



# *Warm Up & Rehearsal Strategies that Build Greater Musicianship*



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*Rehearsals are for teaching the art of listening “LISTEN” – Frederick Fennell*

*I believe in shifting responsibility to the students. Their list (producing a good sound, counting, playing in tune, etc.) is a long list. When students are aware of the big picture you can build on an ever-increasing base of knowledge and experience. - Craig Kirchhoff*

*Listening skills have to be taught, and that means there has to be an opportunity for students to show the teacher that they are listening. If you don't ask questions, you'll never know. - Frank Battisti*

*I like to do things that will help them to both think and use their ears. - James Croft*

## **OVERALL CONCEPTS**

- Key elements from conductor are passion/inspiration & listening/responding by leading a shared understanding of conductor's view of the composer's intent
- Establish an optimum process, and an optimum product will result and will continue to develop and improve your ensemble!
- Rehearsals are where players learn each other's parts
- Student listening is the most important attribute they bring to the rehearsal process

## **WHAT GREAT ENSEMBLES & ENSEMBLE MUSICIANS DO**

- Breathe together & play together
- Subdivide pulse internally
- Players are aware of other players — “listen with their eyes,” “watch with their ears”
- Discover and listen to who is generating pulse
- Listen louder than they play

### **WHAT GREAT ENSEMBLE TEACHERS DO**

- Have a point of view on the music's expressive intent beyond the "surface" objective elements — this drives the rehearsal process and gestural technique
- Emulate great posture and require same from players
- Breathe with the ensemble — breath motivates the gesture (and guides the sound quality, weight, etc.)
- Teach students to internalise pulse & subdivide
- Teach students to understand and read music notation at sight
- Compel and guide students to listen and evaluate/adjust based on what students hear rather than just the conductor's listening and dictated directions
- Change listening perspective — conductor and players (change seating, etc.)
- Use positive language (how to improve outcome) rather than negative descriptions
- Emphasise the collaborative nature of music-making (minimal use of the "I" word!)
- Use clear & meaningful gestures and require appropriate responses in sound
- Ask questions so that students evaluate and generate possible answers/solutions

### **COUNTERPRODUCTIVE REHEARSAL BEHAVIOURS BY ENSEMBLE TEACHERS**

- Always counting off to get started
- Teaching rhythm by rote
- Conducting just beat rather than musical intent
- Never letting ensemble play without the conductor
- Not being fully visible to all players (N.B. use a podium!!)
- Inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal communication
- Providing all answers and directions for change to ensemble issues

### **FREELY AVAILABLE RESOURCES FROM THIS SESSION**

- Many resources, materials, and information on teaching aids demonstrated/used in this session are **FREELY DOWNLOADABLE** from the *Maryborough Music Conference* link on my home page at: [www.robmcwilliams.com](http://www.robmcwilliams.com)

### **MORE INFORMATION ABOUT YAMAHA EDUCATION OUTREACH**

- Please visit: <http://greatstart.yamahabackstage.com.au/education-outreach/>