

Fostering Student Leadership and Followership in Large Ensemble Rehearsals by Stepping Aside

Montana Music Educators Association Professional Development Conference
Friday, October 20, 2023 • 2:00 PM • Missoula, MT

Scott A. Jones, PhD • Professor • The Ohio State University • jones.4371@osu.edu
Musicians of the Hellgate High School Wind Ensemble • Missoula, MT
Jesse Dochnahl, Director of Bands

PART 1

I. Traditional Leadership Opportunities

- Often are limited in both number and focus.
- Often the same “kind of student” serves (potential for bias in selection process).
- Inadvertently divert attention away from the importance of “**followership**.”

II. The Importance of Followership

“... the leadership practiced by individuals who are in positions of responsibility, but not authority, whereby they exert their influence to execute the vision of their leaders or accomplish organizational goals.”

- Weber, L. A., Bunin, J., and Hartzell, J. D. Journal of Healthcare Leadership. 2022; 14: 47-53.

Key qualities of effective followers:

Ego management • Loyalty • Humility • Work ethic • Courage • Active listening • Tact •
Teamwork • Good judgment • Adaptability • Competency • Critical thinking •
Attention to detail • Time management

III. Collaborative Rehearsal and Performance in the Large Ensemble

- A way to access meaningful **leadership and followership** experiences **for all students**.
- Additional benefits of meaningful **student engagement, ownership, and enriched understanding** of the “heart” of ensemble music making: *What is the composition communicating to the listener?*

IV. Foundational Underpinnings

Collaborative large ensemble rehearsal and performance ...

- ... is more about the process leading to performance.
- ... engages student experiences, musicianship, and humanity.
- ... is not the most efficient way to make music as a large ensemble.
- ... can be messy, non-linear, and frustrating to a certain kind of student (and teacher).
- ... can be a transformative “partner” to conductor-led rehearsal and performance.

V. The Role of the Teacher in Collaborative Rehearsal and Performance

Select a composition that provides a **balance of security and musical challenge**.

Provide a **full score** for each student (permission from composer/publisher).

Provide student access to a **mature reference recording** of the composition.

Dedicate **twice the amount of time** to preparation of the composition.

Audio record rehearsals and play back throughout the process.

Plan and lead **group score study sessions** (more “guiding” than “telling”).

Loosely structure rehearsals (i.e. “spend 15 minutes in the B-section of the composition”).

Trust in the student musicians and their collective ability to navigate challenges.

VI. The Look and Sound of Collaborative Music Making

Musicians of the 2023 Minnesota Music Educators Association All-State Concert Band.

August 3, 2023. Moorhead, MN. *Good Night, Dear Heart* by Dan Forrest; C. Alan Publications.

VII. Best Practices for Collaborative Rehearsal in the Large Ensemble

- Identify a timekeeper who will (confidently) remind the ensemble of time remaining in the rehearsal segment.
- Establish specific goals for the rehearsal segment prior to beginning rehearsal.
- Start by playing the section of the composition upon which the rehearsal is focused.
- Often, playing a passage a second time (before comments are shared) can be an effective/efficient rehearsal strategy.
- When you have a relevant observation and musical suggestion, STAND to share it ... and then SPEAK CLEARLY and CONCISELY.
- Ensure that what you have to say is relevant to the rehearsal goals of the current moment. Otherwise, write the comment down for sharing at a more relevant time.
- Observe a maximum of three comments (or fewer) before the ensemble plays again.
- When offering a musical suggestion, consider demonstrating on your own instrument what the music needs rather than solely talking about it.
- Leadership of any “critical moment” in a composition must always be entrusted to an individual musician (i.e. starting, releases, fermata, ritardando, etc.)
- Always be honest, and also polite.
 - “Tact is the fine art of making a point without making an enemy.”
 - “There is *brutality* and there is *honesty*. There is no such thing as *brutal honesty*.”
- Be sure to celebrate small successes and improvements as rehearsal proceeds. Statements like “That was a very helpful observation/suggestion.” can be very inspiring/motivational.
- Avoid the tendency to obsess about technical dimensions of the composition. Inspired music making is more than making sounds that are strictly in tune, in tone, and in tempo.
- Be sure to keep in mind the experience of the listener and what they should be feeling during a passage of music (i.e. “What do we want the listener to “feel” at the arrival of letter G?”).

VIII. Resources

<i>Persimfans</i> (Moscow)	www.persimfans.com
<i>Les Dissonances</i> (Paris)	www.les-dissonances.eu
<i>Orpheus</i> (NYC)	www.orpheusnyc.org
<i>Kaleidoscope</i> (Los Angeles)	www.kco.la
<i>A Far Cry</i> (Boston)	www.afarcry.org
Symphonic Band rehearsal videos	u.osu.edu/symphonicband
Scott A. Jones, Ohio State	jones.4371@osu.edu
Jesse Dochnahl, Hellgate HS (MT)	jedochnahl@mcpsmt.org
Matt King, Whitefish HS (MT)	kingm@whitefishschools.org
Matt Gaal, Anderson HS (OH)	MatthewGaal@foresthills.edu

PART 2

IX. The Working Collaborative Rehearsal

Student musicians of the Hellgate High School Wind Ensemble (Missoula, MT).

Jesse Dochnahl, Director of Bands.

The Rowan Tree arr. Randall Standridge; Grand Mesa Music

X. Observations, Questions, Comments, and Conversation