

Flourish!

**Finding Meaning, Purpose, and Joy
in Your Score Study, Conducting, and Rehearsing**

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*Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to
the mind,
flight to the imagination,
and life to everything. - Plato*

Flourish

verb

1. Grow or develop in a healthy or vigorous way, especially as the result of a particularly favorable environment.
2. Wave something around to attract the attention of others.

noun

1. A bold or extravagant gesture or action, made especially to attract the attention of others.
2. An instance of suddenly performing or developing in an impressively successful way.

A Flourishing Rehearsal

What does it look, feel, and sound like?

What happens in a meaningful, joyful, and engaging rehearsal?

How can you be intentional about your score study, conducting, and rehearsing so that you and your students flourish?

Purpose

What is your **WHY** for teaching music?

What matters most to you?

Intention

1. A determination to act in a certain way: resolve
2. Import, significance
3. What one intends to do or bring about

The Power of Intention

Intention puts our mind into a positive mindset and a state of **anticipation**.

Visualize the outcome and see it happen before it does.

This is similar to how an athlete visualizes a race, a competition, or a performance before the event.

Visualizing what we want and truly believing that it can happen is how we **blueprint** the path for action.

The written note is like a strait jacket, whereas music, like life itself is constant movement, continuous spontaneity, free from any restrictions. – Pablo Casals

What is Your Intention for Repertoire Selection?

Why choose a particular piece of music?

Is there a purpose, depth, or meaning in the piece?

What does the piece offer to the students, to the audience, to the concert, or to the process?

Are you exposing your students to a variety of composers across gender and ethnic groups?

Does the piece elevate the students' artistically and musically?

Does the piece teach about various cultures, ethnicities, or history?

Approaching Score Study with Intent and Purpose

Score study is a means to discover, unveil, and reveal the depths, inspiration, and intent of the composer. The more we discover in the score, the more we have to give our students. The more we study, the more we will hear in rehearsals.

Setting your intention before you begin. Be in the now, the present, and completely focused on the task at hand. Put away distractions and have the tools of study available.

Be vulnerable and open to the emotions, feelings, and inspiration that the repertoire may evoke.

Breathe in gratitude for the opportunity study music before beginning your study. Tranquil, focused score study will generate deeper results.

Growth Mindset Score Study

Imagine the sound of the group that you want to have, not necessarily the sound of your group presently.

For example, you may want to visualize the tone of the Chicago Symphony and the clarity and intonation of St. Martin in the Fields.

Tools for Score Study

Erasable, colored pencils.

Pencil

Sticky notes

Metronome

Piano/keyboard

Instrument or instruments

Teaching Music Through Performance in Band books and other resources

Recordings

Consider enlarging score to make it easier to read and write in

How do we discover the intent of the composer?

Ask them

Program notes

Find out all you can about the composer and other works they have composed

Discover the intent through the study of the score

Go beyond the notes and rhythms to find the expression

Form

Tempo/Time

Phrasing

Colors

Articulation variances. What consonant? What vowel?

Clarity

Balance

Blend

Melody

Countermelody

Harmony and harmonic movement

Internal motor

Percussion. Write percussion cues at the top of the score

Dynamics

*The true artist must seek the **meaning** of the music and this will only be found if he sets about his work honestly, persistently and with humility.*
- Pablo Casals

Strategies for score study

Start at the macro-level. Skim through the score to take in and be aware of the big picture.

Read **program notes**.

Instrumentation. What do you notice? What jumps out at you?

Recordings. Listen to a bunch. Find performances on YouTube. This process may have also occurred when you were selecting repertoire. Don't get locked in to a particular interpretation so that you can create your own and make your own decisions.

Study the score with the **metronome** on and set to the marked tempos.

Write ideas, questions, notes to follow up on, rehearsal plans, etc. on **sticky notes** in score that can be removed when tended to.

Harmonic Analysis. Combination of Jazz Chord analysis, i.e. Cm7, and Roman Numeral, depending on function. I prefer letter name analysis for ease of tuning and transposition.

Use erasable colored pencils to make **markings** in the score. Don't overdo it. Here are some suggestions:

Red—forte dynamics, accents, and crescendos

Orange - mezzo forte dynamics

Blue - piano dynamics and diminuendos

Green - tempo markings, rallentandos, accelerandos, and percussion cues

Yellow - (Yellow) written text, such as "mutes in."

Purple - instrument cues.

Black - meter changes

Regular Pencil - harmonic analysis, phrasal analysis, rehearsal notes. Write emotions, images, stories at the top of the score pages.

Phrasal analysis

Divide phrases into 2 bar, 3 bar, 4 bar, or 5 bar groupings.

2 bars: 

3 bars: 

4 bars: 

5 bars: Combine the 2 bar and 3 bar groupings OR

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Internalize the music

Internalize the music through playing lines on the piano.

Sing one line and play other lines on the piano.

Solfege the melodies and use the piano to check for pitch accuracy.

Play individual lines on your primary instrument. This improves your transposition skills!

Get physically involved with the score study. Gesture, move, and dance while singing lines.

Emote! Tap into the feeling and the E-Motion of the piece.

Make Value Judgments and Decisions about the Score

Spend time thinking about and making decisions about blending colors of instruments during score study prior to the first rehearsal.

Make decisions on the direction of the line and the phraseology of the piece prior to the first rehearsal.

Note grouping: upbeats lead to downbeats. Short notes lead to long notes.

Back off of long notes. Bring out the moving lines. Strive to create clarity in your mind in balance, blend and between melody, countermelody, accompaniment, groove, and percussion.

Allow your intuition and innate musicianship to guide your decisions through singing and playing parts of the score.

Create visual images. Think in terms of metaphors, analogies, and stories. Tell a musical story. Paint a picture.

Anticipate intonation challenges and intonation tendencies of instruments. Mark the score for how chords will need to be adjusted for just intonation. Lower the major 3rd 14 cents, raise the minor 3rd 16 cents, raise the fifth 2 cents.

Think of questions you can ask the players to engage them in the creation of the interpretation.

Score study is a matter of discovery, understanding, curiosity, and internalization of the work. Make the work your own as if it is your creation.

*Conductors need to become the music.
Even the quality and volume of your voice,
and the patterns of your speech have to
match what is going on in the music.*
- Jerry Junkin

Gesture, Movement, and Conducting with Intention

Practice the art of mime. Move how one moves in real life. Lift as if it is heavy in *forte* or for a *crescendo*. Dance in the air as if it is as light as a feather.

Get kinesthetically and viscerally involved with levels of strength and power in the music.

Consider marking time to the music, particularly with mixed meters. Dance.

Practice gestures at half-time in front of mirror.

In legato music, lead with the wrist to create resistance and thickness. The music is in the space between the notes. Think of dark chocolate and sea salt. Gooney.

The importance of the breath and the upbeat - determines the sound and quality of the downbeat. Show the music before it happens.

The gesture of syncopation to show articulation, entrances, and dynamics off of the beat.

Hear the music in your head while conducting. Audiate. Break it into smaller chunks that you can hear in detail.

Don't get caught up in the traditional patterns. Free yourself up to be expressive and show line.

Energize the tip of the baton. Radiate the energy and emotion of the music in your body, face, eyes, and baton.

Where your heart goes, energy flows.

The eyes are the window to the soul.

Create Meaningful Rehearsals

Be excited about the results of your score study and eager to share the piece with your students.

Read the program notes to your students.

Make personal connections to the music.

Make the music relevant to the students.

Integrate art, dance, movement, history, culture into the rehearsal.

Invite students to be involved in the decision-making and artistic process.

Focus on the inner voices and the motor as opposed to obsessing over just the melody.

Give responsibility for keeping time to the students so that you can focus on expression.

Empower the ensemble to be in charge of the pulse.

When cueing, invite rather than point.

Sensitize your ensemble to your expressive conducting, particularly *rubato* and *rallentandos*.

Conduct smaller when the band is dragging. Draw attention to you.

Vary the size of your conducting. Large does not have to equal *forte*. Intense and small can also be *forte*.

Ask soloists to perform above the written dynamic.

Divide the band up in chamber groups to rehearse the music.

Rehearse in a circle.

Rehearse without a conductor.

Have the students stand mark time and sing their parts or play their music on instruments.

Ask students to show the phrase shape in the air with gestures.

Teach students the dance that the music is based on, if applicable.

Teach students the words to the song, if applicable.

Ask students to write about how the piece impacts them emotionally or visually.