

Rehearsal Philosophy

I approach every rehearsal with a simple mindset, I am a teacher first. We teach students/adults not bands. In rehearsal my focus is teaching to and developing the individual. Their musical growth is achieved through the literature that we rehearse and perform.

Large ensembles are basically a collection of chamber ensembles. Students must be encouraged to be engaged and listening as if they were a part of a chamber group. Rehearsals are a collaboration between the conductor, performer, and composer. My role is to bring more to this process than what is written on the page.

85% of what we do as a conductor no one will ever see. It is in the prep, planning, and evaluation where we spend our time. Rehearsal should not be a drill shed but rather a place where we address the individual's role in balance, interpretation, intonation and how their part compliments and becomes part of the composition.

Nor should the rehearsal be a place for lecture. Through gesture and nonverbal communication, we can increase the efficiency of our rehearsals. The Chinese proverb never meant more than in our rehearsal: *Tell me I forget, show me I remember, involve me and I understand*. The author had to be band director!

I am grateful for the conductors who made it easier for me to do my job as a performer. Therefore, I try to conduct in a manner that I would want to see.

During rehearsal I try not to live in the world of "don't!" "Don't drag, don't rush, don't play so loud" etc. This negative and insistent approach creates an atmosphere for students where their only goal is to not make mistakes. I want them to be relaxed and engaged in music making. I want them to take risks and be willing and open to different perspectives. Don't rush becomes...."let's make that passage sound less frantic and hurried" etc.

A well-organized and orderly rehearsal environment sets the tone for the rehearsal. If the room is disorderly the performers perception is that we are not fully committed or have a well-conceived goal and vision for the rehearsal. Students will model what they see.

My goal is to empower students to be willing to take chances, think critically, engage emotionally with the music, and to realize the composer's intent. I enjoy rehearsing! Performance is cool but I enjoy the opportunity of working together and witnessing student growth.