

PRINCIPLES OF EXPRESSIVE PLAYING IN MUSIC:

PRINCIPLES OF EXPRESSIVE PLAYING IN MUSIC:

Bringing Life to the Notes with Young Bands and Orchestras

with Bruce Pearson

Overview and rationale:

Transforming written notation to expressive performance is a skill that all conductors and music teachers today. This clinic for conductors and orchestra ensembles will provide tips and teaching strategies to help you make music.

Bruce Pearson is an internationally known author, conductor, clinician, and conductor. He is perhaps best known for his authorship of the Standard of Excellence Conducting Method Book A for Music Conductors. He also co-authored with Dean Szymanski the Standard of Excellence Advanced Jazz Ensemble Method and the Standard of Excellence Advanced Jazz Ensemble Method for Class and as a clinician by invitation of countries throughout the Pacific Rim, the Orient, Europe, and the Canadian provinces. In the United States he has also conducted many All-State and All-City bands. He has appeared as guest conductor at over one hundred colleges and universities, and has been well-received as keynote speaker for state, national, and international education conferences.

The Midwest Clinic

Tuesday, December 19, 2006

Thursday, December 21, 2006

Assisted by:

Tuesday - Deer Path Middle School Band,
Lake Forest, Illinois,
Steve Nendza & Gina DeGregorio, Directors

Thursday - McCracken Middle School Band,
Skokie, Illinois,
Chip De Stefano, Director



Bruce Pearson is an internationally known author, composer, clinician, and conductor. He is perhaps best known for his authorship of the **Standard of Excellence Comprehensive Band Method** (Neil A. Kjos Music Company). He also co-authored, with Dean Sorenson, the critically acclaimed **Standard of Excellence Jazz Ensemble Method** and the **Standard of Excellence Advanced Jazz Ensemble Method**. In addition to *Standard of Excellence*, Mr. Pearson is well-known for his first contribution to the band curriculum, **Best In Class** and as composer of many widely performed compositions for concert band and jazz ensemble.

Mr. Pearson has led clinics in all fifty of the United States and has been guest conductor and clinician, by invitation, of countries throughout the Pacific Rim, the Orient, Europe, and the Canadian provinces. In the United States, he has also conducted many All-State and Honor Bands. He has appeared as guest lecturer at over one hundred colleges and universities, and has been well-received as keynote speaker for state, provincial, and national music educators conventions.

Bruce Pearson has taught at the elementary, junior high, high school, and college level for over thirty years. Twice nominated for the prestigious **Excellence In Education Award**, he was recognized as "most outstanding in the field of music" for the state of Minnesota. In December, 1998, Mr. Pearson, "in recognition of his outstanding contribution to music education," was awarded the prestigious **Midwest International Band and Orchestra Director's Clinic Medal of Honor**. In 2001, he was awarded St. Cloud State University's Distinguished Service To Music Award "in appreciation for lifelong contribution to music and music education."

PRINCIPLES OF EXPRESSIVE PLAYING IN MUSIC:

Bringing Life to the Notes with Young Bands and Orchestras

These notes are prepared so that you can add your own comments and therefore have a more complete view of today's clinic.

Overview and rationale:

Transforming written notes to expressively-performed music is one of the primary challenges facing conductors and music teachers today. This clinic, for conductors and music teachers of young band and orchestra ensembles, will provide tips and teaching strategies that will help students learn to "make music."

Using a demonstration group, the clinician, will demonstrate the significant distinction between playing "technically well" and playing "technically well – with **PASSIONATE EXPRESSION.**"

Objective:

By the end of this session you will be aware of tips and techniques of how an ensemble can learn to "speak as one voice" communicating and recreating the intent of the composer in an artistic performance.

"Principles of Expressive Playing in Music"

1. The Principle of Identifying and Shaping a Musical Phrase

- a. Identifying Musical Phrases
 - i. Complete Musical Thought or Idea
 - ii. Harmonic Cadence
 - iii. Rhythmic Cadence

Tip – "Thou shalt never breathe in the midst of a musical phrase."

- b. Shaping Musical Phrases
 - i. I love making music.
 - ii. I love making music.
 - iii. I love making music.
 - iv. I love making music.

c. Finding the Most Important Note of the Musical Phrase.

i.

ii.

iii.

iv.

from *Standard of Excellence, Book 1, Conductor Score*. Published by Neil A. Kjos Music Company.
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Abide With Me

William Henry Monk
arr. Bruce Pearson

Written:

Played:

from *Great Warm-Ups for Young Bands*. Published by Neil A. Kjos Music Company, San Diego, CA.
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Tip - “Crescendo on all notes leading to the most important note within that phrase. Decrescendo on all notes leading away from the most important note within that phrase.”

2. The Principle of Note Movement

Ravel: Pavane for a Dead Princess

Maurice Ravel
arr. Anne McGinty

Written:



Played:



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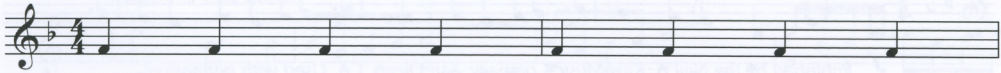
Tip - "Crescendo during long notes at the beginning of a phrase - especially if followed by faster notes."

3. The Principle of Note Shape and Length

"The Classic-Shaped Sound (as found in renaissance, baroque, classical, and contemporary style music). Romantic-Shaped Notes are fully sustained"¹

Classic Shaped Notes

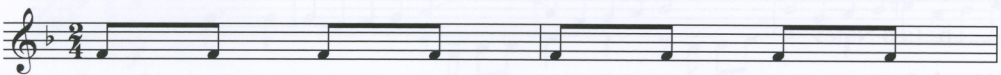
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Played:



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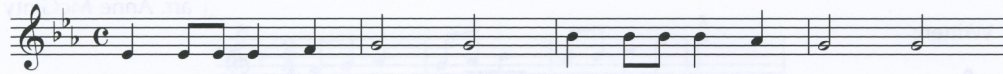
Played:



Court Festival

William Byrd
arr. Bruce Pearson

Written:



Played:

Apply principles from previous exercises.

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Tip - "While note length is greatly influenced by tempo, most music played by ensembles today should be played using classic shaped notes."

4. The Principle of Dynamic Contrast For Notes

a. Syncopation

March for a Celebration

Bruce Pearson

Written:



Played: **f**



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Note: the numbers above the music indicate the relative strength of each note from weakest (1) to strongest (4).

Tip - "The notes preceding and following the syncopated note should be played somewhat shorter than written and softer than the syncopated or emphasized note. The syncopated note should be played nearly full length and louder than the notes preceding or following it."²

b. Tied Notes

March One

Bruce Pearson

Written:



Played:

2 3 3 3 3 4 3 2 3 3 3 3 4 3 3 3 3 3 3 2 3 3 3 3 4 3

Tip - "When two notes are tied, the figure is given a *bold* accent."³

c. Slurred Notes

March Two

Bruce Pearson

Written:

mf

Played:

2 3 3 3 3 4 2 2 3 3 3 3 4 2 3 3 3 3 4 2 2 3 3 3 3 4 3

mf

Tip - "When two notes are slurred, the second note should be played with less volume than the first note."⁴

5. The Principle of Note Grouping

Die Meistersinger (excerpts from the opera)

Richard Wagner
scored by Eric Osterling

Written:

Maestoso con moto

f

Played:

Maestoso con moto

f

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Tip - "Upbeats provide more movement and are more musically expressive than downbeats. By stressing the upbeats, ever so slightly, the performance of music can be more satisfying and musical."

6. The Principle of the Inner Voices

Air for Winds

Melvin L. Shelton

Written:

40

mf

mf

Played:

40

mf

mf

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b. Musical Anticipation

Tapestry

Bruce Pearson

Written:

66

mf *ff*

p

Played:

66

mf *accel.* *allargando* *ff*

ritardando *p*

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Tip - "By first increasing the tension (through use of a *crescendo* and an *accelerando*) thus creating greater anticipation and then delaying the release, a more exciting, passionate performance results"

To all attendees:

The clinician thanks you for your attendance and hopes that his suggestions will help your students make passionate music.

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Work Cited

1. Bencriscutto, Frank, and Hal Freese. *Total Musicianship*, 15–18.
2. VanderCook, H.A. *Expression in Music*, 18.
3. *Ibid.*, 20.
4. *Ibid.*

Special Thanks To:

Deer Path Middle School Band,
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Chip De Stefano, Director

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Suggested Reading on this subject

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