyond teaching for the correct execution of the elements of music in a composition, there are dozens of skills and behaviors that are required for an artistically successful ensemble performance, and these (including the three listed above) also have to be taught.

OPINION

One should not wait to start teaching these skills and behaviors. They can be incorporated into the body of instruction related to performance technique, instrument pedagogy, and musical literacy from the beginning.

For beginners, work on the three skills listed above can start with gestures related to the preparation (inhalation) and release of the breath, and the relation of these physical acts to the initial production and presence of tone (yes, even for string players and percussionists). Basic gestures can be expanded upon to show note length, articulation, intensity (dynamics), tempo fluctuation, and the release of sound - even on an elementary level.

A sequence of instruction to build these important skill sets can be created and applied to various levels of performance experience, and to meet the specific requirements of a particular repertoire.

In the rehearsal process, attaching a specific gesture to a specific verbal instruction (again, presuming visual attentiveness) and - most importantly - following through with this gesture as the ensemble performs, is the most effective way to reinforce the correlation between gesture, physical reaction, and result.

A CONDUCTOR'S SKILL SET

**The necessary “items” to have in your “shopping cart”
to insure success as a conductor**

ARTIST-MUSICIAN

A thorough understanding of musical theory, and the practical application of this knowledge in both the process of score analysis, and in the ability to generate an internal (aural) model of a work of music.

A thorough understand of music in an historical context, and the practical application of this knowledge in creating an interpretation of a work that is Stylistically appropriate, and shows an advocacy for the composer's vision.

To be able to (or have been able to) demonstrate as high an artistic level as possible through an individual performance medium (instrument or voice).

ARTIST-EDUCATOR/PEDAGOGUE

A thorough grasp of, and ever-growing body of knowledge, related to the pedagogy surrounding the individual instruments (voices) in your ensemble(s).

An awareness and command of the scope and sequence of instruction necessary to insure the continuing growth of both the individual musician and the ensemble.

A body of knowledge that allows for the identification and selection of quality repertoire, that is both appropriate for your ensemble(s) and for a specific performing environment.

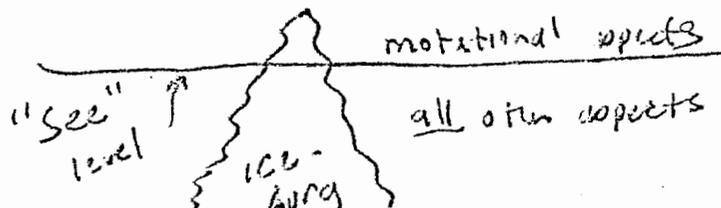
A thorough grasp of and ever-growing body of knowledge related to the complexities of working with individuals, ensembles and bureaucracies, Including highly developed organizational and planning skills.

ARTIST-CONDUCTOR

A thorough command of both the fundamental and advanced technical aspects of conducting, and the ability to use this technique in the service of artistic expression.

TIM'S BASIC AXIOMS
CONCERNING THE
MOTATIONAL ASPECTS OF
CONDUCTING

1. The motational aspects of conducting can be broken down into two basic parts:
BEATS and **MOVES (GESTURES)**
2. Beats *INFORM* and Moves (Gestures) *INSTRUCT*
3. Beats have three parts: the **ICTUS**, **REBOUND** and **DIRECTION**
4. The ictus is always *DOWN* in direction
5. The ictus occurs **ON "THE PLANE"**
6. the ictus is placed *"IN THE 'BOX'"*
7. good "basic" conducting follows the "basic laws of nature"
 - > finding your "natural look" is the key to a tension-free style
 - > you have to raise your arm, but it will "fall" down on its own ("law of gravity")
 - > the arm (almost) never moves at a constant rate of speed ("law of gravity")
 - > the wrist (almost) never stays locked
8. the palm of the hand should (almost) always *face the floor*
9. the tip of the baton should never dip below *"the plane"*
10. The direction of the beat that gets the secondary stress in a measure is (almost) always *to the RIGHT*
11. All moves/gestures have to be *"PREPARED"*
12. Preparatory gestures are (almost) always *UP* in direction
13. How you *ALTER* and *MODIFY* the three parts of the beat (especially the rebound) communicates *MUSICAL STYLE*
14. The larger your *"REPERTOIRE"* of moves (gestures), the clearer your communication of the music's **EMOTIONAL CONTENT** can be
15. All of the above is meaningless unless there is **EYE CONTACT** between the conductor and the musicians
16. Your goal as a conductor is to be both CLEAR and EXPRESSIVE!
17. Axioms #4-10 above can be bent or broken **FOR MUSICAL REASONS**, as long as you are **CLEARLY EXPRESSIVE!**
18. "BATON TECHNIQUE" is only one part of the "ART OF CONDUCTING"
(see following pages)



Timothy M. Smith is a seasoned conductor and veteran music educator – an Emeritus Professor of Music, who is currently the Artistic and Music Director of the Sacramento Symphonic Winds and recently retired, after 11 seasons, as Music Director and Conductor of the Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra. Retiring from academia in 2008, his teaching career included founding the instrumental music program at Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA and a twenty-two year tenure as Professor of Music at California State University, East Bay in Hayward.

In addition to his positions with the Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra and Sacramento Symphonic Winds, Professor Smith is in continuous demand as a guest conductor, adjudicator and clinician. He has conducted professional, collegiate and community orchestras and wind bands, as well as over 200 high school and junior high school honor orchestras and bands throughout the western, northwestern and mid-western states, and given thousands of clinics to instrumental ensembles in school and festival settings. As an educational conductor, Maestro Smith has conducted All-State level orchestras and bands in several states and appeared as guest conductor with nearly every regional, county, and district-level honor orchestra and band in Northern California and Nevada.

Professor Smith holds degrees in Horn Performance, Conducting and Music Education from the Conservatory of Music at the University of the Pacific, and the prestigious School of Music at Northwestern University. He is a former member of the Stockton, Modesto, and Spokane (WA) Symphonies, continues to work as a freelance horn player in the Bay Area, performs with the Sacramento-area brass quintet, BRASSY!, and has served for several years on the professional coaching and performing staff at the Humboldt Brass Chamber Music Workshop.

Involved in music education on several different levels, Maestro Smith was honored by the California Band Directors Association with their highest form of recognition, the “Lifetime Achievement Award” and was named the California Music Educators Association Bay Section’s “Outstanding Music Educator” in 2006. He held positions on the boards of a variety of professional music education organizations throughout California, and served for several years as Music Director of the multi-level Youth Orchestra of Southern Alameda County. Maestro Smith has been guest conductor of both orchestras and bands at the Pacific Music Camp, the Hayward La Honda Music Camp, the Cazadero Performing Arts Camp, and the La Sierra Music Camp.

The Homestead High School Orchestra

Students in the Homestead High School Orchestra program are divided into two levels; String Orchestra – open to all students without an audition, and Chamber Orchestra – students selected by audition. Both orchestras combine with selected members of the Wind Ensemble to form the Homestead Symphony Orchestra, which rehearses 45 minutes per week during one of the school's tutorial periods.

Both the Chamber Orchestra and the Symphony Orchestra regularly earn unanimous superior ratings at CMEA Bay Sections festivals. The Homestead Symphony Orchestra performed at CASMEC in 2014. This June the Symphony Orchestra will join with string players from Cupertino High School, to perform at the Sounds of Summer Festival in Carnegie Hall, New York City!

John Burn is in his 28th year teaching music at Homestead High School.

Currently John teaches Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble and Music Genesis (a computer-based Music course), at both Homestead and Cupertino High Schools. John is currently serving as the state President of CMEA. John is humbled and honored to have received significant commendations including: one of 25 music teachers nation-wide selected as semi-finalists for the 2019 Grammy Music Teacher Award, the 2014 School Band & Orchestra Magazine's California representative in their annual article, "50 Directors that Make a Difference," and he is a 2009 Inductee to the John Philip Sousa Foundation's Legion of Honor. John has a Masters Degree from the University of Illinois, a Bachelors Degree from UCLA, and graduated high school where he now teaches, Homestead High School.