SIZZLE AND SING: USING YOUR VOICE FOR ENGAGING BAND REHEARSALS

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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:
  o 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

- Imagery (Meaning)
- Dynamics (Expression)
- Articulation (Style)
- Tone (Technique)
- Balance (Texture)
- Pitch (Melody+Harmony)
- Rhythm (Pulse+Breath)