

# REHEARSAL TECHNIQUE

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USAF Academy Band

*"The process by which a conductor educates an ensemble in the performance of music"*  
Stan DeRusha

## I PREPARATION

1. Score Study-Development of "Inner Sound"
  - a) Determines what is to be rehearsed and in what order
  - b) Determines the reasons for rehearsing (why rehearse the piece?)
2. Placement of instruments in the ensemble
  - a) Know where to look and who to cue
3. Know strengths and weaknesses of players
4. Anticipate problem areas and solutions
  - a) For conductor
  - b) For player
5. Develop Technique needed to accomplish your rehearsal/performance goals
  - a) Physical gestures demonstrating style, articulation, dynamics, tempo, etc.
  - b) Cueing patterns
6. The reasons (goals) for rehearsing dictate the priorities of the techniques
7. Develop a "plan"
  - a) Synthesis-Analysis-Synthesis
  - b) Read through
  - c) Fix-it as you go along
  - d) Rehearse specific sections
  - e) Rehearse concepts without printed page
  - f) Develop plans for overcoming problems in the music
  - g) What learning are to be accomplished
  - h) Variety of activities
    1. Planned
    2. Spontaneous
    3. Changeable
8. Environment conducive to music-making
  - a) Physical
  - b) Emotional

## II. REHEARSAL

1. Psychological
  - a) Reflect your attitude about making music
  - b) Reflect your abilities as a musician
  - c) Positive reinforcement
  - d) Give all of your attention to making music
  - e) Intensity of interest-impulse of will (be the best example of what you demand)
2. Communicate
  - a) Let the musicians know what you want and expect
  - b) Use clear technique to describe the sound
  - c) Speak up - articulate clearly and loudly, address the entire ensemble
  - d) Combine verbal and non-verbal instruction whenever possible
  - e) Teach!
  - f) Leadership - don't be shy or reluctant
  - g) Motivate - get the players to do what you want them to do because they want to do it
3. Listen - respond
  - a) Use your ears
  - b) Respond to what you hear; encouragement, correction, appreciation
4. Focus - Purpose
  - a) Keep goals and objectives of rehearsal in mind
5. Pace
  - a) Too slow - involve as many players as possible, do not hold "sectionals" with 80 players
  - b) Too fast - non comprehension - no transfer of learning
  - c) Intense - meaningful, generating interest about the music and the process
  - d) Make stops for specific purposes - know what you want to say before you stop
  - e) Waste no time - know the score, use clear and effective technique
  - f) Involve as many players as possible
6. Positive Reinforcement
  - a) Avoid being cynical or condescending
  - b) Do not dwell on mistakes or criticize individuals
  - c) Some errors may correct themselves
  - d) Compliment and encourage, acknowledge good playing
7. Eye Contact
  - a) Look at your players - not in the score
  - b) Look at specific players or section
  - c) Avoid gazing into space or closing eyes
  - d) Use the score for reference only
8. Everyone Makes Mistakes
  - a) Don't dwell on it
  - b) Don't gloss it over them or blame someone else
  - c) Admit it and go on with the business of making music
9. Things to Avoid
  - a) Looks of embarrassment
  - b) Gestures of insecurity

- c) Lack of confidence
- d) Overly apologetic
- e) Unnecessary questions
- f) Nervous habits:
  1. Biting lips
  2. Adjusting stand and music
  3. Putting baton in mouth
  4. Hitting baton on stand
  5. Speech mannerisms, i.e., overuse of okay, uh huh

#### 10. Make Rehearsals Purposeful

- a) Growth should occur at each rehearsal
- b) Provide a learning experience for all
- c) Involve the entire ensemble
- d) Provide a variety of activities

#### 11. Closure

- a) Review goals achieved
  1. Review of successful music making actions
- b) Tutti ensemble
- c) Conclude with a feeling of accomplishment
- d) Player attitude should be positive
  1. About themselves
  2. About music making
  3. Anticipate next rehearsal
- e) Assignments
  1. Encourage player preparation of next rehearsal (practice)
- f) Self Evaluation
  1. Accomplishment of goals
    - A. Successful techniques
    - B. Unsuccessful techniques
    - C. Re-evaluate goals
  2. Time wasted
  3. Verbal/non verbal instruction
  4. Tape rehearsal and analyze your effectiveness

#### 12. Psychological Consideration

- a) Generally, end rehearsals positively, preparing the ensemble for the next meeting
- b) Provide approval, encouragement, appreciation - however - when appropriate
- c) Disapproval - disappointment
- d) Challenge
  1. Preparation (practice) by players for next meeting
- e) Be sensitive to the response of the ensemble
  1. Friendly
  2. Productive
  3. Hostile
  4. Non-productive
- f) Be flexible
  1. You may have to alter your rehearsal plan
  2. Be spontaneous
  3. React to the ensemble
  4. Provide wit/humor when appropriate
  5. Provide discipline when appropriate
- g) Be yourself - develop your Rehearsal Technique

