

SIZZLE AND SING: USING YOUR VOICE FOR ENGAGING BAND REHEARSALS

Nebraska Music Education Association Conference
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Glenn Korff School of Music
Lincoln, Nebraska

Westbrook Music Building Room 104
Thursday, November 18, 2021
2:30-3:30 p.m.

Dr. Curran Prendergast

Director of Bands, Associate Professor of Music
Truman State University
Kirksville, Missouri
cprend@truman.edu

Your and your students' voices are powerful rehearsal tools. Utilizing vocalizations (and other mouth-made sounds) can deepen the musicianship of your students as well as accelerate the music learning process.

Adding vocalizations into your regular rehearsal routine will result in:

- Your students "thinking like a conductor."
 - Command of the musical goals both individually and as an ensemble.
- Improved musicianship especially in the areas detailed in the pyramid (see below).
- Students staying engaged and ENJOYING ensemble music making even more.
- You being able to model the music in more meaningful ways.

Vocalizations

- Works for instrumental ensembles of all ages.
- Aim for having these techniques enter your daily rehearsal and to normalize them. The long-term benefits happen when the students are accustomed to using them.

Sizzle

- This technique involves making an "S" sound through closed teeth.
- Musical breathing should be reinforced.
- Insist that they sizzle musically. This takes consistent repetition over time.
- Musical elements that can be developed using sizzle:
 - Rhythm/Note lengths
 - Listen for the ends of notes as they "enter silence." Plus, reinforces breath release.
 - Sizzle + buttons helps air flow through slurs.
 - Align different rhythmic groups and/or hocket passages.

- Dynamics/expression/phrasing
 - Trace the highs and lows in volume.
 - The energy with which you and your students sizzle a passage can help increase the energy with which they play it.
- Balance
 - Who's sizzling louder than others?
 - Also helps with and additional active listening target
- Articulation
 - Sizzling matches closely the tonguing technique on many instruments.
 - Highlights differences between accented, staccato and any other articulation.
- Other rehearsal techniques to use with sizzling:
 - Move around the room!
 - Remove visual so students will listen in a more focused way.
 - Looping
 - A-B alternating listening
 - Half the ensemble sizzling either beats or rhythms and the other playing.
 - Bopping
 - Directed Listening to a particular person
 - Conducting. Both you and your students can conduct while sizzling. There is a great connection between body movement and breathing that can directly improve performance.
 - Add movement with the sizzle: rising from chair as your part gets louder. Sit back down as your part gets softer.

Singing

- All of the benefits and techniques related to sizzling can be achieved with singing/vocalizing. "Singing" includes "Scat-singing." Vocalized modeling is 10-times quicker in effectively communicating your musical ideas to your students. Here are thoughts on the unique benefits of singing in the ensemble rehearsal:
 - Pitch
 - Initially students may be apprehensive to sing (or hum) during rehearsal. However, once that has passed, humming on a unison pitch, chord or even dissonance will help students work toward playing with better intonation.
 - Tone + Expression
 - Using the full range of sounds through vocalizing to communicate the energy of a particular part-especially in percussion.
 - Provides additional context for tonal concepts like "darker" or "louder."
 - Cultivates ENTHUSIASM!
 - Imagery/Meaning
 - Sing a melody like a lullaby or like you're angry. Observe the differences and apply them to playing. This helps provide a difference context for comparing and thus for making intentional choices about meaning.

Pyramid of Rehearsal Elements

