

The

Note Worthy

Spring 2012

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Director's Message

Bravo! Brava! Wonderful performances at the Winter Recitals! I am very proud of everyone who participated in the recitals. I felt the quality of playing was some of the best ever. There were the usual hitches and glitches, but everyone played well and finished their pieces with no major problems.

The majority of mistakes in the performances were counting errors. And I will take most of the responsibility for that. I have been lax in keeping us working in our rhythm books, and you have suffered for it. So we will definitely get back to counting and clapping on a regular basis.

Semester II Sessions begin on Monday, February 6th, so call me ASAP if you need a new time (or can't remember your current time)! We will review your recital performance(s), both aurally and visually, and discuss what went well and what needs improvement. I will be adding more Practice Record pages to your blue book, so be sure to bring it along. We will also review your goals and set additional goals. Please bring all your method books so we can review where we are and where we need to go in regards to your playing improvement. Bring your solo and be prepared to play it for me if you are participating in Solo & Ensemble Festival at Bountiful or Mueller Park Jr. High Schools later in the week. Everyone else will be playing their pieces for me the next week before the rest of the school festivals. I have the highest expectations for all of you to qualify for your

District and Region Solo & Ensemble Festivals!

Our next Recital is the Spring Festival Recital on Sunday, May 20th – hopefully, in the garden again this year! We will be performing in small ensemble groups for this recital, so start thinking about what you would like to play for this recital — I've already received some requests. I will group you with others of similar ability, and those of you who are multi-instrumentalists will be able to perform on each instrument. And, of course, we will still do the full group selections for the finale of the recital.

Once again, I'll mention the Salt Lake Symphony's annual Vienna Ball fundraiser on Saturday, February 11th as the perfect activity for Valentine's Day. Tickets are \$60 for the dance only, or \$85 for reserved seating with dinner. There is dancing to the Symphony's traditional waltzes and polkas and to the Mark Chaney Jazz Trio, as well as the Silent Auction, floor shows by the BYU Ballroom Dance Team and free dance

instruction before the dance begins. It's a big, big night and a lot of great fun, especially for you parents!

Enjoy the rest of your time off from Coaching Sessions and I'll see you all again the week of February 6th. Remember to bring your \$92.00 Coaching Fee and additional money for any accessories (see inside).

26TH ANNUAL
Vienna Ball
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 11
8:00 PM TILL MIDNIGHT
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
UNION BALLROOM
WITH EMCEE
STEVE WILLIAMS
DANCING TO MUSIC BY
THE SALT LAKE SYMPHONY &
THE MARK CHANEY JAZZ TRIO
FLOOR SHOWS BY
BYU BALLROOM DANCE TEAM
FREE BALLROOM DANCE LESSONS BY
MARGENE ANDERSON OF DANCESCENE
6:30 TO 8:00 PM
DINNER CATERED BY
CHARI WELLS
SILENT AUCTION
GENERAL ADMISSION: \$60
RESERVED: \$85
BRING THE SILENT AUCTION
AUTHORITY REQUIRED
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT BROWN PAPER TICKETS • 1-800-838-3006
WWW.BROWNPAPERTICKETS.COM
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.SALTLAKESSYMPHONY.ORG

Improving Practice: A Look at Quantity and Quality

How many hear you hear your band directors and other music teachers say: "practice more for next week?" Practice is important, but only if the methods are effective. Some players simply don't practice, and others need guidance on how to practice.

For many players, just getting in the required minutes isn't enough to succeed in music. Some common inefficient practice patterns include:

- spending hours repeating the same music,
- repeatedly playing music you can already play,
- playing at tempos that are too fast, and
- not planning out which parts to practice.

While doing the above actions may result in the proper time spent practicing, it usually doesn't result in progress.

And if there is no progression, then you may spend less time practicing, or even quit altogether, deciding you don't have any musical skill or ability. This can be turned around with specific practice strategies that will result in developing more confidence and becoming more successful.

There are typically four categories of practicing:

Few hours per week:

- I. The player who spends little time and doesn't practice efficiently.
- II. The player who is efficient in practice but doesn't spend much time.

Many hours per week:

- III. The player who spends many hours per week but doesn't work efficiently.
- IV. The player who practices efficiently and for many hours each week.

The goal is to be in the fourth category, as efficient practice results in success, and players become more efficient by learning how to practice. Practice sessions need to be structured with a practice plan, such as 10 minutes of warm-up and technical exercises, 5 minutes of sight-reading, and 15 minutes on a piece or playing test music.

Each segment should be specific to the level of ability. For instance, younger players should include scales and technical fingering patterns from their music pieces in the warm-up. Older players should add scale patterns of thirds and arpeggios and slow practice of difficult passages from their music.

When learning a new piece of music, be it a band piece, a solo or even an etude or exercise, one efficient approach is to slowly play through the entire piece to get an overview and find the difficult passages to focus on later. Become familiar with the form and any recurring themes. Then break down the music into smaller, more manageable parts. Depending on the music, "smaller" might be a measure or even one group of notes within the measure. Don't try to play through the entire piece every practice session without stopping to work on the difficult passages. This usually results in not being able to play through the piece without "crashing and burning" at the difficult spots. Besides, the brain cannot focus on too much information at one time. Limiting the amount of

information to smaller parts ensures progress from one practice session to the next.

Once the difficult passages are identified, isolated and broken down into smaller segments, then it's time to focus on these complex measures. Spending a few minutes a day on these difficult measures will minimize the "crash and burn" spots and will enable the music to start to flow without interruption. Breaking down the difficult measures into their component parts is one good approach to learning. Mastering one component at a time and slowly adding the others results in more success in less time.

Try isolating the rhythm first, then play the rhythm on one pitch. Add the proper pitches, then the articulations, starting again on one pitch if needed. Then add the dynamics and other expressive marks. Also try working on one half of the measure at a time, then adding them together. Even break the measure down into single counts if needed.

As the rough spots get easier it's time to use repetition to increase the tempo. Start slowly and gradually increase the metronome speed. If repetition starts to become boring or isn't resulting in any progress, switch to using sequencing, adding one measure at a time to the passage. Try working forwards and backwards through each phrase, paying attention to making smooth transitions.

After isolating the difficult passages, put them back into the entire piece, starting slowly and working up to performance tempo, always striving for smooth, non-stop playing from one section to the next.

Make sure you have the correct attitude towards practicing. It isn't always fun, especially after the excitement of having a new piece wears off. Tearing the music apart, isolating and working on the difficult measures can be tedious hard work. But the result of such hard work is often the reward of an excellent performance. Be sure to always be actively engaged in the practice session. Never just mindlessly go through the motions. All that does is waste your time and contribute to inefficiency and reduced quality of practice.

Start analyzing your success level, the effectiveness of your practice strategies, and your mental attitude towards practice. Asking yourself questions while practicing, such as "Is this measure getting better with this strategy?" can help focus your awareness of what works for you. When you are finished with a practice session ask yourself what you accomplished, analyze which strategy worked the best and plan for the next session.

In summary, the amount of time you spend practicing is important, but how you spend your time is more important. Use specific practice strategies, have a positive attitude, and be mentally engaged in what you are doing. High-quality practice will result in more productive practice and dramatically improve the chances of success in music.

Improving Student Practice: A Look at Quantity and Quality. John May, MENC Collegiate NewsLink, January 2008.

Accessories Order February 10th

I will be placing an accessories order in February in order to replenish my stock of reeds. Many other items are also available at a reduced cost, if you are interested in having me place your order with mine.

Below is a list of some of the items available and their approximate cost. Many other items are also available – just ask.

Payment for these orders will need to be received before the 10th or I will not be able to place your order. There will be a reminder announcement on the board.

Metronomes	\$18.00 up
Tuners	\$15.00 up
Combo Metro/Tuners	\$25.00 up
Clarinet/Sax Mouthpieces	\$31.00 up
	(Fobes Debut)
Ligatures	\$13.00 up
Clarinet Reeds	\$11.00 up
	(Vandoren Traditional(10) \$20.00,
	Rico Reserve(5) \$11.00)
Alto Sax Reeds	\$25.50 up
	(Vandoren Traditional(10) \$26.00,
	Rico Reserve Classic(10) \$25.50)
Tenor Sax Reeds (5)	\$17.00 up
	(Vandoren Traditional \$19.00,
	Rico Reserve \$17.00)
Reed Guards (assort. colors)	\$3.70 up
	(Clar/Alto 2 (2-pack) \$3.70,
	Clar/Alto 4 \$3.70)
Neck straps	\$5.00 up
	(Clarinet - \$11.50/\$24.50,
	Sax -\$5.00 up)
Handkerchief Swabs	\$7.00 up
	(Silk pull through, assort. colors,
	Oboe \$7.00 up, Clarinet \$9.00 up,
	Sax \$10.00 up, Bassoon \$9.50 up)
Music Stands	\$10.00 up
	(carrying bags also available)

Also other reed cases, instrument cases & stands, other reeds, mouthpieces & ligatures, etc., etc.

Parent's Column

*Reminders & Helps to
Enhance Your Child's
Musical Experience*

11 Facts About Music Education

1. "As the musician constantly adjusts decisions on tempo, tone, style, rhythm, phrasing and feeling, he/she trains the brain to become incredibly good at organizing and conducting numerous activities at once.
 2. "Approximately 90% of the brain's motor control capabilities are devoted to the hands, mouth and throat. With this in mind, experts say that the fine dexterity involved with playing a[n instrument] can exercise the entire brain and stimulate general intelligence.
 3. "Musical training has been found to improve how the brain processes the spoken word. This finding could lead to improving the reading ability of children who have dyslexia and other reading problems.
 4. "Students of lower socioeconomic status who took music lessons in grades 8-12 increased their math scores significantly as compared to non-music students. But, just as important, reading, history, geography and even social skills soared by 40%.
 5. "A Columbia U. study revealed that students in the arts are found to be more cooperative with teachers and peers, more self-confident and better able to express their ideas.
 6. "In a study done by Social Science Quarterly in 2009, families with a higher socioeconomic status participate in music more than students with a lower economic status.
 7. "Students at risk of not successfully completing their high school educations indicate that arts participation motivates them to stay in school, and that the arts create a supportive environment that promotes constructive acceptance of criticism and one in which it is safe to take risks.
 8. "With music in schools, students connect to each other better-great camaraderie, fewer rights, less racism and reduced use of hurtful sarcasm.
 9. "High school students who participate in band or orchestra report the lowest lifetime and current use of all drugs.
 10. "New forms of entertainment, from hip hop and rock & roll to film and video games, are being created as we speak and will continue to evolve. Experts say that over the next ten years, jobs in art, music, culture and entertainment will grow twice as many jobs as engineering will. Those who've been educated in the arts will have a great advantage over those who have not.
 11. "The skills gained through sequential music instruction, including discipline and the ability to analyze, solve problems, communicate and work cooperatively, are vital for success in the 21st century workplace
- "Music is great fun, but it isn't just for fun. The benefits are far reaching."