Look Ma, No Hands: Student Led Rehearsals and Performances

2018 Ohio Music Education Professional Development Conference  
Friday, February 9, 2018, 12:30pm  
Hyatt Regency, Columbus, Ohio

Background Information

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<th>Orpheus Chamber Orchestra</th>
<th>The Ohio State University Symphonic Band (Dr. Scott Jones, Conductor)</th>
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Pickerington North Symphonic Band Student Led Performances:
- Capital University New Music Reading Clinic (2014)
- OMEA Professional Development Conference (2016)
- OMEA District Band Adjudicated Event (2017)

Student Led Performing and Rehearsing is...
- More than just performing without conductor
- Students take ownership of the complete rehearsal process from start to finish
- Very little input from teacher

Benefits for Student Musicians
- Encourages active participation
- Encourages critical thinking
- Promotes a deepened sense of accomplishment and esprit de corps within ensemble
- Develops ensemble listening skills
- Develops verbal communication skills
- Promotes ownership of the rehearsal process
- Develops ability to utilize full score

Student Impressions

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<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Positive Outcomes</th>
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<td>Time management</td>
<td>New perspective on the rehearsal process</td>
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<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Learn how to work with peers in a large group setting</td>
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<td>Levels of participation</td>
<td>Develop leadership &amp; public speaking skills</td>
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<td>Musical</td>
<td>Students enabled to solve musical issues on their own</td>
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Benefits for Teachers

- Observe rehearsal environment
- Listen to ensemble for extended periods of time
- Ultimate formative assessment
- Enjoy!

The Process

Getting Started
- Lots of inefficiency, challenges, etc. at first
- Familiar major scale in half-notes (students start themselves)
- Chorales

Materials/Set-up
- Score
  - Every student (or stand) has a copy
  - Purchase or secure permission to copy
  - Paper vs. electronic
  - Projection to screen
- Score Study
  - Experience level of musicians
  - Ensemble score study led by teacher
  - Score study with selected students (e.g., section leaders, etc.)
- Personnel
  - Designated listeners to assist with questions of balance, blend, etc.
  - Leader to help with starting pieces (situated with good sight lines)
- Set-up
  - Traditional
  - Non-traditional
    - Circle
    - Quartets

Student-Led Rehearsal Planning
- Start rehearsal with two to three goals
- End each rehearsal with a few minutes of group discussion
  - Two to three musical accomplishments/progress
  - Two to three musical challenges
  - Also may be worthwhile to have students discuss rehearsal procedures/non-musical achievements and concerns

Ground Rules
- Any musician can stop the ensemble at any time
- Stand when you speak
- Give constructive critique with a proposed solution
- Emphasize at the start of the process: every student’s voice is important

Other Considerations
- Teach students techniques for giving prep with instrument or breath
- Discuss movement while playing
Repertoire

Million Dollar Question
- We spend a lifetime trying to master the art of repertoire selection
- Student led repertoire selection process very similar to any other repertoire discussion
  - What is the appropriate challenge for my students?
  - What role will it be filling on the overall concert program?
  - Is it music of artistic merit?
  - Composers, style, etc.

Special Considerations for Student Led Works
- What do we want students to learn from the experience?
  - How to rehearse on their own
  - How to solve musical issues on their own
  - How to work together to achieve common goals without help from teacher
  - Provide high quality musical experience for students and audience

- What should I look for in repertoire?
  - Select pieces where students will not have significant issues with:
    - Music reading
    - Technique
    - Musical vocabulary
    - Musical/Emotive concepts
  - Select pieces that are the appropriate length
    - For student physical/musical stamina
    - For your overall concert programming
    - For your concert/rehearsal prep cycle

- Factor in Overall Concert/Rehearsal Cycle
  - Rehearsing/Performing a student led work will take more time
  - Must be factored into overall concert/rehearsal cycle

- Any selection of music has the potential to be successful as a student-led piece

Pickerington North Symphonic Band Student Led Repertoire
2014/15  On a Hymnsong of Phillip Bliss..........................arr. David Holsinger
2016   In Paths of Truth and Grace................................arr. Randall Standridge
2017  Shenandoah..................................................arr. Frank Ticheli
2018  Nettleton ........................................................arr. Jonnie Vinson

Scan QR Code for session handout, videos, and links to additional resources!

Questions or Want to Learn More:
Feel free to contact us if you would like to learn more about this process or have questions about getting started:

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